

Wright named Class 4A Boys Track and Field Coach of the Year



Louisburg boys track and field coach Andy Wright was all smiles after winning the Class 4A state championship. He was recently named as the Class 4A Coach of the Year.

The Louisburg boys track and field team had an historical 2021 season as the Wildcats won their second-ever state track championship.

A couple months later, the Wildcat team is reaping rewards from that special season – more specifically, Andy Wright.

Wright was named as the Class 4A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Cross Country and Track and Field Coaches Association. He guided the Wildcats to their first state track title in 10 years.

“Receiving the 4A Coach of the Year was is an absolutely incredible honor,” Wright said. “But I feel like this award really is a credit to the athletes and the entire coaching staff. The athletes were absolutely amazing to work with, and the coaching staff did a fantastic job of having each athlete prepared to do their best.

“It was an unforgettable season for many reasons, and this award just adds to it. I couldn’t be more proud of the athletes and coaches that were part of it.”

Louisburg edged out Andale to win the state title as the Wildcats secured it in the final event of the 4A meet in Wichita.

Tom Koontz won the team's lone state title in the 110-meter hurdles, but the Wildcats earned state medals in 12 of the 18 events.

Wright just completed his fourth season as the boys head coach.

Alyse Moore named 2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Success has seemed to follow Alyse Moore wherever she goes.

It isn't by chance, however – Moore has made her own luck.

Whether it was helping the Louisburg girls basketball team to its best finish in school history, eclipsing the 500 rebound plateau or earning a state medal and breaking the school record in the javelin, Moore had a big year for Wildcat athletics.

Those were just some of the reasons Moore was named the 2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

“It means everything to me to be honored as the Female Athlete of the Year,” Moore said. “I am super thankful to have gotten the opportunity to be an athlete at Louisburg and it is great to be able to be rewarded for that.”

Moore began the school year as the starting outside hitter for the Louisburg volleyball team and ended as an honorable mention All-Frontier League player.

She was second on the Lady Cats with 174 kills and also played well on defense as she was second on the team with 195 digs. She also had 19 aces.



“Alyse is an extremely hard worker and was a joy to coach for four years,” former Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. “Her hard work and leadership paid off as a multi-sport athlete, and I enjoyed seeing her excel in each sport. She had a way of bringing out the best in her teammates

and pushed herself and her teammates to be the best they could be. Alyse is very deserving of this award, and I am very happy for her.”

On the basketball court, Moore made an even bigger impact as she helped the Lady Cats to a third place finish at the Class 4A state tournament, which the program’s best finish in school history. It was also the first state appearance for the program in 47 years.

Along with eclipsing the 500 career rebound mark, Moore was also an honorable mention all-league player. She led Louisburg in rebounding with 8.6 boards a game to go along with 7.3 points and 1.7 steals.

She also earned honorable mention all-state honors from Sports in Kansas and the Wichita Eagle.

“Alyse is very talented in several different sports, but I feel Alyse is deserving because of her hard work and effort,” Louisburg basketball coach Adrienne Lane said. “No matter what season, Alyse would work hard and contribute to her team. It was an honor coaching Alyse in basketball. She would do whatever the team needed to win and she set a great example for everyone with her effort in practice and her positive attitude.”



It was that tournament run that stuck out to Moore the most and it was a time she will never forget.

“I would have to say my all time favorite memory from this year was the Labette County game that brought us to Salina,” Moore said of the team’s state quarterfinal win. “I have never played in such a loud and fun environment and I am so lucky to have been able to have that experience and get to be in the final four with all of my best friends. I will remember that moment for the rest of my life.”

That success continued over to the javelin as Moore recorded her state straight state medal in the event as she finished fourth. In the process, Moore also broke a 20-year-old school record with a throw of 149 feet.

Next season, Moore will throw for the University of Kansas track and field team as she continues to try and improve in an

event she just started trying three years ago.

“Alyse is an amazing student-athlete,” Louisburg girls track coach John Reece said. “She has a great work ethic and that carries over into competition and her leadership as a teammate. She was always willing to put in the extra time needed to make herself even better. This showed with her breaking a longtime javelin record and competing on the big stage at the state meet.

“Since having her in the classroom to now, she has held a high standard for herself and has achieved great things. She will be an asset at the next level and I expect to read about her doing great things in the future.”



Moore also made a little more history following the team's state tournament run in basketball. She became the first female athlete in school history to participate in four

different state athletic events.

As a sophomore in 2019, she went to state in both softball and track. Moore has also placed at the state tournament with both the volleyball and basketball teams.

“To be able to be the first female athlete in school history to participate in the state tournament in four different sports is honestly a dream come true,” Moore said. “It is an amazing opportunity to be able to compete at the state tournament even once, and to be able to do that in four different sports makes me beyond proud. I couldn’t have done it without my coaches and my teammates and I can’t thank them enough.”

Playing in multiple sports has taught Moore different things when it came to competing and other aspects of team sports. It was a memorable four years for the recent Louisburg grad.

“Each sport is slightly different in their own way, but I love each and every one of them and I still have a tough time deciding which one was my favorite,” Moore said. “I loved the crazy celebrations on the court in volleyball. I loved the bond that you create with your teammates in basketball, and I loved the reflection of hard work and technique in track. I enjoyed each sport so much.

“I am so thankful for my time at LHS and for all of my amazing coaches and teammates. I also would like to thank my parents for motivating me every day to work hard and be a good person while doing so. I am going to miss being able to play sports in front of such a supportive community and with unbelievably great people.”

2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year nominees



For the past five 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 fourth 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.”

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 will then vote for their top 3 male and female athletes and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. The winner will be announced later this month.

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!

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

FEMALE



Reese Johnson – Junior – Cross Country, Soccer

Junior Reese Johnson made history in a couple different sports for Louisburg this past season.

In the fall, Johnson played a big role on the girls cross country team. The Lady Cats finished third in Class 4A, as that was the first time a team had placed at state in girls cross country. Johnson also medaled 15th individually and was one of three Lady Cats to earn state medals that day.

