

Lady Cats win at Prairie View; Wildcats medal 12 overall



Louisburg junior Reese Johnson distances herself from the field Thursday during the Ramsey Invitational at Prairie View High School. Johnson finished second overall and the Lady Cats took first in the team standings.

LA CYGNE – It was just another week for the Louisburg girls cross country team as the Lady Cat runners found themselves atop the team standings again.

For the second consecutive week, the Lady Cats won the team title – this time at the Ramsey Invitational – Thursday at Prairie View High School. Louisburg won going away with 19 points and finished 35 points ahead of runner-up Anderson County.

Also, it was the second time in as many weeks that freshman Lola Edwards and junior Reese Johnson were the first ones to cross the finish line. Edwards won the meet in 20 minutes and 30 seconds, while Johnson was second in 21:11.

“The girls are running well,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “They are slowly drawing closer together with their times, which makes them even better as a team.

“Lola and Reese are doing awesome. They are ready to compete each race and are relentless on the course.”

The Louisburg boys also finished strong as the Wildcats nearly won their second consecutive meet as they finished second with 42 points, just three points behind champion Fort Scott and one point in front of third place finisher, Anderson County.

"They performed very well," Reese said. "The top six are running within 30 seconds of each other, which is impressive. As their times drop they will be a strong team at the league and regional meets."

In all, the Wildcats medaled 12 runners between the two teams, including the entire seven-member girls squad.



Freshman Maddy Rhamy leads a pack of runners Thursday during the Ramsey Invitational.

Along with Edwards and Johnson, sophomore Claire Brown finished fifth in the girls race in 22:45. Freshmen Maddy Rhamy (23:01) and Erin Apple (23:12) took eighth and ninth, respectively.

Sophomore Bree Gassman was 13th in 23:34 and fellow sophomore Nova Ptacek rounded out the team in 23:55, which was good for 15th.

On the boys side, senior Carson Houchen led the Wildcats in seventh overall in 18:47 and another senior, Cade Holtzen, was 10th in 18:55.



Senior Cade Holtzen races to the finish line Thursday during the Ramsey Invitational. He finished 10th overall.

Juniors Ryan Rogers finished 12th in 19:02, while fellow juniors Caden Bradshaw (19:12) and Hayden Ross (19:13) were 14th and 15, respectively, and also garnered medals.

Freshman Noah Cotter just missed out on a medal as he took 16th in 19:14 and sophomore Leo Martin was 24th in 20:18.

“Earning medals is not what we look at, but it is nice to be rewarded for a strong effort,” Reece said. “With numbers comes quality and these are the best kids in the school which makes my job easy. They work hard and are rewarded for their hard work.”

Louisburg was originally scheduled to compete in the Pittsburg Invitational on Thursday, but due to COVID-19, the Wildcats had to find a different meet. Instead, Louisburg will travel to the Perry-Lecompton Invitational on Thursday at Perry Lake. Races are set to begin at 4 p.m.

Wildcat boys, girls finish first at Wellsville Invite



The Louisburg boys and girls cross country teams both earned team titles last Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Braden Branine,

Caden Bradshaw, Hayden Ross, Sawyer Richardson, Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Noah Cotter; (back row) Nova Ptacek, Lola Edwards, Reese Johnson, Claire Brown, Bree Gassman, Erin Apple and Maddie Rhamy.

WELLSVILLE – Less than a week after performing well on one of the toughest courses in the state, the Louisburg cross country teams continued their momentum Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational.

Both Wildcat teams brought home top honors as they both finished first in the team standings and garnered 12 individual medals. It was a memorable day all-around for the Louisburg runners.

“Any time a team is successful it is a good feeling,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “When both win the meet, and with the margin of the boys win being so small, it makes you feel great. It shows the effort that the runners are giving both individually, and as a team, to support each other’s effort.”

The Louisburg boys found themselves in a battle for the top spot with West Franklin. The Wildcats recorded 46 points and edged West Franklin by just one point without one of their top runners in the lineup.

