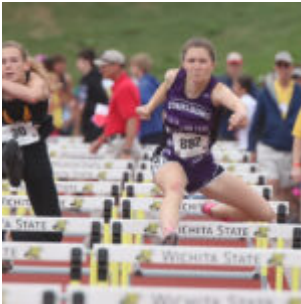


Keagle looking forward to track career at Southwest Baptist



Louisburg senior Sydni Keagle, the school's record holder in the 100-meter hurdles, will continue her track career at Southwest Baptist University next season.

Sydni Keagle certainly made her mark on the Louisburg track program as she is the school's record holder in the 100-meter hurdles and earned state medals in two relays a year ago.

Now she is hoping to do more of the same at the college level.

Keagle recently held a signing ceremony outside of Louisburg High School and signed her letter of intent to run track at Southwest Baptist University next season. The opportunity to run track in college was something that was too good for her to pass up.

"I was super excited when I found out that I was going to be able to run track in college, even if it was just as a walk-on for the first year or two," Keagle said. "However, up until a few months ago, I wasn't even sure if I wanted to continue my athletic career in college. If COVID-19 has made me realize anything, it's that I truly love running track and not being able to participate in the sport my senior year was devastating. That was ultimately what helped me decide to run in college."

Like many spring athletes across the country, Keagle was hoping for a special year – especially in the 100 hurdles. Keagle missed out on a state medal in that event by just one spot last spring, but she is hoping to take a big leap forward in college.

“As of right now hurdles is the only event that I know I’ll be participating in,” Keagle said. “That could possibly change in the future, but hasn’t been discussed yet. The coaches have been amazing throughout the whole process. They are very open with their communication and always answer any questions that I have as quickly as they can. I’m very excited to see what next year has to offer.”

Keagle wasn’t even sure what school she was going to attend until the last couple months, but the Southwest Baptist coaching staff did a good job of persuading her. She believes the Division II program, based in Bolivar, Mo., will be a good home for her for the next four years.

“At one point I was kind of stuck in the middle while trying to decide between SBU and Pitt State, but track ended up being the end factor that helped me make my decision,” Keagle said. “School wise, both were great options and I could see myself at either one, but one of the things I was looking for the most was the ability to run.

“I wanted to run at Pitt State, but was had a hard time getting ahold of their coach. In the meantime I reached out to the SBU coach and was able to get a response fairly quickly. After a couple of conversations with their coach I had made up my mind and knew that SBU was where I wanted to go.”



Louisburg senior Sydni Keagle signed her letter of intent last month to run track at Southwest Baptist. Sitting next to Sydni are her parents Jennier and Eric. Standing are her siblings Raeya and Reed.

Keagle, who is planning on majoring in elementary education, believes Southwest Baptist is good sport for her both academically and athletically.

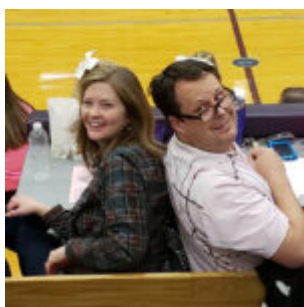
“The big reason other than track was that all of the staff and students there are so warm and welcoming in ways that I never got at other schools,” Keagle said. “They show that they care and are interested in your future, academically and athletically. Plus, they have a great education program that I’m excited to be a part of.”

Now the hard part for Keagle begins. With the lost season due to COVID-19, Keagle is now in the process of staying in track shape for when she gets to college and knows that she has a lot of work to do still.

“Not having a season this year has proved more difficult than

I thought,” Keagle said. “Usually I am in athletics year round so I don’t have to think about when I’m going to exercise or run, and being at home has made it a challenge. I do my best to run and keep in shape, but it doesn’t always go the way I plan. This summer though, I’ll be on more of a schedule, hopefully with workouts coming from the coaches at SBU.”

Dennis leaves lasting legacy in Louisburg, LHS athletics



Damon Dennis, and his wife Karla, pose for quick picture during a timeout at a Louisburg High School basketball game Dennis was announcing. Dennis, who is better known as Doc D, is handing over his business at Louisburg Chiropractic Office to Dr. Jacob Polzin and is stepping away as the LHS team doctor after 28 years of service. His last day at the office is tomorrow (Saturday).

Almost every day of the week, if you were looking for Damon Dennis, he could be found at his office on 11 S. Broadway St., helping treat those pesky aches and pains, taking X-rays, or mending those beaten up athletes after a game.

Doc D – as he his affectionately known – opened Louisburg Chiropractic Office 28 years ago and has served as the Louisburg High School athletic team doctor for almost that

same amount of time.

Dennis has seen it all. The walls in his office are lined with mementos from his years of service to both the community and the high school.

He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

On Saturday, he will officially leave Louisburg Chiropractic Office and hand the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis is also stepping away as LHS' team doctor and will leave an absence on the sidelines and behind the mic that many in Louisburg have come to know.

"My decision to step down and sell the practice has turned out to be the hardest thing I have ever done," Dennis said. "I have poured everything I have into my job and community. It has become my entire existence. I was taught from a young age to serve others and your community. I feel like the pressures I have put on myself have become unhealthy. I have put about 40 years work in to 28 and feel like there is never going to be a good time to make such a huge life change.

"That being said, I feel like I need to make changes while I am still able to do the things that will be best for my family. Dr. Polzin came along and I think he will carry on the work at the office wonderfully. We are a lot alike in many ways. I could not have found anyone better to replace me."

For many, Dennis has been a big part of people's lives, especially in the athletic arena. He has served as the LHS team doctor since 1992 and has treated many athletes in those 28 years.



Dennis (left) and Dr. Jake Polzin pose for a picture in their office. Polzin will officially take over the practice from Dennis after this week, but both have been seeing the patients the last three months.

During the school year, Dennis would leave his place of business every day after 3 to go to the high school to tape up athletes from all different sports and made sure they were all ready to go for practice. After that was over, he would rush back to his office to finish the day treating his patients.

It would be hectic life for some, but it is one that he has treasured for the last nearly three decades.