In the spring, Johnson was one of the leaders on the girls soccer team that advanced to the Class 4-1A state final four this past season. Johnson earned second team All-Frontier League honors after she finished the season with seven goals and nine assists as the Wildcats finished fourth at state.



Alyse Moore – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Track

Alyse Moore ended her senior season as one of the most accomplished athletes in Louisburg High School history. Moore is the first female athlete in school history to compete at the state level in four different sports, including both softball and track in the same season in 2019.

In the spring, Moore earned her second straight track state medal in the javelin as she finished fourth in the Class 4A meet. Earlier in the year, Moore broke a 20-year-old school record with a throw of 149 feet.

Moore was also a starter on the girls basketball team and helped the Lady Cats to their best finish in school history. Moore and the Lady Cats advanced to state for the first time in 47 years and took third overall. Individually, Moore eclipsed the 500-career rebound mark and was an honorable

mention all-league player. She led the team in rebounds with 8.6 boards a game and also averaged 7.3 points and 1.7 steals.

On the volleyball court, Moore started as an outside hitter for the Lady Cats and was second on the team with 174 kills and 195 digs.



DeLaney Wright – Junior – Basketball, Track

DeLaney Wright ended the 2020-21 school year with a bang as she became the school's first athlete to win three state championships in track in one season.

At the Class 4A state meet in Wichita last month, Wright won state titles in the long jump, 400-meter dash and 200-meter dash. She broke her own 200 and 400 school records to reach those accomplishments. On the season, Wright set new school

records in each of those events.

Wright was also a key player on the girls basketball team and helped the Lady Cats to their best finish in school history. Wright and the Lady Cats advanced to state for the first time in 47 years and took third overall at the Class 4A state tournament. Wright was one of the team's best defensive players as she averaged two deflections and a steal per game. She was also assigned to the team's best player.

MALE



Weston Guetterman – Senior – Football, Basketball

Weston Guetterman played big roles for both the Wildcat football and basketball teams this past season.

On the gridiron, Guetterman was the starting quarterback for

Louisburg, which finished 4-3 and tied for third in the Frontier League standings. Guetterman earned honorable mention All-League honors on defense for his play in the secondary. He finished the year with 32 tackles, two interceptions, three tackles for a loss and seven batted balls. He also finished with 548 yards rushing and six touchdowns.

Guetterman was one of the team leaders on the boys basketball team that advanced to its first state championship in school history and took second at the Class 4A state tournament. He was a second-team All-Frontier League selection from the point guard spot and averaged 12.5 points, 4.3 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.2 steals a game. He was also an all-state selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal, Wichita Eagle and Sports in Kansas.



Cade Holtzen – Senior – Cross Country, Wrestling, Track

Cade Holtzen was a three-sport athlete this past season for Louisburg and became the first male athlete (that is known) to participate in state competitions in all three sports, in the same season.

Holtzen helped the Wildcat cross country team to qualify for state for the first time in school history as they finished third at regionals. At state, Holtzen took 56th overall in 18 minutes and 46 seconds.

On the wrestling mat, Holtzen had a year to remember as he finished his career with a 155-19 record and a third-place state finish at 132 pounds. He was a four-time state qualifier for the Wildcats and a three-time state placer. Holtzen served as the team captain this past season and currently holds eight program records, including most season victories and most career wins. He was also chosen to participate in the 2021 Metro Classic.

In the spring, Holtzen earned his second state medal of the year as he helped the 4×800-meter relay team to a third place finish. He also helped the Wildcats to their second team Class 4A state track championship in school history.



Kolby Kattau – Junior – Football, Baseball

Kolby Kattau was a two-sport athlete this past season and had a good year for both the football and baseball program.

In the spring, Kattau helped the Wildcats to their first regional championship game since 2009 as he played both first base and pitcher. Kattau finished the year with a .444 average and racked up 32 hits for the Wildcats to go along with a .560 on-base percentage. He finished with five doubles, two triples, 16 RBIs, scored 26 runs and stole nine bases. He was a first team All-Frontier League selection and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the KBCA.

On the football field, Kattau played on both sides of the ball for a team that finished with a 4-3 record and tied for third in the Frontier League. He finished with two touchdowns from

the running back spot and had 41 tackles at linebacker.



Alec Younggren – Senior – Football, Wrestling

Alec Younggren was a two-sport athlete for Louisburg as he shined on the football field and on the wrestling mat.

Younggren, who missed part of the football season with an injury, still played well-enough on the offensive and defensive lines to earn All-Frontier League honors on both sides of the ball. Younggren was named as a first-team offensive lineman and an honorable mention lineman on defense.

He was a key fixture on the Wildcat offensive line that amassed more than 2,400 yards of total offense and 20 touchdowns. He also had 23 tackles on defense. Younggren was also an all-state honorable mention selection.

The Louisburg senior had an historic season in wrestling as he advanced to the 220-pound Class 4A championship match, where he finished runner-up. He finished the year with a 37-1 record and had Louisburg's highest state finish since 2012.

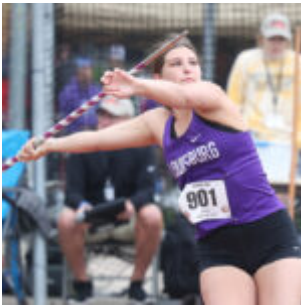


Braden Yows – Junior – Soccer

Louisburg junior Braden Yows was vital part of the Wildcats' best finish in school history this past season. Yows helped the Wildcats to a third place finish in the Class 4-1A state tournament.

Yows was a first-team All-Frontier League and all-state selection from his midfield spot. He broke a program record with 21 assists and also finished with seven goals on the year.

Moore excited for journey with Jayhawk track program



Alyse Moore didn't even pick up a javelin until a few years ago and didn't give track a thought when she got into high school.

Three years later, Moore is now preparing herself to throw at the Division I level.