Junior Ryan Rogers was unable to run last Thursday, but his Wildcats teammates picked up the slack as seniors Carson Houchen and Cade Holtzen earned top 10 finishes. Houchen took fifth overall in 18 minutes and 49 seconds and Holtzen was ninth in 19:08.

Junior Caden Bradshaw also earned a medal for the Wildcats as he took 13th in 19:46. Two more runners, junior Hayden Ross (20:00) and freshman Noah Cotter (20:02), also medaled as they took 15th and 16th, respectively.



Junior Hayden Ross (left) and freshman Noah Cotter sprint to the finish Thursday at Wellsville.

Sawyer Richardson came in 30th in 21:04 and Braden Branine was 34th in 21:39 to round out the Wildcat runners.

“Carson and Cade are great senior leaders,” Reece said. “At the meet they led by example and the others followed. With Ryan not running, we really had to step up with our 3,4 and 5 runners and they did. With every runner counting and as close as the score was, our No. 6 would have won the meet for us if it was a tie breaker.”

The Louisburg girls had a strong performance of their own as the Lady Cats recorded 25 points to win the team title over Santa Fe Trail, which had 43 points.

Freshman Lola Edwards continued her strong season as she won the individual crown going away in 21:02. Junior Reese Johnson was right behind her as she finished second overall in 21:43.

All seven Lady Cat runners came away with individual medals. Sophomore Claire Brown was third on the team in seventh overall in 23:24.

Sophomore Bree Gassman (23:51) and freshman Maddie Rhamy (23:55) took 11th and 12th, respectively. Another freshman, Erin Apple, was 17th in 24:46 and sophomore Nova Ptacek took 22nd in 25:39.



Louisburg coach John Reece urges on freshman Maddie Rhamy on Thursday at Wellsville.

"It was nice to see them (Lola and Reese) running up front, especially with a short week after running at Wamego on the Saturday before," Reece said. "The girls group is doing a great job of pushing each other in meets and working together in practice."

The Wamego course featured several hills and obstacles to overcome, but the Wellsville was vastly different and took a little bit for the Wildcat runners to get used to.

"Wellsville is not a hilly course but it has a million turns on it which makes it hard to get a long stretch to get into a good rhythm," Reece said.

Louisburg will look to continue its success this Thursday when the Wildcats compete at the Prairie View Invitational. Races are set to begin at 3:30 p.m.

Wildcats medal five at Wamego Invitational



Louisburg senior Carson Houchen leads a pack of runners Saturday during the Wamego Invitational at the Wamego Country Club. Houchen was one of five medalists for the Wildcats.

WAMEGO – For Louisburg cross country coach John Reece, the purpose of driving the 2-plus hours to compete in the Wamego Invitational is a simple one.

The course at Wamego Country Club is where the Class 4A state meet will be held at the end of October and Reece wanted to give his runners a taste of what it is like to run on one of the toughest courses in the state and what it will be like should they make it to state.

The Wamego Invitational brings in some of the top teams and runners from all over the state, and if Saturday's results

have anything to say, the Wildcats have a chance to do well in the postseason.

Freshman Lola Edwards led the way as she finished sixth overall in 21 minutes and 5 seconds and was one of five Wildcats to medal. The top 40 medalists in each race earn medals.

"Wamego always lines up the top 4A teams in the state each year," Reece said. "This makes it the most competitive meet next to league for the regular season. Our veteran runners get a chance to run the course again and the newbies get their first taste of one of the toughest courses in the state."

Edwards led the Lady Cats to a fifth place team finish as they recorded 129 points and were just one spot away from earning team medals – that distinction goes to the top four squads. Baldwin (29 points), Eudora (69), Buhler (80) and Tonganoxie (107) each finished in the top four.

Along with Edwards, junior Reese Johnson also ran well. Johnson, who was a state medalist as a freshman, was familiar with the course after appearing at state the last two years and took 12th in 21:49.