“My time in practice has been a blessing,” Dennis said. “I truly care about all of the patients and people in the community that I have been involved with. I have tried to be a positive impact on the town through my involvement in different organizations. As with any business, there are bumps in the road. I genuinely appreciate everyone who has had a positive impact on me through these years.

“I have poured my heart and soul in to every aspect of my business and involvement in the community, sometimes at the sacrifice of my wife, Karla. I am eternally grateful for her patience and love. Part of the reason why I am handing over the reigns is that I have a lot of making up for time to do.”



Damon Dennis (middle) walks out of the locker room with the Wildcat football coaches prior to a game.

Dennis and his family have made a lot of sacrifices during his

time and many of the Wildcat coaches – both former and present – appreciate what he has done for them and their players.

“As far as what he has meant to the community, it is immeasurable,” longtime former coach Gary Griffin said. “He came in the first year and made himself available to all the coaches and was there for whatever the kids needed from the medical stuff, to a new pair of shoes, or money to go to a team dinner. He was even there to lend an ear to a kid that was having issues from girlfriends, teacher issues or problems at home.

“For me personally, he was a cheerleader when times were not good, he was an advocate for kids when I didn’t always know what was going on behind the scenes. I trusted Doc like he was a member of the coaching staff. I told him a lot of things in confidence so I could get his advice knowing it would not go any further. As far as the community goes, he is a pillar and he is involved in everything and is held in high regards by most. It is really hard for Doc to tell anyone no, so most of his days are longer than just his office hours. Doc is going to be missed in so many ways. He is a very humble man and he is very deserving of slowing down and enjoying the fruits of his labor.”

A Small Beginning

Back in June of 1992 is when Dennis began to plant his roots in the town he would begin to call home.

Dennis purchased the small satellite office from Dr. Larry Fulk, who at the time also had a practice in Paola. Dennis was less than a year out of school and was eager to get involved in the Louisburg community.

Two months later, Dennis reached out to then Louisburg High School administrator Doug Chisam and asked if he could serve as the team’s doctor – free of charge. Since August of 1992,

Louisburg High School would not be the same.

Dennis made trips over to the high school for treatment and would also follow many of the team's to their games after work was over. It was a life that would go on to create many memories.

"Jim Knox, Don Meek and Doug Chisam were all very supportive and I am forever in their debt," Dennis said. "I started out just going to all games, home and away, and every sport that I could. At that time I was in the office from 6 am to 7 pm and then off to games 3-4 nights a week. The things I have always enjoyed about being the team doctor was the kids and the coaches. High school athletes have not changed since day one. They want someone who cares about and shows interest in what they are doing. I am still close with a lot of the students who have come through the high school and will continue to be.

"My role evolved over the years. I began doing all the taping before practice and games, Impact testing, announcing basketball and other roles as the coaches requested. I enjoy helping others and that is how my role evolved in to so many other areas. Over the years, the coaches have included me and I will always be grateful to them for allowing me to be a part of the experience."



Damon and his wife Karla pose for a picture in front of his office back in the early 90s.

His role got even bigger when the new high school was built and Dennis was asked if he would like to announce basketball games. He certainly didn't mind having a mic in his hand and loved playing off the crowd and making sure the athletes felt a little extra special.

"We had a girls' tournament and Dave Tappan asked me if I would announce the game," Dennis said. "He thought it would be a nice touch to have an announcer. I am not sure he ever asked me to continue, I just did it. I had to be at games anyway and I like to talk, so it worked out. Dave never said to quit, so I just kept doing it.

"I really did enjoy that. I would try to throw in a little funny once and awhile just to see if people were listening. Dottie Cook had a birthday every game night for several years. Knowing the kids so well, it was fun to add their middle name or nickname at the game."

Tappan, who is currently the USD 416 assistant superintendent, worked as the LHS activities director and principal during many of Dennis' years in Louisburg and the two became quick

friends.

With that, Tappan is well aware of Dennis' work ethic and commitment to Louisburg athletics. In fact, he has seen it firsthand.



Doc D lets out a cheer on the sidelines following a big play during the Wildcats' 2010 state championship game.

"Most people know that Doc doesn't take vacations very often," Tappan said. "In fact, it usually takes a team of us to get him out of the office for more than a day. But in 2010, he and Karla scheduled a trip over Thanksgiving break to Chicago. Well, that was also the year of our run to the state football championship and there was no way he was going to miss it. In typical Doc D fashion, he lined things up to perfection. He takes a 5 a.m. flight from Chicago to Kansas City, has Karla drive him to the Legends off of I-70 and at about 6:30 I'm

picking him up and we beat the team to Salina. When the bus finally rolls in, he looks at Coach (Gary) Griffin with a grin and says, 'What took you so long?' About four hours later we were celebrating a championship.

"The commitment that Doc D has demonstrated over the years to the students of Louisburg schools is second to none. From the football sidelines on a Friday night in the fall, to being behind the mic in the LHS gym during basketball season, Doc always supported the students, the coaches and the administration of USD 416. I am proud to call Damon Dennis my friend."

Beyond The Call of Duty

Running a business can be difficult enough, but when you have other responsibilities on top of all that, it can be stressful at times.

The coaches at Louisburg High School never got that when working with Doc D. Veteran and young coaches alike were amazed at the dedication he displayed.

"Doc D is one of the most honest and honorable men I have ever met," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "He has donated countless hours and years for helping Louisburg student athletes. He always went out of his way to help anyone and everyone. He wasn't always just helping players. He would always check in on the coaches as well – checking on their well-being, their teams, and their families.

"Doc always went out of his way to make someone feel important and special. He was NEVER too busy for anyone. He will be greatly missed and he is irreplaceable. Thank you Doc D for everything that you have done for my teams, my family and for myself. You are someone I am lucky enough to call a friend."

That dedication would not only be found after school in the evenings, but even before the sun came up as well.



Doc D checks out Louisburg's Hallie Hutsell following an injury during last soccer season.

"Doc D will be greatly missed," Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. "He unselfishly devoted many hours to our athletes and was always a phone call or a text away. I can't count how many times he would meet myself and an athlete or two at the school at 5:30 a.m. prior to departure for a volleyball tournament. Not only was he a great role model and mentor for the athletes, but he served as a great mentor to a young coach for the past 14 years. He will be greatly missed by many."