The Louisburg senior recently signed her letter on intent to join the University of Kansas track and field program and compete in the javelin.

"To be able to sign with KU is truly a dream come true for me," Moore said. "I have always dreamed of competing at the collegiate level, and I've always wanted to be able to compete at the Division 1 level."

It has been quite the journey for Moore in the javelin – one that started her sophomore year as she played softball and competed in track at the same time, to one that ended with a broken school record and two state medals.

Moore, who is a three-sport athlete at Louisburg, always saw herself playing softball in the spring for the Wildcats.

That was until her parents had a conversation with Louisburg

track coach Andy Wright and convinced them to let Alyse try both sports.

“The only reason that I actually ever started javelin was because my parents and Andy and Amy Wright went out to dinner one night, and the Wright’s convinced my parents that I would be a great javelin thrower, because they had seen my fast arm during softball,” Moore said. “That year I was still playing softball and actually chose softball as my main focus at the time, but Coach (Alex) Gentges would voluntarily stay after practice and coach me.

“I really did not get that much time to compete or practice, so the next year I made probably one of the hardest decisions I’ve ever had to make, and decided to just focus on javelin instead of softball. I honestly had no idea that I would end up where I’m at now when I first began throwing. I’m pretty sure I didn’t even place at my very first meet.”



Alyse Moore recently signed her letter of intent to join the University of Kansas track and field team. Alyse is seated next to her parents, Alison and Tommy Moore. Standing (from

left) is her sister Adelyn and brother Ashton.

Despite doing two sports at the same time, Moore took off in the javelin as she threw over 120 feet at regionals as a sophomore to qualify for state and then went on to place fourth overall at the state meet.

At the same time, Moore was a part of the 2019 Wildcat softball that won a regional title and qualified for state and was able to compete on the state level in two different sports.

Then in 2020, Moore and everyone else lost their spring season due to COVID, but it only left her hungrier.

In her senior campaign, Moore broke a 20-year-old school record in the javelin at 149 feet and went on to place fourth at state for the second straight season.

Moore, who was also a starter on the Louisburg girls' basketball team that had its best finish in its history this past season as the Lady Cats took third at state, wasn't sure what sport she wanted to do in college.

Then KU came calling and Moore knew it was the right spot for her.

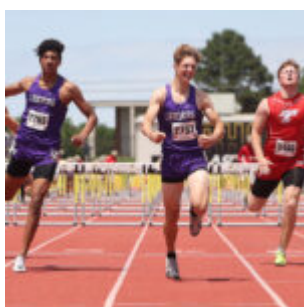
"I had really been struggling about deciding where I wanted to go to college, and I had several other schools interested in having me on their team, but I had just been waiting on a school that I knew would be the best fit for me," Moore said. "I chose KU because they have a very successful track and field program, they have a great nursing program and that worked well with my major. The coaches were extremely transparent with me, and my mom also attended KU, so I was very familiar with the school."

As for what she would like to accomplish with the Jayhawk program, Moore has many goals for herself, but she knows those will take hard work to accomplish.

“When I go to KU, my first goal is to be able to consistently place at meets, and also win some really big meets,” Moore said. “I want to continue to get better and once I achieve the first goals that I have set for myself, I would love to eventually be able to compete at the Olympic level.

“There is a possibility that I could throw shot put during the indoor season, and I would personally love to try hammer throw. I am looking forward to being able to see what else I can do to help benefit the team and I’m all-around super excited.”

Koontz wins state title as Wildcats medal in 12 events at 4A meet



Louisburg junior Tom Koontz was all smiles after winning the 110-meter high hurdles Friday during the Class 4A state meet at Cessna Stadium in Wichita.

WICHITA – There were many big performances for Louisburg in its quest for a Class 4A state championship as the Wildcats medaled in 12 of 18 events.

Several athletes stepped up on their way to giving Louisburg its second state championship – its first coming 10 years ago.

Maybe none stepped up more than Wildcat junior Tom Koontz.

Koontz was Louisburg's lone state champion Friday during the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships at Cessna Stadium in Wichita.

He cruised to a personal-best time of 14.87 seconds in the 110-meter hurdles to win going away. Wellington's Gavin York was second at 15.22.



Louisburg junior Tom Koontz clears a hurdle during as sophomore Mason Dobbins (left) is right behind him during the 110-meter race. Koontz won the race and Dobbins was third overall.

“Winning the 110s was easily one of the highlights of my track career,” Koontz said. “Before the race, I kept repeating to myself ‘no one here wants this more than you’ and I had convinced myself that I had it in the bag.

“(Coach Leanna) Willer had asked me to run under a 15 so she had bragging rights, but it was also my desire to be better than I was before that did it for me. When the race was over, I couldn’t believe that I’d done it, and I simply wouldn’t

stop smiling.”

Koontz nearly got a second gold medal in the 300-meter hurdles, but came up just short as he hit a couple hurdles on his way to a second-place finish in 40.54 seconds. Topeka-Hayden’s Jake Muller won the event in 39.92.

In all, Koontz finished the state meet with four medals, including two as a member of the 4×100 and 4×400-meter relays.

“I knew the 300s would be my toughest race, and it was,” Koontz said. “I was so determined to win that I lost sight of how I run my races. One small slip up can make the difference, but now I’m ready for next year. The 300s are a very difficult race, but I know I’m capable of doing great things in it.”

The Wildcats had top three finishes in all of their relays and it started with the 4×800 group.

Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Hayden Ross and Jaden Vohs ran to a third-place finish in 8 minutes and 33 seconds. Buhler won the title at 8:16 and Wamego was second with a time of 8:20.

“I was very happy with our 4×800,” Holtzen said. “We wanted first, but the top two teams ran incredible races so to be top three in the state is a great feeling. And there is no other way I would’ve liked to cap my high school career than that.”



Louisburg junior Jaden Vohs leads a pack of runners during the 1,600-meter run Friday at the state meet. Vohs earned three state medals overall.