"The race was run in two waves 90 seconds apart, which kind of helped us as we were in the second wave so we got to use the tail end of the first wave to motivate us to pass runners," Reece said. "Lola and Reese competed very well. As a team we just missed being one of the top four for team medals, but this meet is more about the opportunity to run the course in preparation for a return in October."

The Wildcat boys came away with three medals of their own. Junior Ryan Rogers led Louisburg in 32nd with a time of 19:08. Senior Carson Houchen also left with a medal as he took 34th in 19:19 and junior Caden Bradshaw was 36th in 19:20.

"The boys team ran great," Reece said. "The one aspect of their race that was impressive was that the top five runners for us were only 40 seconds apart from each other. This is a huge deal as we move forward. We can not only improve individually, but being so close together we will pull each other along and be strong as a team. Earning three medals on the boys side was outstanding. I hope to be bringing both teams to state this year."

Senior Cade Holtzen just missed a medal as he finished 45th in 19:38 and freshman Noah Cotter was 48th in 19:48. Freshman Braden Branine was 63rd in 20:38.

On the girls' side, sophomore Claire Brown also just missed a medal as she took 42nd in 24:14 and sophomore Bree Gassman was 47th in 24:28. Freshman Erin Apple was 50th in 24:41, sophomore Nova Ptacek was 53rd in 25:37 and senior Kennady Wilkerson was 60th in 26:58.

Louisburg is back in action Thursday when it travels to the Wellsville Invitational. The meet is set to begin at 4 p.m.

Week 2 Athlete of the Week: Lola Edwards



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week two of the fall sports season, sponsored by Louisburg Family Dental.

LOLA EDWARDS, FRESHMAN, CROSS COUNTRY

In her first major varsity race, Louisburg freshman Lola Edwards put together an impressive showing against some of the top runners in Class 4A. Edwards medaled sixth at the Wamego Invitational last Saturday with a time of 21 minutes and 5 seconds. She finished in the top 10 in the 66-runner field and the Lady Cats finished fifth in the team standings.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

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Wildcat cross country opens season with home quad



Louisburg freshman Lola Edwards leads a pack of runners during the Wildcats' season opener Sept. 3 at Lewis-Young Park.

It wasn't the way its season was supposed to start, but the

Louisburg cross country team made the best of a bad situation.

The Wildcats, who were originally scheduled to compete in Garnett for their season opener, had to find a different meet due to COVID-19 restrictions. It didn't take them long to figure something out as they were able to host a quadrangular with three other Frontier League schools on Sept. 3 at Lewis-Young Park.

Louisburg was able to put together a successful performance in its first meet of the season as the Wildcats had several top 10 finishes on both teams as they squared off against quality competition in Baldwin, Spring Hill and Ottawa.

The Wildcats had the most success on the boys' side as they came away with three in the top 10.

Junior Ryan Rogers had a strong opening meet as he finished fourth overall in 19 minutes and 40 seconds and junior teammate Caden Bradshaw was sixth in 19:59. Senior Cade Holtzen took eighth in 20:12.

Freshman Noah Cotter finished just outside the top 10 as he took 13th in 21:03, while junior Hayden Ross and sophomore Braden Branine were 15th and 16th, respectively. Sophomore Leo Martin was 18th in 21:55.

Trent Allen (21st), Griffin Drew (22:19), Sawyer Richardson (25th), Landan Henry (28th), Max LaJoy (30th), Carson Houchen (38th), Drake Baus (46th) and Kemper Johnson (47th) also competed for Louisburg.

Spring Hill's Tommy O'Leary won the boys race in 18:34 and Baldwin's Caleb Carr was second in 18:40.

For the Louisburg girls, the Lady Cats had a pair of top 10 finishes, led by junior Reese Johnson, who placed eighth.

Freshman Lola Edwards was right behind her in ninth in her first varsity race.

Sophomore Claire Brown finished 15th, while Nova Ptacek (22nd), Bree Gassman (23rd), Kennedy Wilkerson (24th), Erin Apple (25th) and Maddie Rhamy (26th) all finished in the upper-half of the race.