However, where Dennis is most recognized was on the football sidelines. He did anything from tending to injured athletes, mentoring future trainers and handing out free food or candy to the student section before certain games.

It wasn't gone unnoticed as many around the school and

community know what Doc D has meant to the district.

“If Louisburg had a Mt. Rushmore, Damon would definitely be up there,” Louisburg graduate and longtime coach Jeff Lohse said. “Doc is one of the most selfless people that I know. He was always more than willing to help anyone out and never expected anything in return. I consider Doc to be a great friend of mine and this is definitely bittersweet. I wish him and Karla nothing but the best as they open up this new chapter in their lives. Damon will be missed but his legacy in Louisburg will live on forever.”

Dennis always made sure to welcome the new coaches to the district and made them feel a part of the family and that was the case with boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel when he came to the school three years ago.



Doc D was presented with a team signed helmet following the team's award banquet two years ago.

"Doc D is the most selfless man I know," Pfannenstiel said. "What Doc gave to this school and community is unprecedented. He cared so much for all of our athletes, there's no way we are going to be able to replace what he brought to this school. I feel bad for whoever is going to come in and try to fill his shoes – he set the bar way too high."

Dennis has been on the sideline for many of Louisburg's greatest athletic achievements, including three state football appearances and has watched many athletes along the way achieve great individual accomplishments.

He knows that he has been blessed to be able to be a part of Wildcat athletics in one form or another the last 28 years.

“As for favorite memories, it is not always about the wins and losses,” Dennis said. “The things I have most enjoyed is the time spent with athletes and coaches. The things that go on in the locker room, before and after games were the fun part. I have had a behind the scenes view of some pretty amazing people.

“Obviously the 2010 state football championship is at the top of the list. We had gone to the championship twice and come home in second on two occasions. It was a great group to be around and a great experience. If I had to choose a group of kids that really stand out the most, it would be the seniors my first year here (class of 1993). They welcomed me with open arms and made me feel like I was appreciated. I still speak to members of that class often and consider them friends. It was a really special group. I also loved seeing kids accomplish their dreams of success. Louisburg has had its share of champions and athletes that have gone on to do some amazing things.”



Doc D was also good with equipment as he works on Madden Rutherford's helmet prior to a game.

In his last week at the office, Doc D has seen a lot of visitors that have come to thank him for everything he has done. Although Dennis won't be around as much as he used to, he wants people to know that this isn't a farewell – but more of a see you later.

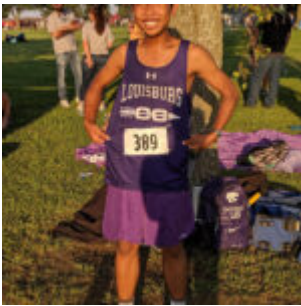
“I want everyone to know how much I appreciate their kind words,” Dennis said. “There has been talk of various activities surrounding my career change that have been proposed. While I genuinely appreciate this, I don't think I can handle the attention. My emotions have gotten the better of me and I am not sure that I can handle any celebrations publicly, unless everyone wants to see me cry.

“I am not going away. I just won't be at 11 South Broadway or at the high school every day. Thank you to everyone that has

supported me as I have made every effort to support my community.”

No, Doc – thank you...

2020 Senior Spotlight: Purno Sangma



Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.

As a foreign exchange student from Bangladesh, Purno Sangma wanted to absorb everything he could at Louisburg High School.

One of those things happened to be running.

Sangma joined the cross country team last fall and was excited to see what he could do on the track team this season, along with what the experience would be like.

“I’ve always loved running, so I was really looking forward to the short distance sprint events in track because I’m more comfortable doing them,” Sangma said. “I’ve been running my whole life – not in a sports related way – but in general just to have fun and clear my mind. Sometimes I run when I’m in a

hurry and late for school.”

Being from a different country can be nerve-racking enough, but it is quite another when a pandemic is going on around you. The spread of COVID-19 not only cancelled the track season, but also his final two months of high school.

Sangma has had to put some of those friendships and experiences on hold for now as the country tries to figure out what to do next.

“I was really sad and frustrated that the school and the season were cancelled,” Sangma said. “I have a few good friends in the track team and I wanted to do the season with all of them. I was really sad to miss prom and not being able to complete my classes. I’ve been trying to keep a positive idea about everything that has happened.

“I have been in contact with my family back home on a weekly basis, but they’re not concerned about me that much because Louisburg is a pretty small town.”

Although it hasn’t necessarily been in the sports arena, Sangma has left his mark at LHS, especially in the music department. He has been a member of the choir and also earned a spot in the musical last year.

Not only that, but Sangma could many times be found performing the national anthem before different sporting events throughout the year.

“I actually loved being able to sing the national anthem of the United States of America,” Sangma said. “It’s actually a great privilege given to me as a foreign exchange student to be able to sing it. It wasn’t actually difficult for me. I looked forward to all the days I got to sing the anthem.”

Even with all chaos of the last two months, Sangma has relished his time in Louisburg and he is looking forward to

what lies ahead.

“I have loved every second I’ve spent here as a foreign exchange student,” Sangma said. “I met amazing teachers and made really good friends. Everything that I’ve done in my exchange year I won’t take it back.”

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Purno on how he has been coping with an early end to his senior year and some of his other interests. Here are his responses from the rest of our Q&A.

LSZ: What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

PS: I miss my friends from school, my classes – choir especially – and the teachers a lot.

LSZ: What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

PS: I think the times I spent in cross country. Cross country was hard, but it was really rewarding. I had the best time with my teammates and coach (John) Reece.

LSZ: What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

PS: I love being involved in music activities.

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

PS: After graduation, I’ll be working to go to college at Johnson County Community College and then to KU, hopefully.

LSZ: What accomplishments that don’t involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

PS: That has to be doing the musical last year. I never knew I could do the musical.

LSZ: What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

PS: I like taking risks with people.