Louisburg also got some key points in the distance races with Vohs and Houchen. Both runners medaled in the 1,600-meter run as Vohs was sixth at 4:36 and Houchen took eighth in 4:42.

Vohs also picked up a medal in the 800-meter run as he came in sixth in 2:03. Houchen just missed a medal as he took ninth in 2:05.

“Jaden and I both weren’t projected to get points based on our regional times, so to come into the 1,600 and have both of us score was a big bonus for our team points,” Houchen said. “In the 800, both of us were just about wiped going into the race, so to come away with ninth and with Jaden scoring points was a really great feeling.”

Vohs, a junior, is competing in his first year of track and was able leave Wichita with three state medals.

“I had no idea what to expect,” Vohs said. “Honestly, I only anticipated to medal in the 4×800 relay. Thanks to hard work and perseverance, I was able to medal in every event. It was fun competing at such a high level. I will continue to train so I can keep improving.”



Louisburg senior Ben Wiedenmann takes the handoff from sophomore Ethan Ptacek during the 4×100-meter relay.

Next up was the 4×100 relay and the team of Justin Collins, Koontz, Ethan Ptacek and Ben Wiedenmann finished runner-up with a personal best time of 43.52 seconds. Chanute won the event in 43.20.

The same group of runners went on to clinch the state championship in the 4×400-meter relay to end the meet in a personal best time of 3:29.13 and took third.

“We actually were hoping to break our school record for the 4×100 but fell just .2 short of doing it,” Wiedenmann said. “But the second and third place medals achieved in those events were both very welcome since we were seeded one place lower than we finished in both races.”

Getting two medals in the relays, Collins also ended his Wildcat track career with a pair of individual medals. Collins went on to finish fifth in the 100-meter dash (11.22) and the 400 dash (51.19).

Ptacek also earned an individual medal of his own as he took eighth in the 400 dash in 51.51.



Senior Justin Collins gets off to a good start in the 100-meter dash Friday at state. Collins ended the day with four state medals.

When all was said and done, Collins earned four state medals

and couldn't have asked for a much better finish to his season.

"I was very happy with myself since I came in ranked 6th in the 100 and 8th in the 400, and I ended up getting 5th in both," Collins said. "I was very pleased because It was a great way to end senior year.

"Getting to walk away with four medals was an amazing feeling. All the hard work we had to put in to practice paid out and ended my senior year with a bang."

Sophomore Mason Dobbins came away with two state medals in his first ever state competition.

Dobbins finished third in the 110-meter hurdles in 15.24 seconds. Earlier in the meet, he finished in a tie for fifth in the high jump at 6-0.

"At first I was a little nervous in high jump since I had a lot of good competition, but after the first jump all the nerves went away," Dobbins said. "It felt amazing for me and Tom (Koontz) to finish top three like we did. Tom and I had really been pushing each other every week in practice to better each other and for us to come into state and pull off what we did was incredible."



Louisburg senior Luke Faulkner celebrates after he cleared a personal best 14-6 to take second at the state meet in the pole vault.

In the field events, the Wildcats were able to medal two in the pole vault and senior Luke Faulkner saved his best for last. Faulkner cleared a personal-best 14-6 to finish as the state runner-up.

Freshman Caden Caplinger cleared 12-6 and medaled eighth in his first state meet.

“The conditions for the morning were great and I was ready to compete and I went against very skilled vaulters,” Faulkner said. “I focused on my jumps and vaulted the best I ever have. Taking second felt incredible especially since 4A pole vault was one of the hardest events with the competition.”

Sophomore Nathan Vincent provided some big points for the

Wildcats in the javelin and he started the event strong with a personal-best throw in the preliminaries.

Vincent's first throw of the day was 176-10 and was good for fourth overall.



Sophomore Nathan Vincent recorded a personal best throw of 176-10 in the javelin to take fourth Friday at the state meet.

"I threw the javelin as best I could," Vincent said. "Coming out with a PR on the first throw was a huge relief and really relaxed my nerves and allowed me to just go out there and throw."

In other events, sophomore Nathan Apple took 15th in the 110 hurdles in 17.52 and junior Ryan Rogers was 15th in the 3,200-meter run in 11:03.

In the field events, senior Jay Scollin was 15th in the javelin with a throw of 141 feet and sophomore Isaiah Whitley was 16th in the long jump at 17-9.

“What a state championship means to me...”



So much went into the Louisburg boys earning the Class 4A state track and field championship last week as the Wildcats medaled in 12 of the 18 events.

Whether it was the sprints, hurdles, distance, relays or field events, the Wildcats needed them all to come together to win the state's top prize.

Winning meant a lot to all the athletes and coaches, so I asked many of them what this whole experience meant to them and I got many different answers.

“It was a great way to close out such a difficult year. There may never be another year like this one. I know how much it means to these kids to leave their mark forever on their community with a state championship. I'm very proud at how they handled adversity throughout not only the season, but the entire school year. They are great group of kids and I just feel blessed that I could be a part of it all. It'll be a year to remember and it's all because of their hard work and dedication.” – **Alex Gentges, assistant coach**

“Winning state was a long term goal of mine and many other guys in the track team. At the beginning of the season we didn't know where we would be at due to losing the 2019-2020

season, but everyone did their part to contribute to the several meet first place finishes and state championship.” – **Ben Wiedenmann, senior**



Louisburg seniors (from left) Cade Holtzen, Carson Houchen, Ben Wiedenmann, Justin Collins, Luke Faulkner and Jay Scollin.

“This was pretty special for me. I’ve been coaching for 20 years. This is my first state title since I was a lowly sophomore, who didn’t even play, on a state championship football team with Lawrence High. This is my only state title, and may possibly be my only, as a coach. I didn’t even have a boy place at state this year, but I know that there is so much that we all did to help this team accomplish what they did. Watching all of the hard work that all of these kids did to push each other to be the best was amazing.