Alexis French (29th), Maddy O'Keefe (39th), Andrea Gaza (40th), Ruth Minster (42nd) and Elizabeth George also competed for Louisburg.

Baldwin's Riley Smith won the race and finished two seconds ahead of Spring Hill's Vienna Lahner.

The Wildcats are back in action Saturday when they travel to the Wamego Invitational. The first race is set to begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Wamego Country Club.

Wildcat runners ready to try for another trip to state



The Louisburg boys cross country team returns five varsity runners from a year ago and are led by seniors Cade Holtzen (pictured, front) and Carson Houchen.

It was another historic season for the Louisburg cross country team a year ago.

For the third consecutive year, the Louisburg girls qualified for state as team, and one of those runners – Trinity Moore – had the school's best finish as she took third at the Class 4A meet and broke her school record in the process.

Fast forward to the present day and the Wildcats will have a little different look to it. Gone is Moore, who is now a member of the Pittsburg State cross country team, but much of the team still remains.

They may be some of the same names, but they are a year older, a lot faster and there are some new faces mixed in.

Still, the goal remains the same for the Wildcats – to find themselves at the final meet of the year in Wamego for the Class 4A state competition.

“Our end of season goal is a state bid by both teams and it is the same for this year,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “We will run and have fun and enjoy our time together because we know it can be taken away at the drop of a hat.”

The threat of COVID-19 has every team in the state knowing full well that they can't take anything for granted and the Wildcat runners plan to compete with that mentality.

Louisburg will bring of a lot of experience on both the boys and girls side.

Five runners off the girls state team return to try and make it a fourth consecutive trip to state and are led by returning state medalist, Reese Johnson. Senior Kennady Wilkerson, junior Ruth Minster and sophomores Bree Gassman and Claire Brown could also play big roles on varsity this season.



Junior Reese Johnson, a state medalist from two years ago, will look to make even more impact on the varsity squad this year.

Sophomore Nova Ptacek, who was an alternate on the team last season, will look to add the depth, as will freshman Lola Edwards as she works her way into the top seven runners.

Other freshmen such as Erin Apple, Madison Rhamy and Madison O'Keefe could all see varsity time as the season goes along.

"The girls team will be solid this year," Reece said. "We return lots of experience and have added some quality freshman to the team. State last year was not what a few of the runners wanted and they are working hard to go back and improve."

"Lola, Erin, Maddie and Maddy, our freshman girls, will add a lot of depth to the team and they could even be varsity

runners sooner than later. Lola will be one of our top girls from the start and we will bring her along slowly as she learns to race the 5K."

On the boys side, the Wildcats return much of their starting lineup from a season ago and they are led by a pair of seniors in Cade Holtzen and Carson Houchen, who will be in their fourth year with the program.

Juniors Ryan Rogers, Sawyer Richardson and Caden Bradshaw all steadily improved last season and will look to do the same thing this year as they welcome some new faces to the group.

"Like the girls, we bring back lots of experience in the boys team," Reece said. "Carson and Cade are our seniors and they are stepping up to lead the others. We will be rolling through races together and going for it at the end of the season."

The COVID-19 pandemic has already put its fingerprints on the Wildcats' season as Louisburg was not able to compete in Garnett in its opener this week due to numbers restrictions.

Instead, Louisburg was able to put together a quad competition for Thursday on its home course at Lewis-Young Park. Races are set to begin at 4 p.m.

LHS fall sports practices underway with precautions



With the cloud of a different looking fall season hanging over their heads, the Louisburg High School fall sports teams officially got back to work Monday for the first day of practice.

The possibility of having a shortened fall season due to the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't scared off Wildcat athletes from giving this season a go and making the most it.

All four teams saw good numbers on the first day of practice as it was business as usual for many of those squads.

In all, Louisburg saw a total of 181 athletes come out for sports at the high school level. Those numbers will drop when volleyball and boys soccer makes their cuts, but it shows the athletes aren't afraid of what lies ahead and are excited to get their season going.