Purno's Favorites

Pro athlete: Lionel Messi

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: None

Movie: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2

TV Show: Glee

Song: Anchor by Novo Amor

Band/Musician: Novo Amor

Pregame meal/snack: Trolli Sour Bites

Class/subject: Choir

Teacher and why? Mrs. Alison Moore – she has been one of the most amazing people I've met this year.

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball
Michael Waldron – Track and Field
Avery O’Meara – Soccer
Ryan Haight – Golf
Andie Masten – Soccer
Lauren Cutshaw – Softball
Trent Martin – Track and Field
Erin Lemke – Soccer
Luke Wickersham – Golf
Skylar Bowman – Soccer
Gabby Dugger – Softball
Sydni Keagle – Track
Olivia Chase – Soccer
Colin Cook – Golf
Morgan Messer – Soccer
August Daniels – Softball
Carter Anglin – Track and Field
Hannah Straub – Soccer
Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball
Madden Rutherford – Baseball
Lily McDaniel – Soccer
Garrett Harding – Track

Mackenzie Scholtz – Soccer

Calvin Dillon – Golf

Kat Coolidge – Softball

Charlie Koontz – Track

Ashley Moore – Soccer

Carlee Gassman – Track

2020 Senior Spotlight: Carlee Gassman



Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.

From the day she joined the Louisburg track and field team, Carlee Gassman made an impact for the Lady Cats.

After joining the team as a sophomore, Gassman would go on to break the 300-meter hurdle record four times that season and finish as the state runner-up in the event, along with medaling in the long jump. A year ago, Gassman captured three more state medals and a fourth place finish in the 300

hurdles.

Those two years with the Lady Cat program has given Gassman a multitude of memories to look back on and she was looking to add many more for her senior campaign.

“During the winter months, track is all I thought about and I had already started my training,” Gassman said. “So to say I was looking forward to track is an understatement. I was already in track season working towards my goals that I had set for myself. With this season being my last, I had set some very ambitious goals. I had talked to coach and I really wanted to see what I was capable of doing in the 800-meter run. I have never ran an 800 in my whole track career so I was curious and set a very ambitious goal, along with my goals for the 300 hurdles.”

The 300 hurdles has provided Gassman the most success, and it is the hurdles she will continue to do when she moves on to college at Northern Iowa. It is an event that fuels her drive to succeed.

“No doubt the 300 hurdles is my favorite race, as it brings so much joy to myself,” Gassman said. “I had some pretty ambitious expectations. I wanted to set a new school record and I most definitely had a state title in my eyes. After my 300 hurdle state race last year, I was very disappointed in my performance, only because the girl who won the race ran a slower time than my PR and that was really frustrating to me.

“I was also happy that it set off a spark in myself and gave me the confidence that I needed to know that I could be standing where she was this year. I also knew I needed to work on some things and change some of my training strategies.”

Gassman made some of those important changes and was ready to take off for the 2020 season, but it was ultimately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That meant the final two months

of her senior year was gone, including her final track season.

“I’ll be completely honest, I haven’t always liked school, so to hear that school was cancelled didn’t bother me as much,” Gassman said. “I was homeschooled until sixth grade, so it’s kinda fitting to end my senior year with online school at home. But I will say that when I heard the news of school cancelling, I actually cried because I knew that was the end of track and it only just started. I would have much rather suffered through school, knowing that I would still have a track season.”

It has been a rough couple months as Gassman knows she was supposed to be using this week to prepare for the state track meet this weekend in Wichita. Instead, she has those memories to help get her through it.

“I love everything that comes with participating in track,” Gassman said. “With that being said, I have to say my favorite memory and or moment is simple – everything that happens while being a part of the track team. Every practice and meet is so memorable and so much fun. The track team is one big family and I love how everyone cheers for each other during races and how we push each other during practices. Also, if it wasn’t for Sydni Keagle, I wouldn’t have had so many fond moments while participating in track the last two years.”

Gassman’s track career is far from over, however. She will make the transition to Division I track in college next year and is excited to continue her journey one hurdle at a time.

“I never ran hurdles in middle school because my coach wanted me to run relays,” Gassman said. “However, my freshman year of high school I had an amazing coach, she believed in me and pushed me to be the hurdler I am today. At that time, I lived in Iowa and they didn’t run 300 hurdles, instead they ran 400 hurdles. It was the beginning of track season and Bart came over to me and asked if I wanted to try hurtling and

of course I was intrigued. After that practice, I absolutely feel in love with them.

“Track is a huge part of my life and I’m blessed to be able to say I get to continue my track adventure in college. Track has been the best way I cope with things and how I make friends. I wouldn’t be who I am today without having participated in track for those six years.”

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Carlee on how she has been coping with an early end to her senior year and some of her other interests. Here are her responses from the rest of our Q&A.

LSZ: What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

CG: I have been missing track practices the most honestly, along with Sydni Keagle. She always brings so much joy to my days. I also miss Tom (Koontz) and the hurdle practices. When all three of us are together we have a lot of fun and I wish we could have continued our water spitting war to see who would have won at the end of the school year.

LSZ: What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

CG: Most memorable moment as an athlete – you would think would be when I placed second in hurdles at the state meet. However, when I read this question my mind went straight to a soccer tournament I participated in a few years ago. The tournament was called Iowa games and I just remember having so much fun and I didn’t want it to end. Each game we played was thrilling.

LSZ: What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

CG: I don’t have many hobbies outside of sports, but I do

enjoy taking photos of my siblings at their athletic events. I also love to walk for hours and I enjoy teaching myself American Sign Language.

LSZ: I know you are going to Northern Iowa next year, but with everything going on, have you been able to do much to stay shape and train for track?

CG: I have most definitely been able to stay in track shape. My dad crafted some hurdles out of blocks of wood and I have been using those to continue my hurdle training. With all this time I have on my hands, I have been running a lot actually. Living across from the lake has also been very beneficial. I have gone over and measured out 200 to 400 meters and ran repeats as a workout. I have college to look forward to, but my dad knew how disappointed I was and so we have scheduled our own track meet to end my senior year. Not sure where this track meet is going to be held but its keeping me motivated and will be a lot of fun.