“Two things sticks out in my mind. The week of regionals I stopped by the track on the way home and watched a little pole vault practice. Caden Caplinger made a vault and Luke Faulkner

was yelling and screaming with excitement that Caden did some sort of technique correctly. He was genuinely happy for others successes. Jay Scollin just finished his last throw as a senior for Louisburg High and he stayed and watched the sophomore that he had been working so closely with go from 8th place to 4th with one throw. He was one of the loudest supporters of his teammates that just threw further than him. Watching athletes that had graduated come back and cheer on other throwers makes you know how important it is to everyone that has been involved with Louisburg sports. It is a family that I am blessed to be a part of and it will be a year that I will likely never forget.” – **Pete Skakal, assistant coach**



Coaches (from left) Alex Gentges, Pete Skakal, Andy Wright, John Reece and Leanna Willer.

“Winning state meant the absolute world to me. In my four years of high school, running has undoubtedly been the highlight of my experience, and finishing off my senior year with a state ring is just about the best way I could ever hope to end high school athletics.” – **Carson Houchen, senior**

“The interesting thing is that I don’t believe it was even on their radar! The boys prepared themselves to compete at state and to do ‘their’ best. Because of their work/competition ethic, they were going to bring it no matter what. By having that mindset, they all performed to their utmost. I have always said control what you can and positive things will follow and it did. This championship had even more emotion as we had a dog in the fight in the 4×4 and they did their job for their teammates. It was an awesome experience and one that will not soon be forgotten as we scored in all aspects of both track and field. I’ll guess I’ll have to stick around for another 10 years to see if it happens again.” – **John Reece, distance coach and head girls coach.**

“Winning a team state championship has been everything I’ve hoped for. I’ve never done team sports, so the feeling of winning something as a team means everything.” – **Cade Holtzen, senior**

“There are no words to describe how incredibly proud I was of the entire team. It was a total team effort! It was a moment I will never forget as a coach, and how exciting that it came down to the final race. Everyone gave it their all, and just couldn’t be happier as a coach to see all of that hard work pay off for them with the greatest reward.” – **Andy Wright, head boys coach**



“It meant a lot to be apart of a state championship team. We all put in so much hard work at practice and it’s great to see it pay off.” – **Mason Dobbins, sophomore**

“It was a pretty surreal moment for me. I knew we had a shot at the title, but watching those boys compete event after event to earn each point was something pretty incredible to watch. These seniors were a special group, and I’m so proud of them for finishing their high school careers off with such an amazing accomplishment. I was definitely the emotional one of the group as it brought tears to my eyes to see the entire team together and so proud of each other after a long day of competing.” – **Leanna Willer, assistant coach**

“Winning the team state championship was amazing because we were ranked second or third and we thought we still had to fight for those places. Over time during the meet we kept crawling up to first in points and started to surprise ourselves at what we could accomplish.” – **Luke Faulkner, senior**

“It was an amazing feeling winning something this big for Louisburg, especially when Andale was supposed to win and then having it come down to the last race made it even better. I felt a lot of pride when we got on the podium in the number one spot. As a sophomore it felt really good to actually earn points for the team.” – **Nathan Vincent, sophomore**



“Winning state as a team was amazing. I couldn’t have asked for a better team to go in with and take a state championship.” – **Justin Collins, senior**

“It’s exciting to be a part of school history. Taking first place at state is quite an accomplishment. As a team, from our first practice, that was our No. 1 goal. I’m happy to be a part of such an athletic team.” – **Jaden Vohs, junior**

“To win state was absolutely astonishing, and it was a dream

come true because I knew I would be making my mark on the school and on the town. It meant everything that I did to prepare was worth it.” – *Tom Koontz, junior*

STATE CHAMPS: Louisburg boys track wins school's fifth state title



Members of the Louisburg state championship team are (front row, from left) Jaden Vohs, Luke Faulkner, Ben Wiedenmann, Tom Koontz, Justin Collins, Jay Scollin, Ethan Ptacek; (middle row) Mason Dobbins, Isaiah Whitley, Ryan Rogers, Hayden Ross, Cade Holtzen, Nathan Vincent, Caden Caplinger, Carson Houchen, Nathan Apple, coach Leanna Willer; (back row) coaches Pete Skakal, Alex Gentges, Andy Wright and John Reece.

WICHITA – On the 10th anniversary of the Louisburg boys' first state track championship, this year's team wanted to do something to commemorate the historic event.

The Wildcats decided they wanted to win one of their own.

Louisburg edged out Andale for the state championship Friday during the Class 4A Kansas Track and Field Championships at Cessna Stadium in Wichita.

It is just the second track championship for Louisburg and just the fourth team state championship in school history.

The first one was a golf title in 1977, and then football won its first state title in 2010. The track team followed with its first later that school year in 2011 and the Louisburg cheer squad won a state title in 2019.

“There are no words to describe how incredibly proud I was of the entire team,” Louisburg coach Andy Wright said. “It was a total team effort. It was a moment I will never forget as a coach, and how exciting that it came down to the final race. Everyone gave it their all, and I just couldn’t happier as a coach to see all of that hard work pay off for them with the greatest reward.”



Louisburg senior Ben Wiedenmann shows off the Class 4A state championship trophy to the crowd Friday in Wichita.

Like with every good championship, there was plenty of drama toward the end as the state title came down to the last race – the 4×400-meter relay.

Louisburg held a 71.5-71 lead over Andale going into the 4×400. The Wildcats needed to beat Andale to secure their state title.

Justin Collins, Tom Koontz, Ethan Ptacek and Ben Wiedenmann had the Wildcats' title hope riding on their fast feet.

Everyone on the Louisburg and Andale side knew what was at stake.

“I was one of the only people from Louisburg on the field during the 4×4, and going into it I knew that beating Andale would get us a state championship,” senior Carson Houchen said. “I stood at the 200m mark to make sure our runners had the kick they needed on the second half of the race, and I was pretty much surrounded by Andale guys. I could hear them talking about how they just needed to beat Louisburg to win the meet.”



Justin Collins takes off from his blocks to start the 4x400-meter relay.

Collins opened the race for Louisburg, and while he was toward the front of the pack – so was Andale.

“I was very nervous and super excited for it to start because I knew that race would determine a lot,” Collins said.”

Still out in front of Andale, Collins handed the baton to Koontz, who widened the lead even more.

“The 4x4 was definitely the most stressful part of the day, because I knew we had a real chance to win state,” Koontz said. “So all the stress I had before relating to my events and myself melted away, because it became solely about the team and our school.

“So I knew that they were counting on us, and I wasn’t

planning on letting them down. Nonetheless, I was still scared, but I had faith in our group.”



Tom Koontz runs by his teammates as they cheer him on during the second leg of the 4×400 relay.

Koontz had a reason to be confident as he handed the baton off to Ptacek who widened that lead over Andale a little more and was still toward the front of the pack.

Then came the final handoff to Wiedenmann, who by that time, had plenty of breathing room between him and the Andale runner as he ran the final 400 meters for the state title.



Sophomore Ethan Ptacek takes off during the third leg of the 4×400.

“Talking to our teammates and coaches before the race, it became very apparent that we had to just beat Andale in the 4×4 to secure the state championship,” Wiedenmann said. “While it did make us pretty nervous, we all set a goal to do our best and beat Eudora, our season long rivals, and just let the rest fall in place.

“Being the last leg I knew that if the race was close or if I lost the lead on Andale that the blame really comes down to me, but I just trusted my teammates and did the best I could to supplement their efforts.”



Ben Wiedenmann takes the handoff from Ethan Ptacek as he enters the final leg of the 4x400.

The Wildcat quartet did just that as they set a new personal record of 3:29.13 and edged out Eudora for third place. Andale finished in seventh at 3:33.

“We went out there and ran our race and ended up getting a new personal record, and ended up grabbing a state title with it,” Collins said.

Once the race was over, members of the Wildcat team emptied from the Cessna Stadium stands and made their way to the infield to congratulate each other – and why not – it was an historic day.

“That was probably one of the happiest moments I have ever had,” Houchen said. “It was a race, and an experience, I will never forget.”



Senior Cade Holtzen was all smiles, as were the rest of his teammates, after the Wildcats secured the state title.

The state championship was more than one race for Louisburg as points came from all over the place to keep the Wildcats in the race.

Louisburg had just one state champion on the day in Koontz in the 110-meter hurdles. The rest, the Wildcats just racked up points multiple events.

The Wildcats scored points in 12 of the 18 events, several of which had multiple point-getters. Each of the three relays had top three finishes, while senior Luke Faulkner was second in the pole vault.



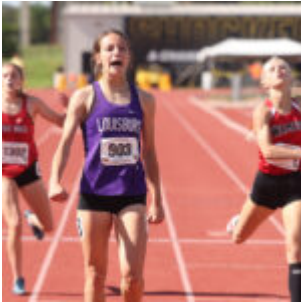
Louisburg head coach Andy Wright gives a big hug to Tom Koontz following the 4x400-meter relay.

Louisburg ended up with 77.5 points and Andale was second with 73. Buhler was third in the state with 53.

“Winning the team state championship was amazing because we were ranked second or third and we thought we still had to fight for those places,” Faulkner said. “Over time during the meet, we kept crawling up to first in points and started to surprise ourselves at what we could accomplish.”

The Wright Stuff: Louisburg

junior wins 3 state titles, 3 others medal



Louisburg junior Delaney Wright lets out some emotion following her state championship win in the 200-meter dash Friday at the Class 4A State Track and Field Championships at Cessna Stadium in Wichita.

WICHITA – Delaney Wright was the favorite to win state titles in her three events last Friday at the Class 4A State Track and Field Championships.

She didn't disappoint.

Wright not only won three state championships, but she won them in convincing fashion, breaking two school records in the process. The Louisburg junior won the long jump, 400-meter dash and the 200-meter dash on her way to an historic day in Wichita.

“My experience at state track this year was amazing,” Wright said. “The people competing there were super nice and my teammates made it more fun. It meant a lot to pull off winning three state titles.”

Wright became the first female Wildcat athlete to win three state titles in the same year as she helped the Lady Cats to a fifth place finish in the team standings – also the highest finish for Louisburg girls track and field.

“I can't say enough how awesome of a competitor Delaney is,”

Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. "I know she went to state with one thing on her mind – win. She did just that and truly performed to her best. Winning three different events is an incredible feat."



Delaney Wright lands in the sand pit during the long jump competition Friday in Wichita. Wright won with a mark of 18-2.25

The long jump was Wright's first state championship on the day as she recorded a leap of 18 feet, 2.25 inches and defeated Paola sophomore Maggie Kauk, who had a jump of 17-8.25.

Next came the 400-meter dash and Wright took control of that race from the beginning. She won by more than a second with a time of 58.30 seconds – which broke her school record that she set earlier this year.

"After I came out of my blocks in the 400 I knew I was feeling

good and had what it takes to finish good in the race,” Wright said. “Having confidence and knowing I worked hard all season for this meet was rewarding, especially when I PR’d and broke my records.”

In what was supposed to be her most competitive event of the day, Wright again ran away from the field. She won the 200 dash in a school-record time of 25.54 seconds and defeated runner-up Kimalee Cook from Towanda-Circle, who had a time of 26.01.



Delaney Wright leads a pack of runners in the 400-meter dash Friday at the state meet in Wichita.

“I was really excited after the 200 cause it was my last race and the competition was tough,” Wright said. “I broke to the lead and knew I won my third state title. I gave a little fist bump to the air in excitement after crossing the finish line and congratulated the girls around me after the race. Overall, it was a great meet and was awesome. I’m got to experience it

with my teammates.”

Louisburg wasn't done with state medals as the Lady Cats found their way to the podium in three other events.

Senior Alyse Moore concluded her historic javelin career as she earned her second state medal. Moore recorded a throw of 139-4 to take fourth overall, behind a trio of Andale throwers who took the top three spots.

One of those, senior Katelyn Fairchild, broke the Class 4A record with a throw of 175-4.

Louisburg junior Davis Guetterman also threw in the competition and took 14th with a toss of 109-3.



Louisburg senior Alyse Moore finished fourth in the javelin Friday at the state meet in Wichita.

“I didn't throw by best this time, but I did the best I could in a way,” Moore said. “I gave my 100 percent, but I was a

little disappointed with the outcome because I know that I have the potential to be better. I was still glad to be up on the podium. It was definitely a competitive field.”

It has been a memorable season for Moore, including one that saw her break the 20-year-old school record in the javelin. She will also join the University of Kansas track and field team next season.

“Alyse capped off an awesome career with her performance in the javelin,” Reece said. “Medaling fourth was a great accomplishment and she will have a great time throwing for KU.”

Junior Corinna McMullen continued her strong season in the discus with her first state medal. McMullen recorded a throw of 113-01 to take fourth overall.

Andale’s McKenzie Fairchild won the event with a throw of 140-0 and her sister Katelyn was second at 132-10. Ottawa’s Jaine Johnson was third at 118-5.



Louisburg junior Corinna McMullen earned her first state medal in the discus Friday as she took fourth with a throw of 113 feet.

“Throwing at my first state track meet was definitely a time to remember,” McMullen said. “Waiting until 2 to throw on Friday gave a lot of time for nerves to come into play, but I had to trust the training I put in during the week and put it all to the side. I prepared myself to stay out of my head and not be so technical because I knew I was going to be the smallest thrower there.

“I didn’t throw my best, even though I threw very well in warmups, but that is what throwing it about. State was such a great experience being on that podium, no matter what place it was. Watching the rest of the athletes was so fun and so memorable.”

Freshman Emma Vohs also came away with a medal in her first

ever state competition. Vohs finished sixth in 1:02.09.

I was very thrilled to receive a state medal in the 400, however, I would've liked to run a better time," Vohs said. "I had an amazing experience, with all the people around us, teammates cheering you on, and standing on the podium being rewarded my medal felt like such a privilege.

"I was also excited my brother (Jaden) and I both got to go to state. Next year, I would like to break 60 seconds in the 400 and try different events, such as the 800."



Louisburg freshman Emma Vohs rounds a turn Friday during the 400-meter dash.

The four state medalists racked up 43 points in the team standings and the Lady Cats finished fifth – their highest finish in school history.

“I guess you can call them the Fantastic Four as they put together an outstanding performance and finished fifth as a team,” Reece said. “Girls athletics started the year with guns ablaze and through each season never stopped the charge and they have the hardware to prove it.”

In other events, freshman Erin Apple ran the 1,600-meter run in her first state event and took 13th in 6:08.

Another freshman, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, finished 14th in the pole vault after she cleared 7-6.

Week 10 Athlete of the Week: Tom Koontz



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week 10 of the spring sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones-Craig Holtzen.

Tom Koontz, Junior, Track and Field

Not only did the Louisburg boys track and field team win the Class 4A state championship last weekend in Wichita, but junior Tom Koontz captured one of his own, as well. Koontz won the 4A state title in the 110-meter hurdles in a personal best time of 14.87 seconds and earned one of four medals on the

day. He also went on to take second in the 300 hurdles.

Koontz also joined a pair of relays that got state medals. Koontz, along with Justin Collins, Ben Wiedenmann and Ethan Ptacek took second in 4×100-meter relay. The same team clinched the state championship in the final race of the day, the 4×400 relay. The Wildcat quartet took third overall and edged out Andale for the team title.

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

Previous winners:

Week 1: Lexi Hampton

Week 2: Kolby Kattau

Week 3: Jaden Vohs

Week 4: Mia Wilson

Week 5: Johnny Eberhart

Week 6: Alyse Moore

Week 7: Brandon Doles

Week 8: Delaney Wright

Week 9: Reese Johnson



Wildcat track wins first regional title since 2012; qualifies in 15 events



The Louisburg boys track and field team were all smiles Friday following the Class 4A regional meet in Paola. The Wildcats won their first regional title since 2012 as they qualified for state in 15 events.

PAOLA – It has been almost a decade since the Louisburg boys track and field team has come away with a regional title.

That drought came to an abrupt end Friday during the Class 4A regional meet in Paola. The Wildcats racked up 168 points and defeated runner-up Paola by 30 points to win their first regional crown since 2012.

In all, Louisburg qualified for state in 15 of the 18 events on Friday. The Wildcats had six individual regional champions and are sending 16 athletes to state.

“This team has worked so hard and put in the time at practice and it was super nice to see that pay off for the athletes,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. “They were excited to win regionals, but what I love about them is that they aren’t satisfied with it, and want to go after state.”

Two of those individual titles came from one person. Junior Tom Koontz won both the 110 and 300-meter hurdles, and he also qualified in two relay events. He was the top-point getter for

the Wildcats.

Koontz ran a personal best in the 110 hurdles to win in 15.07 seconds and later won the 300 hurdles in another personal best time of 39.80 seconds. He is currently ranked No. 1 in Class 4A in both events.



Louisburg junior Tom Koontz stretches out ahead of teammate Mason Dobbins to win the 110-meter hurdles.

“My main goal in my hurdle events was to beat my rival from Spring Hill every meet, and PR of course,” Koontz said. “But winning at regionals seemed very possible for me, so I did have it up there as one of my goals.

“But to PR on both my events by so much meant the world to me. Everyday I work hard so I can get better and hopefully get noticed, and PRing by so much was like a dream come true. That doesn’t mean I’m done though.”

Koontz also joined Justin Collins, Ben Wiedenmann and Ethan Ptacek to take second in the 4×100 and 4×400-meter relay. The 4×100 ran a time of 43.79 and the 4×400 ran a season best 3:29.

It was a special moment in the 110 hurdles race as the Wildcats qualified all three hurdlers for state. Along with Koontz, sophomore Mason Dobbins was runner-up in 15.36 seconds and sophomore Nathan Apple was fourth in 15.79.

In the preliminaries, Apple had originally not qualified for the finals due to a competitor next to him knocking over his hurdle unintentionally. Meet workers allowed Apple to run again, which allowed him to qualify for the finals and he ran a personal record in the process.

“Tom has worked super hard all season and he is a perfectionist at practice,” Wright said. “He stays after to get it just right, and that commitment is paying off for him. I can’t wait to see him get a chance to put all that hard work into action and give it his best at state.

“All the hurdlers have all been working and improving, and qualifying three is a credit to that work they put in practice.”



Louisburg senior Carson Houchen runs the anchor leg of the 4×800-meter relay Friday in Paola. The team of Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Hayden Ross and Jaden Vohs won the regional crown in 8:32.

The Wildcats also scored a lot of points in the distance races and it started with the 4×800-meter relay as the team of Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Hayden Ross and Jaden Vohs won a regional title in a personal best time of 8:32.

“The 4×8 at regionals was much more competitive than we thought it would be,” Houchen said. “Basically every team went out and PR’d by a lot. Our team also PR’d, but only by about two seconds. Everyone on our team except me had their best split times of the year, and I was about 5-6 seconds behind where I usually am. If all of us run our best times, we have a very good chance to get first or second at state.”

Vohs went on to win a regional championship of his own in the

1,600-meter run in 4:45, less than a second in front of Labette County's Alex Meister. Houchen also qualified in the 1,600 as he took third in 4:52.

The two traded spots in the 800 run as Houchen qualified in second in a time of 2:06.05 and Vohs was fourth in 2:06.65.

"Because Jaden and I did three events last Friday, it was an extremely tough meet for us," Houchen said. "The meet was run ahead of schedule so we didn't get a lot of recovery time in between our races.

"Having my teammate running the same tough races with me was a big boost to my confidence and is a big reason why both of us were able to qualify in all three events. I'm looking forward to competing with Jaden and helping each other reach new heights at state."

Louisburg also qualified a runner in the 3,200-meter run as junior Ryan Rogers finished fourth in 11:06.

In the sprints, Collins qualified in two individual events as he took second in the 400-meter dash in 51.51 seconds and earlier took third in the 100 dash in 11.26. Ptacek also qualified in the 400 dash and took fourth in 51.77.

Wiedenmann recorded a runner-up finish in the 200-meter dash in 23.06 seconds.



Sophomore Ethan Ptacek gets the handoff in the 4×400-meter relay during the Class 4A regional meet in Paola. The team of Ptacek, Justin Collins, Ben Wiedenmann and Tom Koontz took second in the 4×400 and 4×100 relay.

“Justin and Ben have been the backbones of the team all year on the track,” Wright said. “They are excellent leaders and help give the younger guys the confidence they need to perform well as a team.

“I love what they will bring to the track in their intensity at state. They have both been there and know what to expect and how to handle the pressure. I look for good things from them on Friday.”

In the field events, the Wildcats had a pair of regional champions in the pole vault and high jump.

Senior Luke Faulkner earned a regional title in the pole vault

after he cleared 14-0 for the second straight week and edged out Paola's James Earlywine, who also cleared 14-0. Freshman Caden Caplinger also earned a state bid after he cleared 12-6 to take third.

Dobbins provided the Wildcats with a nice surprise in the high jump as he cleared a personal best height of 6-1 to win the event.

The Wildcats also got a nice boost from sophomore Isaiah Whitley, who recorded a personal best of 20-8.5 in the long jump to take fourth and earn a bid to state.

"I was super happy for Mason, but not surprised as he is a super hard worker, and is putting it all together," Wright said. "Coach (Leanna) Willer has him believing in what he can do, and I know he will just keep getting better.

"I knew Isaiah had a big jump coming. He was getting frustrated in previous weeks, and I told him it was coming, that he was going to put it together and pop a big one and he did."

Louisburg also qualified two athletes in the javelin as both Nathan Vincent and Jay Scollin endured sloppy conditions to find a way to state. The runway was wet and muddy due to rain from earlier in the week, but the Wildcat throwers came through.



Louisburg senior Jay Scollin recorded a personal best throw in the javelin to take third overall.

Vincent was second with a throw of 159-03 and Scollin had a personal best toss of 158-6 to take third overall.

Now the Wildcats have their sights set on the Class 4A state meet this Friday in Wichita. The top eight will earn medals, but Louisburg is also trying to get on that medal stand as a team.

Events will begin at 8 a.m. at Cessna Stadium, and the meet, which is in conjunction with Class 3A, will run throughout the day.

“If we go in there with the mentality of just doing what we know we can do, and competing, these guys are going to give it their best shot and surprise some people that have maybe overlooked them,” Wright said.



Luke Faulkner raises up the regional championship plaque following the conclusion of the meet last Friday.

Other results are:

3,200 run: Leo Martin, sixth, 11:28; Sawyer Richardson, 9th, 11:42

100 dash: Hunter Heinrich, 11th, 12.38

1,600 run: Ryan Rogers, seventh, 5:06

400 dash: Dylan Armstrong, seventh, 55.30

300 hurdles: Mason Dobbins, fifth, 42.57; Nathan Apple, eighth, 43.43

800 run: Cade Holtzen, ninth, 2:15

200 dash: Armstrong, seventh, 24.38; Heinrich, ninth, 24.60

Shot put: J.R. Rooney sixth, 40-8; Chase Pritchard, 11th, 36-0.5; Reid Justesen, 14th, 34-2

Discus: Nathan Vincent, fifth, 124-11; Pritchard, 11th, 89-10

High jump: Isaiah Whitley, eighth, 5-8

Long jump: Ethan Ptacek, ninth, 19-1.75; Hayden Feikert, 10th, 18-8.75

Javelin: Carson Wade, seventh, 136-06

Pole vault: Caleb Shaughnessy, fifth, 10-6