For the Louisburg football team, Wildcat coach Robert Ebenstein has 70 players out this season after the Wildcats finished last year with a 6-4 record and spot in the regional playoffs.

Practice has been similar than in year's past, even with COVID-19, however the players and coaches are doing their part to stay as healthy as possible. That includes players bringing their own water bottles to practice and coaches instructing with face coverings.

"The kids and coaches were very excited to get back to it," Ebenstein said. "We have a very young group and it was good to see them get out on the field and compete."

"We are following all the guidelines passed down from KSHSAA, the county and general guidelines from our school administration. The kids have done an amazing job buying in and doing what we have to do to ensure we get our opportunity to play this season."



On the volleyball court, the Lady Cats came together to try and put together another strong season. Louisburg finished last year with a spot in the state tournament and took fourth overall.

When practice began, Louisburg had 38 athletes out for volleyball and the Lady Cats will try and continue to work off what they have done over summer as they try and make it back to the state tournament. Practices have looked a little different than in year's past as players and coaches are wearing face masks at all times, unless certain physical activities are taking place.

"I think the first few days have gone well," Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. "We have a set of

volleyball skill drills and physical tests that each athlete completes as part of the tryout process. Like every year, they are excited to get the season started. I'm sure there are different emotions because there are some unknowns. We are preparing to compete for the entire season but know there is the possibility it could be cut short or we could see adjustments to our schedules that are out of our control. We had 35 athletes, split among three teams, participate this summer in a league ran out of Olathe. Playing for six weeks over summer gave us an idea of what the season could look like and how we can adapt to the new guidelines that have been put in place.

"We are still practicing social distancing so we've adapted some of our drills to accommodate for that while also creating a competitive environment. We are encouraged to work in smaller groups when possible as well. As the season progresses, we'll see the biggest changes come when we have a match because some pre-game protocol has changed as well as structure during a match. For instance, teams will not switch benches at the conclusion of a set."



The Louisburg boys soccer team is coming off one of its best season's in program history as the Wildcats reeled off 16 wins a year ago and won a regional title. Louisburg returns several starters from last season and the Wildcats currently have 43 players out.

Along with football, soccer is considered a close-contact sport and the Wildcats are doing everything they can to keep themselves – and others – healthy throughout the year.

"The first day of practice was a typical first day," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "We were a little rusty, but we got through it. The boys are incredibly grateful for the ability to play the game they love. The boys have some massive goals this year and understand what it is going to take to obtain them.

"We made the kids have their masks on during breaks and their own water bottle. This will hopefully limit the chance of COVID spreading."

The one sport that probably won't see too much change this season is cross country. The Wildcat runners are coming off a season in which they had a runner – Trinity Moore – take third at state and watched as the girls' team qualified for state for the third year in a row.



Louisburg still has high goals on both the girls and boys side and the Wildcats have 30 athletes out this season. Thanks to a successful summer of running workouts, Louisburg is ready to get its season underway.

"We are always excited to get started," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "This year is not much different because we had a great season last year and the returners are very focused on improving over last year. Once summer running got started, a sense of normalcy crept in and we started getting ready for the season. They were excited to be with friends again."

"Not much has changed for us since there is not 'contact' during our races. The only thing that could change is how races are started to reduce numbers and losing meets due to a

large number of schools participating. We are already scrambling to get a first meet in this year. We will make it happen for the kids."

LHS coaches thankful, excited about KSHSAA ruling on fall sports



Coaches, parents and athletes held their collective breath last week during the Kansas High School Activities Association's executive board meeting.

People around the state watched to see what KSHSAA would recommend for fall sports during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Back to school will be different than normal, and for some, will start after Labor Day due to a high number of positive cases.

Still, many have wondered what was going to happen to fall activities around the state and they got their answer. A motion by KSHSAA failed 5-4 in the executive board session, which in turn allowed the fall sports season to continue as scheduled.