LSZ: What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

CG: My greatest accomplishment outside of athletics is most definitely my decision to get baptized at the age of 12.

LSZ: What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

CG: Probably that I was home-schooled until my sixth grade year.

Carlee's Favorites

Pro athlete: Tom Brady

Pro team: New England Patriots

College team: University of Northern Iowa

Movie: Footloose (1984)

TV Show: Friends

Song: Collide by Jars of Clay, Restless by Switchfoot or Forget And Not Slow Down by Reliant K

Band/Musician: Jars of Clay, Switchfoot and Reliant K

Pregame meal/snack: Blueberry bagel with ham on it

Class/subject: Science

Teacher and why? Andy Wright – I don't have him as a teacher, but it always brings me joy when I see him in the hallway.

Previous Senior Spotlights

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Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

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Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer

Garrett Harding – Track

Mackenzie Scholtz – Soccer

Calvin Dillon – Golf

Kat Coolidge – Softball

Charlie Koontz – Track

Ashley Moore – Soccer

2020 Senior Spotlight: Charlie Koontz



Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.

To say Charlie Koontz had a memorable junior season, might be an understatement.

Koontz, who was a sprinter on the Louisburg boys track and field team, found his way to the medal stand at state and left his mark on the Wildcat program. Koontz, along with Blue Caplinger, Justin Collins and Ben Wiedenmann broke the school record in the 4×100-meter relay at the Class 4A regional meet last May.

Then a week later, Koontz garnered a medal as the same four runners took fifth at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita. It was one of many big moments for the Wildcat track team.

Koontz was ready to make it an even better season in 2020 as the Wildcats saw their numbers rise and planned to score points in many of the events.

“This season was going to be really good for us considering we still have a bunch of speed and other weapons,” Koontz said.

“There were a lot of kids that were going to step up and possibly help us out in the long run as the season went along.

“I was really looking forward to this year’s season and it was going to be a lot of fun. We were basically going to do what we did last season and try and better ourselves every day. The ultimate goal is always making it to state.”

That was the plan this season as the Wildcats were ready to make some noise at the end of the year. They returned several state qualifiers from their 2019 team and had goals of medaling at state in numerous events in 2020.

Unfortunately, nothing went according to plan this spring as sports across the country were cancelled due to COVID-19.

The news was frustrating, to say the least, for all the seniors involved but Koontz realizes it is a situation that is out of his control.

“With the cancellation of everything, you can’t really do much besides just accept what happened and roll with it,” Koontz said. “Everything will sort out eventually. It’s a bummer and no student should have their senior year cut short unwillingly, but there’s a first for everything.”

Track has been a sport that Koontz has been involved in since middle school and participated in many different events along the way. I was also something that got him ready for his favorite sport – football.

“I’ve participated in track ever since seventh grade and I had tried long jump, high jump and all the sprinting events and I enjoyed it so I stuck with it,” Koontz said. “I did pole vault in eighth grade and that was pretty fun. In high school, I did it because I liked it and it was fun and it also kept me in shape for football.”

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to

catch up with Charlie on how he has been coping with an early end to his senior year and some of his other interests. Here are his responses from the rest of our Q&A.

LSZ: What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

CK: I've probably missed the social atmosphere and just the way things were, things are just weird now.

LSZ: What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

CK: My most memorable moment at this school was my junior year when we beat Paola in football, 25-7. That was just so much fun and something I will never forget.

LSZ: What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

CK: My favorite thing to do outside of sports is probably fishing or hunting. My dad introduced me to all that and ever since it's become a big part of my life. I love being outside and I'm just so lucky enough to be able to share unforgettable memories, see amazing things, and do stuff that a lot of people never get to experience.

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

CK: I plan to attend the University of Kansas to major in biology or pre-med.

LSZ: What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

CK: Some accomplishments other than in athletics would be that I've been on the Principal's Honor Roll throughout high school. I've done my best to maintain good grades and I've done pretty good at it, so I feel accomplished with that.

LSZ: What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

CK: Most people don't know that I can do a back flip and other stuff like that.

Charlie's Favorites

Pro athlete: Troy Polamalu

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: Kansas State Football

Movie: Dances With Wolves

TV Show: Supernatural

Song: California Love by 2Pac

Band/Musician: Jimi Hendrix or AC/DC

Pregame meal/snack: Pasta

Class/subject: Any kind of history

Teacher and why? Mr. Ebenstein, because I've spent the most time around him with football and all that compared to the other teachers. I know for a fact he will do just about anything for the people he cares about and he is just one of the best guys I've ever met.

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O’Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer

Garrett Harding – Track

Mackenzie Scholtz – Soccer

Calvin Dillon – Golf

Kat Coolidge – Softball

2020 Senior Spotlight: Garrett Harding



Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.

For the longest time, baseball has always been Garrett Harding's sport in the spring and summertime.

It was something he grew up playing, but during his senior year at Louisburg High School, Harding wanted to change it up and do something a little different.

Enter track.

Harding decided to put baseball on the backburner and give

track a try – more specifically the shot put. He wanted a different challenge in his life.

“I was looking forward to experiencing something new and proving to myself that I can be good at whatever I really try to do,” Harding said.

After the first couple weeks of practice, Harding was beginning to get the hang of it as he tried to learn as much about the shot put as he could in a short amount of time.

“Last year during baseball season a few things happened that made me not want to play anymore so I decided to try something new,” Harding said. “Track was a lot of fun and I was progressing my technique pretty rapidly to where I believe I was throwing the farthest already in shot.”

Unfortunately, Harding will not get the opportunity to see how it all would have turned out as his senior season was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Harding was a part of a talented boys team that had a chance to compete toward the top of the Frontier League and regionals as the Wildcats returned several state qualifiers from a year ago.

“This year would have been a great season for track with Michael (Waldron) doing javelin and all the runners coming back,” Harding said. “In shot, I feel like we would have been very competitive, especially in the throwers relay.”

The absence of a spring season has left athletes around the country heartbroken, but Harding is trying to make the best of a bad situation. He was one of the Frontier League’s top players this season in football and was recently selected to play in the Kansas Shrine Bowl in July.

Although that game is still in limbo as the Shrine Bowl is trying to find a new facility to host the event, Harding can

only focus on what he can control.

“It hasn’t been too bad for me,” Harding said of the time off. “I have had more time to lift weights and have made a jump in my maxes. I also have had time to run and also spend time with my family. It is disappointing that some of the stuff I was looking forward to senior year has been canceled, but it’s out of my control, so I have been just doing what I can.”

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Garrett on how he has been coping with an early end to his senior year and some of his other interests. Here are his responses from the rest of our Q&A.

LSZ: What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

GH: I miss being away from my friends and I especially miss pestering Coach Skakal.

LSZ: What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

GH: My most memorable moment was when we were in the locker room right before the Paola game my junior year. The biggest game of the year between two undefeated teams for the Frontier League championship. I was never more focused and determined in my life than at that point.

LSZ: What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

GH: I’d say my favorite activity is hanging out with friends, but that is everyone’s. I do enjoy kayaking and just being near or on the water.

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

GH: I am going to play football at Truman State University and pursue a degree in Business Administration/Management and

Finance. After that I want to go to graduate school and get my MBA.

LSZ: What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

GH: Well when people call me dumb because I did something stupid, I like to tell them that I am a duly elected National Honor Society officer. I'm also proud of my FBLA accomplishments because it shows how much my team and I can work together and problem solve.

LSZ: What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

GH: I was on a billboard for St. Joseph West Hospital when I was just born. (Not even 24 hours old) The billboard was up for a few years and it was outside of St. Louis.

Garrett's Favorites

Pro athlete: Anthony Sherman

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: Kansas State

Movie: Battleship

TV Show: The Ranch

Song: T-R-O-U-B-L-E by Travis Tritt

Band/Musician: Kenny Chesney

Pregame meal/snack: Ibuprofen

Class/subject: History

Teacher and why? Coach E (Ebenstein) is my favorite because he is basically a high schooler just in an adult body.

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer

LHS sports preparing to start back up in June with summer workouts



Kansas high school sports has been absent since the middle of March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but that all could change very soon.

During its board of directors meeting earlier this month, the Kansas State High School Activities Association made a change to its summer regulations. Starting on June 1, school employed coaches may begin summer programs as long as it is permitted by the community's health authorities and the school district.

Coaches at Louisburg High School are making plans to move forward beginning the first of June, but they must meet some guidelines to do so.

In the first two calendar weeks in June, athletes will need to attend a conditioning session each day. Those must be completed to be able to participate in a coach's camp or organized competition.

If an athlete is playing football, they must complete an extra five days of conditioning before being able to participate in competition.

The first two weeks of conditioning sessions will not involve weights, indoor facilities or sporting equipment to ensure safety. Masks will be optional at workouts, but six feet of distance will be in place along with no more than the 90 gathering restriction under the phase 3 guidelines put out by the state.

Then on June 15, barring no setbacks, conditioning will include indoor weight sessions and indoor facilities will be allowed. Coaches will also be able to hold camps and competition throughout the summer.



Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein has plotted out summer workouts for his football team beginning with three weeks of conditioning starting June 1

“I think the guidelines were set to help ensure the safety of all student athletes accords the state, along with their physical health as well as the preparation for the season,” Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. “Challenges may be there, but overall they are irrelevant as all the teams in the state have to follow the same guidelines. Our school administrators have been very supportive throughout this process.”

Along with the new changes, KSHSAA also lifted the moratorium period at the end of the summer and will allow teams to practice all the way up to the beginning of the school year. Fall sports, however, will take precedence from Aug. 1 through Aug. 15.

For some programs, the changes won't be much different as what they have experienced in the past, other than practicing social distancing through the first two weeks of conditioning.

"We are still allowed to compete in leagues and camps after all athletes have completed 10 days of conditioning/training," Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. "Our summer weights program is changing some this summer, so it gives the players a chance to acclimate back into workouts before putting a ball in their hands.

"When you really look at the schedule, we lost the first two weeks in June (in terms of volleyball skill work), but we gained the moratorium week and have full contact until August 16. The fall season starts on August 17. Normally, we can't have contact, outside of weights and conditioning, after mid-July. This actually gives us about four weeks on the back end of summer to work with the athletes."



Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment has her normal summer scheduled planned out despite a different start.

Still, the new-look summer won't be without its challenges – especially in the first 10 days of the summer calendar. However, the coaches and athletes will gladly work around the new rules in order to get back together and competing again.

“I think the new guidelines will help kids get back to some normalcy as long as everything continues to get better, but the six feet of social distancing could be challenging when you are coaching a team sport,” Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. “We will find a way to overcome these challenges and help the kids develop as much as possible.”

Coaches have already altered their camp schedules for the summer, and that information, along with a list of camps, can be found [here](#).

As for Louisburg cross country, the runners will also be going through a conditioning period like everyone else. They will meet at the football practice field at 7 a.m. for an hour every morning beginning June 1 and that will continue through the summer.

Since school has been out since the middle of March, coaches have tried to find a way to stay in touch with their players – and like with online schooling – the zoom platform has been a big help for coaches.

“Football has been doing online zoom workout together for those currently in high school every Monday, Wednesday and Friday while we have been out of school, so I have still been seeing them and they have been doing some cardio,” Ebenstein said. “We have as normal of a summer planned as possible. We will have our weights sessions, our team camp, review/skills night, and we will have our contact camp that KSHSAA is allowing.”

With everything going on around the state and the country, everything is still in limbo and dates could have to be altered once again depending on what local officials decide. Even with all that, the coaches believe there will be a fall season.



Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley has tried to keep many of his same events for both the boys and girls teams.

“I am confident our fall season will be played,” Conley said “It may have some things that are different, but we will play. I know that the boys are very anxious in having conversations with some of them.”

Many of the coaches and players are just ready to return to some kind of routine following the spread of COVID-19 and they hope sports can give that to them.

“As of right now, our season is scheduled, and we’ll plan accordingly if told differently,” Compliment said. “But for right now, (activities director Michael) Pickman has stressed that for most of the athletes, a return to summer weights/conditioning/activities will be their first taste of ‘normalcy.’ I’m excited to get back at it and see the athletes

and students again.”