"I am relieved that we know a definite start date and there will be no changes to the start of games," Louisburg High

School activities director Michael Pickman said. "The kids and coaches worked all summer, and I didn't want to see that start date delayed and lose that progress. However, there will be some changes due to the pandemic so the focus turns to safety. The last thing I want is for the athletic events and protocols to create the spread of COVID that affects the academic side, so it will be very important that we take the recommendations of the health organizations and KSHSAA to make the athletics and competitions as safe as possible for this year."

During the meeting, KSHSAA had proposed keeping the original start of practice date of Aug. 17 for all activities. For activities being able to allow social distancing and minimal contact, such as girls golf, girls tennis, cross country, debate and scholars bowl, no modifications were recommended.

However, the proposal called for moving the start dates for competition in football, volleyball and boys soccer to begin no earlier than Sept. 8 – which basically took a week of their season.

It would have made football and eight game season, instead of the normal nine. For soccer, number of games would have been reduced from 16 to 14 and volleyball would have been reduced from 36-30 points.

For many of the Wildcat head coaches, the vote of the executive board was a breath of fresh air in what has been a challenging spring and summer for local athletes.

"I really think it was a good decision," Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. "The kids deserve a chance to be able to play their season. It could be different than we have seen before, but I think we have done a good job of keeping the exposure down. They deserve this opportunity and activities like football will keep kids focused on school as well. I believe it is something they need."

"It was also good decision for the whole state. Yes, we are close to the metro, but you have schools like Smith Center or somewhere else in the state where the exposure is low. Starting the season on time was the right thing to do, and if there are cancellations, it gives schools an opportunity to reschedule if they need to."

Louisburg's boys soccer program is looking to have another big season as it tries to repeat as a Frontier League champion and their 16 wins from a year ago. Although, the Wildcats are looking forward to getting their season underway, they realize things could change on a daily basis.

"I was extremely excited," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "There were so many rumors and recommendations that were flying I was worried. The vote at least gives this group an opportunity to actually get some games in. This gives the boys soccer team a chance to back up the season they had a year ago. I am excited to see us at least get a chance to start the season.

"I will be honest, I was extremely worried over the summer. In fact, a comment was made in the KSHSAA executive board meeting that still has me worried. They said let's start the season as soon as possible, because we are not sure how long it is going to last. It will also be interesting to see if the CDC or local health departments change their protocols when someone may have it, otherwise teams will be shut down right and left because they might have the virus."

Cross country is a sport that considered somewhat safe when it comes to the spread of COVID-19. Louisburg head coach John Reece has treated this summer like normal.

Reece had 35 runners out for the first day of their daily morning runs, and have averaged 20 a day since then. It is considered a "socially-distanced" sport, and one that KSHSAA had no problems with starting their schedule on time.

"Very excited for our seniors to have a fall season," Reece said. "I'm not gonna hold my breath as who knows what could happen in a month. For now it is go time, and we will be ready."

"We have been able to transition into some workouts on Wednesdays to get some quality work in. The rest of the time we are running this town and getting in the miles. It is going to be another fun year for both boys and girls teams. We want to get both to state and we will work hard to accomplish this goal."

Volleyball is the one indoor sport in the fall, which has some worried about how social distancing will work in the gym and how many teams will be invited to tournaments. As for now, nothing has changed in that department, and head coach Jessica Compliment is looking forward to working with her team in a couple weeks.

"It's nice to know what the season is going to look like," Compliment said. "The uncertainty and the unknowns for the upcoming school has been a little unnerving, but I am happy to see that the players will have a season."

"I do not know of any changes to our schedule as of right now. I have been told the schedule will go as scheduled until we hear differently. I have not heard from tournament host schools on whether or not they plan to change anything."

As far as spectators go, there has not been a limit set as of yet as members of the school district are working on protocols to use during the season. For now, the obvious guidelines are the ones people experience on a daily basis.

"There will be guidelines more than restrictions as related to Covid-19 safe practices that align with each sport and specific to that sport," Pickman said. "Universal aspects like wearing masks to practice and during periods of inactivity will apply to all. Cleaning equipment schedules and protocols

to have water bottles and cease use of water fountains, etc, along with others are sport specific guidelines for both practice and game day. These documents are being drafted and will be communicated once final.

"We are following the Executive Order 20-59, so if the event is outside, there will not be masks required, but we will still encourage social distancing. If the event is inside, masks will be required as well as social distancing encouraged."

The district has had to make one change to the start of the fall season and that is the cancellation of the Fall Sports Pep Rally that has annually been held at the high school.

"The Community Pep Rally was a hard decision because it is a great school and community business partnership that the community and our coaches, players, and students look forward to, but it was more important to avoid these extra opportunities for mass gathering to place focus on opening school and activities on time and healthy as possible," Pickman said. "We are looking to reschedule possibly during the buffer week at the conclusion of the fall season. No other events have been cancelled at this time."

2020 Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the past four years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and to highlight the athletes.

For the third straight year, Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an "athlete."

Obviously, 2020 has not been the typical year when the spring was cancelled due to COVID-19. However, I still want to make sure those athletes that were set to make an impact in the spring were recognized as well.

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They voted for their top male and female athletes and then I tabulated the results. I will release the results in the coming days.

Below are the nominees for this year's award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!

Female Athlete of the Year Nominees



Haley Cain – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer

Haley was a three-sport athlete during her time at Louisburg High School and recorded the rare feat of earning 12 varsity letters.

In the fall, she helped the Louisburg volleyball team to its third consecutive state tournament and was selected to represent Kansas in the Greater Kansas City All-Star Match. She was also named to the All-Frontier League second team as a middle hitter.

Cain was also a two-time team captain for the Louisburg girls basketball team and was a key player for the Lady Cats this past season. She was also set to be a big contributor for the Wildcat soccer team in the spring as well.



Trinity Moore – Senior – Cross Country, Soccer

Trinity made cross country history for the Wildcats this past season as she medaled third at state and broke her own school record in the process. The Louisburg senior also medaled at state all four years.

Moore was also a returning starter for the Wildcat soccer team and was a key factor in helping the Wildcats to three consecutive state final fours and two state runner-up finishes.

She started 43 games for the Wildcats and concluded her career with 18 goals and eight assists. She is fifth in school history with 44 points.



Erin Lemke – Senior – Volleyball, Soccer

Erin was another multi-sport athlete for Louisburg as she was a member of the volleyball and soccer teams. Lemke was an outside hitter for the Lady Cat volleyball team and was selected to represent Kansas in the Greater Kansas City All-Star Match.

On the soccer team, Lemke was a two-time team captain for the Wildcats and was a returning all-league and all-state player. She was also one of the team's top goal scorers.

Lemke had a very productive career for the Wildcats as she started 48 of her 59 games and earned all-league and all-state honors as a sophomore and a junior.

She finished her career with 29 goals and 27 assists and Lemke

has the second-best assist mark for a season in program history with 17 and is third in career assists. She also added seven game-winning goals.



Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Senior – Volleyball,

Powerlifting, Softball

Reilly was a multi-sport athlete for Louisburg High School as she competed in volleyball, power-lifting and softball. She was an honorable mention all-league selection in volleyball as she served as the Lady Cat libero.

Ratliff-Becher was a big part of the Lady Cats' state tournament runs the last three years. She was also selected to participate in the Greater Kansas City All-Star game last November.

As a powerlifter, Reilly recorded her second-straight state championship and took first in each of the three individual events.

Ratliff-Becher was also a returning starter on the Lady Cat softball team after she helped Louisburg to a state tournament appearance a year ago as a catcher and outfielder.

Male Athlete of the Year Nominees



Garrett Rolofson – Senior – Soccer, Basketball, Golf

Garrett is a three-sport athlete for Louisburg as he was a member of the soccer, basketball and golf teams. In soccer, Rolofson served as the Wildcats' goalkeeper and helped Louisburg to a regional title and a school record 16 wins.

Rolofson was named to the All-Frontier League first team and to the all-state second team. He posted eight shutouts on the season and allowed only 17 goals, four of which came from penalty shots. He also finished with 78 saves on the season and allowed the second fewest goals in Class 4-1A.

In basketball, Rolofson was a starter on the Wildcat basketball team and this spring he was all set to help the Wildcat golf team to their second consecutive state tournament

appearance. He was the team's No. 3 golfer a year ago.



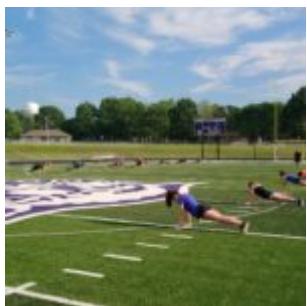
Madden Rutherford – Senior – Football, Baseball

Madden was a multi-sport athlete for Louisburg as he was a key member of the Wildcat football and baseball teams.

Rutherford, who was a team captain on the football team, was selected as a first team All-Frontier League quarterback. Rutherford finished the year with 671 yards passing with eight touchdowns and he also added 245 yards on the ground and four more scores.

On the baseball team, Rutherford was also a returning all-league player and was slated to be the Wildcats' No. 1 starter this spring.

Wildcat athletes report back for summer conditioning



Almost 80 high school girls attended the first day of summer conditioning on Monday at Louisburg High School.

For the first time in almost three months, Louisburg High School and Louisburg Middle School athletes found themselves back on the field starting Monday at Wildcat Stadium.

It didn't include any balls, equipment, weights and wasn't indoors, but more than 300 athletes participated in the mandatory conditioning drills that were set by the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

"The turnout was exceptional, and considering the limit on group sizes, distance restrictions, and getting creative in using multiple spaces to accommodate the large numbers in appropriately sized groups allowed in phase three, these coordinators did a great job setting a standard," Louisburg activities director Michael Pickman said.

This was all following the cancellation of the spring season to the spread of COVID-19 and KSHSAA allowed school districts to begin conditioning exercises on June 1. The Louisburg school district started this past Monday and each athlete must participate in 10 sessions before being able to attend in any team activities or camps.

Several coaches were in attendance running athletes through drills in three separate stations that would allow some space between everyone. Football coaches Robert Ebenstein, Ty Pfannenstiel, Joel McGhee and Drew Harding were on hand to lead drills, along with other staff from within the USD 416 school district.

"There are many coaches who are volunteering and just want to be there to support their athletes," Pickman said. "It's what makes the LHS coaching staff stand out from others. However, I have encouraged coaches not directly coordinating weights to stay home as much as they can with numbers restrictions, but so far we haven't had that be an issue."

High school boys begin each morning at 6 a.m., for the hour-long workout and high school girls follow and then it all finishes up with middle school. To start there were 121 high school boys in attendance, 79 girls and 126 middle school students.



More than 120 Louisburg High School boys attended the first day of summer conditioning at Wildcat Stadium.

To start the day, each athlete is screened before the start of

conditioning with a temperature check and then they are divided into three groups. Each of them will participate in three stations that focuses on different workouts. There are no more than 45 athletes in a group and the coaches design workouts to promote the six feet of distance.

"There were temperatures that needed to be taken and protocol for sanitizing hands and checking in that went efficiently and smoothly overall," Pickman said. "A lot of planning went into this with the coaches to make sure it went well. And Mr. Holloway (LHS principal) volunteered his time to help take temps at the various sessions."

As far as cross country goes, interested runners instead attend running sessions held by coach John Reece that will take place throughout the summer and they do not have to attend conditioning.

Whenever the athletes have completed their 10 sessions, they are allowed to participate in team activities the rest of the summer. As of right now, everything is on track to allow athletes to begin attending camps after June 29.

"Everything is progressing so far to according to schedule," Pickman said. "Assuming the governor's phase out stage begins when it is supposed to, we will be ready to begin using the weight room, gyms, and sports equipment. Coaches will be able to have practices and then middle school and high school age camps after June 29. The younger kids who do not have to have the 10 days of acclimatization are able to run the week of June 22. With the schedule the way it is, kids should have no problem getting their 10 days of acclimatization needed to participate in camps."