2020 Senior Spotlight: Carter Anglin



Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.

Carter Anglin was all geared up for his final season of track and he did the summer workouts to prove it.

Anglin, who throws the discus for the Wildcat track team, dedicated his offseason to getting better in the event and was poised to earn a spot at the state meet for the first time. He wanted to end his high school career on the best note possible in an event that had become a big part of his life.

“I’ve been throwing discus since seventh grade and I don’t really know how I got into it,” Anglin said. “It just always looked fun to me. It has become a huge part of my life and I’ve committed countless hours towards perfecting the technique. Last summer, I attended multiple summer camps to improve my skills and prepare for my last track season. One of these camps was a week-long camp at KU where I trained with former Olympians.”

He was also a member of a boys team that had the potential to have a lot of success in 2020 as the Wildcats returned several state qualifiers. It was supposed to be a season to remember.

Unfortunately for Anglin and the rest of his teammates, their season never really got started as it was cancelled due to the spread of COVID-19. Anglin and the rest of the Wildcat seniors will never get a chance at that last one opportunity at state.

“It has been extremely hard to cope with the fact that I don’t get to finish my senior year, especially since it’s something that I’ve been looking forward to forever,” Anglin said. “As far as the throwers go, we had a good chance at being extremely successful in all three events. Michael Waldron, Jay Scollin, Cole Evans and I all had potential to place at all of our varsity meets and get plenty of points for the team.”

Even with all the bad moments currently, Anglin is still trying to find the positives and think about the good times, including when he took gold at the Louisburg Invitational.



Photo by Jennifer Mullinax

Louisburg senior Carter Anglin was the team's top returning discus thrower and was hoping for his first trip to state.

"My favorite moment from track has been taking first place in discus at our home meet last year with my personal best throw," Anglin said. "I was looking forward to this season so much, especially considering I had a good shot at qualifying for state for my first time.

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Carter on how he has been coping with an early end to his senior year and some of his other interests. Here are his responses from the rest of our Q&A.

LSZ: What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

CA: Track season is probably what I have been missing the most, I met all my best friends through track and it's the season that I look forward to the most every year and the one season where I get to see all my friends every day.

LSZ: What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

CA: Marching in the Rose Parade with the band is definitely my most memorable moment since it was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

LSZ: What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

CA: Working on, reading about, messing around with, or anything else that involves cars. It has been a passion of mine for a long time and I hope to have a career in automotive technology in my future.

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

CA: I plan to attend McPherson College to study Automotive Restoration and eventually pursue a career in the automotive field.

LSZ: What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

CA: Being inducted into the National Honor Society, obtaining the rank of Eagle Scout, and being awarded a number of college scholarships purely based on my ACT score and GPA. I think all the achievements demonstrate perseverance and hard work and it feels great to be recognized for that hard work.

LSZ: What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

CA: My parents took me to Vegas for my 16th birthday.

Carter's Favorites

Pro athlete: Ken Block

Pro team: Kansas City Royals

College team: Pitt State Gorillas

Movie: Talladega Nights

TV Show: Breaking Bad

Song: Second Chance by Shinedown

Band/Musician: Shinedown

Pregame meal/snack: Footlong turkey and cheese Subway sandwich

Class/subject: Algebra

Teacher and why: Mr. E (Ebenstein) because I admire the way that he makes something as boring as Government fun.

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

**Gassman excited for
opportunity at Northern Iowa**



Louisburg senior Carlee Gassman, who recorded three state medals last year and is the school's record holder in the 300 hurdles, signed to run track at the University of Northern Iowa on April 20.

As a freshman in high school, Carlee Gassman knew what her ideal college was, but at that time there were a lot of unknowns.

A lot can happen in three years. For Gassman, however, everything seemed to fall into place.

The Louisburg senior found her perfect school and will get the opportunity to compete in the athletic arena on top of it all. Gassman made it all official on April 20 when she had a signing ceremony outside of Louisburg High School and signed her letter of intent to run track at the University Northern Iowa, a Division I program in the Missouri Valley Conference.

"I was a freshman and my best friend and I at the time really wanted to be teachers, and if you know anything about UNI it's that they have the best teaching program," Gassman said. "That's really when I started dreaming of running at UNI. My best friend and I are now going to college together and I get to compete in the 400 hurdles. How could it get better? It was always a dream to run in college, but I wouldn't say at a D1 level. I honestly don't care at what level as long as I'm able to continue to hurdle."

She will definitely be able to do that as Gassman made a name for herself when she joined the Wildcat track team as a sophomore. Early in that sophomore year, Gassman went on to

break the school record on four different occasions in the 300-meter hurdles and finished at second at state.

As a junior, Gassman earned three state medals, including a fourth place finish in the 300 hurdles and had hoped to compete for a state title in the event this year before spring sports were cancelled due to the spread of COVID-19.

All that success led to options for different college choices for Gassman, but in the end there was one that stood out among the rest.



Carlee Gassman (middle) signed her letter of intent with her family in attendance to run track at the University of Northern Iowa. Seated next to Carlee are her parents Tara and Brent Gassman. Standing (from left) is her sister Bree and her brother Cade.

“It honestly wasn’t that hard of a decision,” Gassman said. “After I visited UNI I already knew that’s where I wanted to continue my adventures. I did have another college interested in my athletics and what was appealing about that one is I would’ve been able to compete in both track and soccer. Being

able to play soccer and run track in college made the decision a bit harder.

“However, they didn’t have my major and I would’ve had to take some rough paths to get to where I wanted to go. And with UNI they offered the exact major I wanted so I chose my education over athletics and I couldn’t be happier. The only downfall is I’ll be five hours away from my family.”

Currently, Gassman is trying to get in as much training as she can as she begins her transition from the 300 hurdles to the 400’s in college. There could also be other options for her once she arrives on campus.

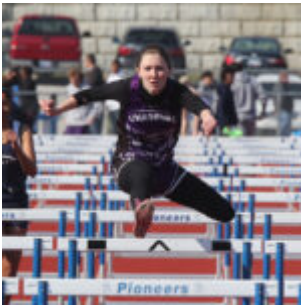
“As of right now I’m not sure what they are going to have me do,” she said. “I know 400 hurdles is my top event and I could be doing some long jumping and 800s. As of right now everything is on schedule and hopefully it stays that way.

“Right now I’m on the bubble of being able to score points for the team, so my top goal is to bring my time down in the 400 hurdles to be able to score points. I would also like to see what I can do in the 800.”

Education was also a big factor in her decision and Northern Iowa seemed like the perfect fit for Gassman.

“UNI is not too big and not too small,” she said. “It’s location was also appealing to me and having extended family around there is an extra bonus. Another thing that makes UNI such a great fit is the major I want to go into. At UNI, they offer the nitty gritty specifics that go along to my major. I want to go into communication disorders specializing in American Sign Language. I imagine myself teaching children in the deaf community or even being an interpreter and they have a clear cut path for that.”

2020 Senior Spotlight: Sydni Keagle



Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.

Sydni Keagle loved soccer – in fact – it was her favorite sport all the way up through middle school.

However, when she reached the seventh-grade, she wanted to give track a try. She looked at the hurdles, and although it would be challenging, she thought she might be able to have some success in it.

Not everyone had the same views Keagle had.

“I mentioned to someone that I was interested in trying them and was told that it probably wouldn’t end well,” Keagle said. “I was a pretty clumsy and uncoordinated person at that time so it kind of made sense.”

Six years later, everything seemed to turn out just fine for Keagle and her hurdling adventure.

Last season, the Louisburg senior became the school record holder in the 100-meter hurdles and qualified for state for

the first time. It was a year to remember for Keagle and she was looking to make more memories for her senior season.

Keagle was one of many key pieces to the Louisburg girls track and field team this year and some preseason rankings had the Lady Cats ranked in the top five in the state with several returning state qualifiers.

“I remember still being in volleyball season and asking Carlee Gassman if she was as ready for our last season as I was,” Keagle said. “Ever since the end of state, I had been physically and mentally preparing to put in the work to not only qualify for state again, but also place and earn an individual state medal.

“There was a good chance that we could send multiple girls to state and we had the goal of placing this year. This season would have been one of the best that our team has had in a long time and we were all so excited to compete.”

Like all the other schools across the state, the spread COVID-19 took away those goals and potential memories with the cancellation of spring sports. The news hit everyone hard and Keagle was no different.

“I actually found out in a text from Delaney (Wright) to Rain (Pugh), Carlee and I,” Keagle said. “She sent a message saying how much fun she had with all of us and that she would miss us and wished we could have had one more season. Immediately after I read the words, I started crying to the point where I couldn’t stop. A little while later I realized that no track meant no school, and no school meant no prom and then it was just one thing after another that just had a snowball effect on my emotions.

“I talked to the girls for a while and it made me feel a little better but it was hard to really grasp that the whole year was over. I’m now at the point that I’ve accepted what’s happening and have started to just focus on school and

spending time with family.”



Photo by Kristin Davis

Louisburg senior Sydni Keagle was hoping for her first state medal in the 100 hurdles this season.

Keagle had quite the junior season as she not only broke the school record in the 100 hurdles, she was also a part of the team's 4x100-meter relay that finished fourth in the state. She also came within one spot of taking a state medal in the hurdles after she came in ninth.

That one spot had been a motivator for Keagle going into the 2020 season as she was hoping to get on the state medal stand in her favorite event. Still, she has plenty of memories during her time with Louisburg track and is excited for what is to come – including a spot on the Southwest Baptist University track team.

“My favorite part of track is the people,” Keagle said. “I don’t remember most of the workouts we did in practice, but I remember running with Delaney Wright, Rain Pugh and Carlee Gassman and how even when we were all out of breath and wheezing we could still manage to make each other laugh. The people are what make track fun and worth participating in. Even if I’m warming up for an individual event, 99 percent of the time there is another teammate either warming up with me or talking to me to calm my nerves.

“Track has definitely become a big part of my life, and while I don’t practice year-round it is the thing that I have set the most goals for. It has also become a big part of my family’s life, especially during season. They come to every meet they can and have supported me through all of my ups and downs. Without them, I seriously doubt that I would have come as far as I have in just a few years.”

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Sydni on how she has been coping with an early end to her senior year and some of her other interests. Here are her responses from the rest of our Q&A.

LSZ: What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

SK: I’ve mostly been missing the opportunity to spend time with friends and actually see people. There are ways to still talk to them and communicate through technology, but it’s not the same as being able to hang out in person.

LSZ: What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why

SK: My most memorable moment was when I not only qualified for state but also broke the school record for the 100 hurdles in the same race. The reason it was such a big deal was because my original goal was to qualify for state junior year and then break the school record by the end of my senior year and I was

able to do both at the same time. It was unexpected and exciting.

LSZ: What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

SK: I really enjoy reading because it's a chance for me to slow down and just relax for a while. I don't have to worry about anything other than the story I'm reading and I can take a break from everything else I have going on.

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

SK: I plan to go to Southwest Baptist University and study Elementary Education so that I can teach kindergarten or first grade. I also plan to run track.

LSZ: What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

SK: The accomplishments that I am most proud of are maintaining my grades throughout high school and being a member of National Honor Society. I'm usually pretty busy during the week so being able to have good grades, while still participating in athletics, going to church and volunteering, babysitting, and spending time with family, is something I'm really proud of.

LSZ: What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

SK: I was a dancer for six years when I was younger. I did ballet, jazz, and tap, but tap was my favorite.

Sydni's Favorites

Pro athlete: Stephen Curry

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: KU Basketball

Movie: Aladdin

TV Show: Gilmore Girls

Song: If Today Was Your Last Day by Nickelback

Band/Musician: Jonas Brothers

Pregame meal/snack: Gatorade and a Subway sandwich

Class/subject: History

Teacher and why: Mrs. Quinn. She has been my advisory teacher for the past four years and I also had her for AP Lang, but she always makes a point to ask how I'm doing and to check in with me when she can tell that I maybe haven't had the best day. She also keeps me on task and makes sure I have all my work done.

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball