Wildcats capture second straight title with win at Anderson County



Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen (pictured), along with teammates Carson Houchen, Hayden Ross and Jaden Vohs, won the 4×800-meter relay Thursday at Anderson County. The Wildcats won the team title with 152 points.

GARNETT – It was another week and another title for the Louisburg boys track and field team.

The Wildcats captured Anderson County Invitational title as they racked up 152 points and defeated runner-up Eudora by 10 points. It was the second straight victory for Louisburg as it won the Paola Invitational earlier this month.

“I continue to be super proud of the effort the boys are giving at meets,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. “We have yet to get a good weather day for times to come down, but the kids are competing and I think that shows in our placings. The atmosphere and culture on our team is amazing. Everyone is cheering each other on trying to win the meet.”

Louisburg found a lot of its success in the relays and distance races and accumulated a lot of points in those.

The 4×800-meter relay team of Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Hayden Ross and Jaden Vohs put together a new personal best time of 8 minutes and 45 seconds to win the race.

Houchen also found success in the 800-meter run as he took first in 2:12, while Ross (2:15) and Holtzen (2:16) came in third and fourth, respectively.

Vohs, who ran the 1,600-meter run for the first time this season, took runner-up in his debut with a time of 4:53. Teammate Ryan Rogers was sixth at 5:13, and later took fifth in the 3,200 in 11:26.

The Wildcats also captured the 4×100-meter relay title as Hayden Feikert, Tom Koontz, Ethan Ptacek and Ben Wiedenmann ran a time of 45.09 to edge Eudora.

Ptacek went on to take runner-up in the 400 dash in 52.86, while Wiedenmann was second in the 100 dash in 11.71. Feikert was sixth at 11.97.

Koontz also had a successful day in the hurdles as he won the 300 meters in 41.17 and three Wildcats scored points in the 110s. Koontz was second in 15.83, while Mason Dobbins (16.09) and Nathan Apple (16.95) were third and fourth, respectively.

Koontz, Hunter Heinrich, Dylan Armstrong and Ptacek ended the night on the track with a third place finish in the 4×400 relay in 3:41.

In the field events, Louisburg had a big day in the javelin. Senior Jay Scollin threw a personal best of 151 feet, 4 inches to win the competition for the first time this season. Teammate Nathan Vincent, was right behind him in second at 149-9.

Sophomore J.R. Rooney also recorded a personal best in the shot put. His throw of 44-11.75 was good for third, and was less than six inches out of first.

In the jumps, Dobbins took third in the high jump after he cleared 5-10 and teammate Isaiah Whitley was sixth at 5-8.

Feikert finished runner-up in the long jump with a mark of

19-1.5, while Whitley (18-10) and Ptacek (18-6) were fourth and sixth, respectively.

Senior Luke Faulkner took third place in the pole vault after he cleared 12-6.

Wright helps Lady Cats to fourth place finish at Garnett

Louisburg junior Delaney Wright won a pair of events and finished second in another in back-to-back weeks as she helped the Lady Cats to a fourth place finish with 63 points at Anderson County.

Wright captured the 400-meter dash title with a season best time of 1:01.24. She also won the long jump with a season-best mark of 17-9.5

Wright ran another season best time in the 200 dash in 26.61 seconds to take runner-up to Spring Hill’s Izzy Williams (26.22).

Senior Alyse Moore continued to show improvement in the javelin as she recorded a personal-best toss of 144-8 to win the event. That attempt was good for the third-best throw in the state of Kansas so far this year.

Teammates Davis Guetterman and Tae Ellison also fared well as Guetterman was second in the event at 111-11 and Ellison was fifth at 106-4.

Junior Corinna McMullen also scored points for the Lady Cats in the discus. McMullen was second with a toss of 104-11 and sophomore Emma Prettyman was sixth in the shot put at 29-9.

Freshman Erin Apple scored some big points on the track for the Lady Cats as she was fourth in the 3,200-meter run with a personal best of 13:48. Another freshman, Emma Vohs, took fifth in the 400-meter dash in 1:04.68.

Other results are:

GIRLS

100 meter dash: Emma Vohs, 7th, 13.88; Sophie Katzer, 12th, 14.32; Andrea Gaza, 16th, 14.69

200 dash: Vohs, 9th, 28.44; Gaza, 16th, 30.53; Julia Arriola, 25th, 31.98

400 dash: Addison Drake, 15th, 1:14; Caleigh Kettle, 16th, 1:14

1,600 run: Erin Apple, 9th, 6:20; Alexis French, 13th, 6:40

3,200 run: French, 8th, 14:39

Pole vault: Maddy Carpenter-Ross, 8th, 7-0

Shot put: Alyse Moore, 7th, 28-5.5

Discus: Emma Prettyman, 8th, 82-11; Aiyana Penca, 10th, 81-8; Davis Guetterman, 17th, 72-3

Javelin: Jocelyn Kettle, 16th, 64-10

BOYS

100 dash: Gavin York, 11th, 12.13; Isaiah Whitley, 18th, 12.51

200 dash: York, 12th, 25.03; Hunter Heinrich, 15th, 25.72

400 dash: Heinrich, 7th, 56.18; Ben Wiedenmann, 10th, 57.93

800 run: Sawyer Richardson, 111th, 2:23

1,600 run: Landon Henry, 16th, 5:42; Nathan Parker, 18th, 5:57

3,200 run: Noah Cotter, 7th, 11:33; Andrew Brown, 11th, 11:55; Max LaJoie, 15th, 12:16

300 hurdles: Mason Dobbins, 7th, 44.99; Nathan Apple, 8th, 45.10

Pole vault: Caleb Shaughnessy, 10th, 9-6

Long jump: Elias Pugh, 21st, 14-9

Triple jump: Pugh, 13th, 31-2.5

Shot put: Chase Pritchard, 11th, 38-11.75; Brayton Brueggen, 23rd, 28-9

Discus: Layne Ryals, 7th, 107-4; Pritchard, 9th, 105-8; Nathan Vincent, 19th, 83-5; Brueggen, 24th, 70-5

Javelin: Ryals, 9th, 122-2

Wildcat boys win Paola Invitational title



Louisburg junior Hayden Feikert lands in the long jump pit during the Paola Invitational on Thursday. Feikert took fourth in the long jump and the Wildcats won the meet with 141 points.

PAOLA – The Louisburg boys track and field team got a lot of contributions in several events Thursday during the Paola Invitational.

It showed in the final tally as the Wildcats racked up 141 points to win the meet as it defeated runner-up Paola by 17

points.

The Wildcats scored points in all but three events, one of which was due to a disqualification in the 4×100 relay, or it could have been more.

“There were multiple personal records throughout the meet, and athletes went in and competed,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. “I felt it was a good team performance across the board.”

On the girls side, the Lady Cats took fifth overall with 64.5 points. Spring Hill and Paola tied for the meet title with 150 points.

Junior Jaden Vohs had a big day to lead the Louisburg boys as he won the 800-meter run in 2 minutes and 9 seconds.

Louisburg went on to continue to score points in the distance races as Vohs, Cade Holtzen, Carson Houchen and Hayden Ross won the 4×800-meter relay in the 8:52.



Louisburg junior Jaden Vohs sprints to the finish of the 4×800-meter relay Thursday in Paola.

Houchen also fared well in the 1,600 run as he took second in 4:59. Junior Ryan Rogers also scored points as he finished eighth in 5:19.

“It was Jaden’s first time running the open 800, and we were very happy to see him go out and run hard for the win,” Wright said. “The 4×800 team is running super hard and Coach (John) Reece has them running to compete.”

The Wildcats also accumulated a lot of points in the sprints and hurdles. Sophomore Mason Dobbins took second in the 110-hurdles in 15.67, while junior Tom Koontz (15.74) and sophomore Nathan Apple took third and fourth, respectively.

In the 300 hurdles, Koontz finished runner-up in 41.99 and Dobbins was sixth in 43.38.

Seniors Justin Collins and Ben Wiedenmann scored several points in the sprints. Collins (11.56) and Wiedenmann (11.67) took third and fifth, respectively, in the 100 dash. Widenmann went on to take second in the 200 dash in 23.40.

Collins, sophomore Ethan Ptacek and senior Dylan Armstrong all finished in the top eight in the 400 dash. Collins was runner-up at 51.92, while Ptacek was fourth in 52.85. Armstrong took eighth in 56.04.

The Wildcat 4×400 relay of Wiedenmann, Collins, Koontz and Ptacek took second overall in 3:31.

“Again, I keep using this word, but we are solid,” Wright said. “We have multiple guys that have the potential to win or place in the sprints. The guys are challenging each other in every practice and will just keep getting better with that mentality.

“Our hurdlers are really coming on strong and that’s a credit to the work those guys are putting in. That success is fantastic for the team.”

In the field events, Louisburg went 2-3 in the pole vault. Senior Luke Faulkner cleared 13 feet to finish second and freshman Caden Caplinger was third at 12 feet.

“Caden clearing 12’ was a PR for him,” Wright said. “We are still early in the season, and I know he will get up there to 12-6 or 13-0 or higher by the end of the season. Luke had good attempts at 13-6 and he is our leader in the pole vault group, it is very nice to have him helping and being a leader with the underclassman.”



Louisburg junior Chase Pritchard took third in the discus with a throw of 124 feet.

Louisburg also scored several points in the throws as sophomore Nathan Vincent took third in the javelin at 154 feet, while junior Chase Pritchard was third in the discus with a throw of 124-3.5.

Vincent also took sixth in the discus at 116-2 and sophomore J.R. Rooney was eighth in the shot put at 41-7.

“It was great to get points out in the throws,” Wright said. “Those guys are putting in the work and it’s paying off at the meets. I expect them to continue to put throws out there and

be competitive.”

In the jumps, sophomore Isaiah Whitley was third in the high jump as he cleared 5-10 and Dobbins was seventh at 5-6. Junior Hayden Feikert took fourth in the long jump with a mark of 19-10.

Delaney Wright continued to shine for the Louisburg girls as she picked up a pair of victories.



Louisburg junior Delaney Wright won the long jump and the 400-meter dash Thursday in Paola.

Wright won the long jump with a mark of 17-2.25 and also went

on to win the 400-meter dash in 1:01. She finished runner-up in the 200 dash in 27.10.

“It was great to see Delaney continue to push herself,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “She was happy but not satisfied with the long jump as she left an 18′ jump in the sand because she drug a foot on the landing. She is demanding of herself which makes her easy to coach.”

Freshman Emma Vohs also scored points in the sprints as she took fifth in the 400 (1:03) and sixth in the 200 (28.76).

In the field events, junior Corinna McMullen had her season best throw in the discus of 107-9.25 to win the event for the first time this season.

Senior Alyse Moore continued her success in the javelin as she recorded a season-best of 140-9 to take second to Wellsville’s Jadyn Troutman. The Wellsville senior won with a toss of 141-8 on her final throw.

Moore also scored points in the shot put as she took fourth at 34-5.

Juniors Davis Guetterman (113-4) and Tae Ellison (98-2) also had season best throws in the javelin and finished seventh and eighth, respectively.

“Corinna threw well and in tough competition came away with the gold,” Reece said. “Alyse and Davis continue to improve in javelin as well as other events. The throwing crew is doing a great job so far this season.”

Other results are:

GIRLS

100 dash: Andrea Gaza, 19th, 15.19

200 dash: Gaza, 22nd, 31.72

800 run: Alexis French, 11th, 2:52; Erin Apple, 14th, 2:54

1,600 run: Apple, 12th, 6:22; French, 14th, 6:38

Shot put: Emma Prettyman, 9th, 30-11; Aiyana Penca, 20th, 22-11

Discus: Penca, 14th, 83-11; Prettyman, 17th, 79-1

BOYS

100 dash: Hayden Feikert, 15th, 12.26

200 dash: Dylan Armstrong, 14th, 25.22

800 run: Cade Holtzen, 13th, 2:17; Ryan Rogers, 14th, 2:18

1,600 run: Hayden Ross, 10th, 5:20

3,200 run: Andrew Brown, 11th, 11:55

300 hurdles: Nathan Apple, 9th, 44.88

Pole vault: Caleb Shaughnessy, 9th, 10-6

Long jump: Ethan Ptacek, 11th, 18-8; Isaiah Whitley, 14th, 18-5

Shot put: Chase Pritchard, 11th, 39-0.5; Nathan Vincent, 20th, 35-2.5

Discus: Layne Ryals, 16th, 95-8.75

Javelin: Ryals, 14th, 123-3; Jay Scollin, 17th, 114-8

Week 3 Athlete of the Week: Jaden Vohs



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week three of the spring sports season, sponsored by Dr. Laura's Orthodontics.

Jaden Vohs, Junior, Track and Field

Louisburg junior Jaden Vohs was a big part of the Wildcats boys' victory at the Paola Invitational last Thursday. Vohs won the 800-meter run with a time of 2 minutes and 9 seconds. Earlier in the meet, Vohs ran the anchor leg of the 4×800-meter relay as he joined Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen and Hayden Ross to win in 8:52.

After it was over, the Louisburg boys team won the Paola Invitational with 141 points defeated runner-up Paola by 17.

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



Wildcats win three events at Leavenworth Invitational



Louisburg senior Alyse Moore won the javelin with a throw of 136 feet, 3 inches and was one of three Wildcats to win events Thursday at the Leavenworth Invitational.

LEAVENWORTH – The Louisburg track and field team didn't waste much time in competing against some of the top bigger schools in Kansas and Missouri.

The Wildcats took part in the Leavenworth Invitational on Thursday and brought home several medals on both the boys and the girls side.

Louisburg won three events, including two on the girls side as senior Alyse Moore captured the javelin title and junior Delaney Wright took first in the long jump.

The Wildcat boys also had a gold medal performance as sophomore Nathan Vincent recorded a 50-foot personal record to win the javelin.

In all, the boys finished third in the team standings with 107 points and the girls were fifth with 47. Lee's Summit West won the girls title with 164.75 points and Mill Valley won the boys with 142.

"We didn't get the times and distances we wanted overall, but I really thought we competed," Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. "We didn't worry about being the smallest school at the meet."

Moore picked up right where she left off as a sophomore in the javelin as she recorded a throw of 136 feet, 3 inches – which eclipsed her state medal-winning throw from almost two years ago.

The Louisburg junior also scored points in the shot put as she was third with a toss of 33 feet, 9.5 inches.

"Alyse is coming off of a great winter season and it is carrying over to the spring season," Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. "Alyse will do nothing but get better week by week. The throwers will be scoring points all season for us and that is exciting."

Wright, who medaled at state in four events as a freshman, placed in a four of her events Thursday – including a gold medal performance in the long jump. She had a leap of 17-2.

The Wildcat junior also scored points in the sprints as Wright was second in the 200 dash (27.39 seconds), fourth in the 400 dash (1:02) and fifth in the 100 (13.47).

"Delaney did well for the first meet out," Reece said. "Getting back into the groove after a long basketball season is a challenge, but a good one to have for our athletic

programs. She was not that far off of marks from two years ago so I’m excited to see how she progresses.”

Throws were a plus for the Lady Cats as sophomore Emma Prettyman took fifth in the shot put at 32-8, while junior Rinny McMullen was fifth in the discus at 94-04. Junior Davis Guetterman also scored in the discus with a sixth-place throw of 95-10.



Senior Justin Collins sprints to the finish of the 100-meter dash Thursday in Leavenworth.

On the boys side, Vincent provided a nice surprise for the Wildcat coaches in the javelin. The Louisburg sophomore recorded a throw of 152-05, which set a new personal record by nearly 50 feet, and he won the competition by an inch.

Vincent’s teammate, senior Jay Scollin, took third with a toss fo 145-03.

The Wildcats also scored points in the discus as junior Chase Pritchard was third with a toss of 122-9 and Vincent was sixth at 110-7. In the shot, sophomore Jackson Rooney took fourth at 39-3 and Pritchard was fifth with a toss of 38-6.5

“The throwers have been working hard with Coach (Pete) Skakal and Coach (Alex) Gentges,” Wright said. “Javelin was the big surprise with Nathan’s PR and placing first, along with Jay’s third place throw. Chase also had a good night throwing the discus.”

On the track, the Wildcats scored points in all the sprints, but found a lot of success in the 400 dash, specifically.

Seniors Justin Collins and Ben Wiedenmann, along with sophomore Ethan Ptacek, had three of the top four placers. Collins was second in a time 52.49 seconds, Ptacek was third at 53.19 and Wiedenmann was fourth at 53.38.

“Justin and Ben wanted to run the open 400 this year,” Wright said. “Their sophomore year they had fast splits on the 4×4 relay and want to see what they can do in the open. Then add Ethan Ptacek in the mix, that is a pretty good trio to have competing against each other every week.”

Collins also went on to finish runner-up in the 100 dash in 11.80 seconds and Wiedenmann took fifth in 11.88.

Louisburg also thrived in the relays as Collins, Wiedenmann, Tom Koontz and Ptacek took runner-up in the 4×100 in 44.57, while Collins, Koontz, Ptacek and Hunter Heinrich was fifth in the 4×400 in 3:38.

On the 4×800, the team of Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Hayden Ross and Jaden Vohs also ran strong in 8:53 to take fourth.

“All the relays ran well for the first meet,” Wright said,. “4×8 ran a solid race and they have the fastest time in 4A for the first week of meets. Still a long season to go, but off to

a good start.

“4×1 had solid handoffs and time. I though they ran faster than I thought they would and they will get better with more experience with each other. 4×4 competed well. We didn’t have Ben in the relay this week. When we bring Ben into the mix , we should be one top 4×4 relays in class 4A.”

Sophomore Mason Dobbins ran strong in his first varsity race in the 110 hurdles. Dobbins was second in 15.99 seconds, while Koontz was fourth in 16.12.

Koontz also had a big day in the 300 hurdles as he finished second in 41.81. Dobbins was fifth in 43.64 and sophomore Nathan Apple took sixth in 44.62.

“Mason and Tommy are going to push each all year in the 110 and 300,” Wright said. “Both should be in the top 5 at most of our meets. Mason had a good start in the 110 and Tommy had a good start in the 300’s. Nathan Apple also had solid races in the 110 and 300’s. This trio should be fun to watch this season.”



Luke Faulkner was second in the pole vault after he cleared 13 feet at Leavenworth.

Louisburg senior Luke Faulkner also earned a medal as he finished second overall in the pole vault after clearing 13 feet and freshman Caden Caplinger was fifth at 11-6.

The Wildcats also scored points in the jumps as junior Hayden Feikert was fifth in the long jump with a mark of 19-7.5 and Dobbins was sixth in the high jump at 5-8.

Other results:

GIRLS

100 dash: Andrea Gaza, 25th, 15.03

200 dash: Emma Vohs, 8th, 28.97; Gaza, 19th, 31.96

800 run: Erin Apple, 20th, 2:58; Alexis French, 21st, 2:59

1,600 run: Apple, 11th, 6:14; French, 15th, 6:43

Pole vault: Maddy Carpenter-Ross, 7th, 7-0

Shot put: Aiyana Penca, 15th, 25-7; Davis Guetterman, 17th, 24-5; Sydney Thornton, 19th, 23-4

Discus: Emma Prettyman, 8th, 89-3; Penca, 9th, 88-6; Guetterman, 16th, 67-3; Malee Rutherford, 20th, 59-01

Javelin: Tae Ellison, 9th, 88-9; Jocelyn Kettle, 21st, 64-0; Rutherford, 22nd, 63-11

BOYS

100 dash: Caden Caplinger, 18th, 12.45; Hayden Feikert, 19th, 12.45; Hunter Heinrich, 21st, 12.95

200 dash: Ben Wiedenmann, 8th, 24.16; Cooper Hipp, 14th, 24.84; Caplinger, 23rd, 25.5; Dylan Armstrong, 25th, 25.55; Heinrich, 26th, 26.42

400 dash: Armstrong, 11th, 56.55; Heinrich, 14th, 57.88

800 run: Carson Houchen, 9th, 2:13; Jaden Vohs, 11th, 2:13; Hayden Ross, 16th, 2:18; Sawyer Richardson, 22nd, 2:32; Ayden Deterding, 23rd, 2:36

1,600 run: Cade Holtzen, 11th, 5:20; Leo Martin, 16th, 5:56; Nathan Parker, 17th, 5:58

3,200 run: Noah Cotter, 12th, 11:54; Andrew Brown, 13th, 12:29; Max LaJoie, 14th, 12:46; Landan Henry, 15th, 12:50

110 hurdles: Nathan Apple, 7th, 16.98



Isaiah Whitley clears a height in the high jump Thursday.

High jump: Isaiah Whitley, 7th, 5-8

Pole vault: Caleb Shaughnessy, 7th, 10-0; Hipp, 7th, 10-0

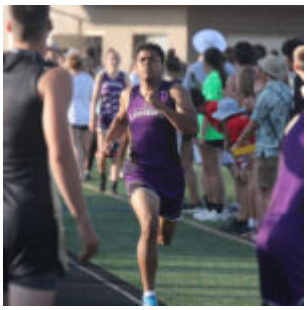
Long jump: Ethan Ptacek, 8th, 18-6; Whitley, 11th, 18-4

Shot put: Nathan Vincent, 8th, 37-0.25; Jaymes Melton, 11th, 34-8; Reid Justesen 19th, 30-5

Discus: Layne Ryals, 8th, 103-0; Will Hutsell, 12th, 93-2; Jackson Rooney, 13th, 88-1

Javelin: Ryals, 13th, 113-1; Liam DeVary, 16th, 105-7; Dominic Owens, 21st, 98-10

Wildcat track has state aspirations after missing last season



Louisburg senior Ben Wiedenmann is one of two returning members from the 2019 state 4×400-meter relay state championship team, along with fellow senior Justin Collins.

The 2019 track and field season couldn’t have ended on a better note for Louisburg.

In the regional meet in late May, the Wildcats qualified for state in 19 events between the boys and girls teams and also set six school records at the same time.

All that led up to a successful state meet where the Wildcats finished with multiple medalists and a state championship in the boys 4×400-meter relay.

Louisburg had built up a lot of momentum for the 2020 season, only to have it taken away due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, the Wildcats return several athletes from that special 2019 campaign and are looking forward to what 2021 has in store.

“With missing last year’s season, it is difficult to say how the team will look,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said.

“It might take a couple of track meets to get back where they were two seasons ago. Practice has been going very well. We have good senior leadership and they have been setting the tone at practices.”

On the boys side, the Wildcats return half of that state championship 4×400 team in seniors Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins as the sprinters are a strength of the team.

Both Wiedenmann and Collins figure to be the Wildcats’ top runners in the 100, 200 and 400-meter dashes. Sophomore Ethan Ptacek (400), junior Hayden Feikert (100) and freshman Hunter Heinrich (200, 400) all figure to be in the mix as well.

Ptacek, Heinrich and junior Tom Koontz are also battling for the final two spots in the 4×400 to join Collins and Wiedenmann. The same runners will also make up the 4×100 relay as well.

Louisburg will also put together a 4×800 relay as seniors Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen and juniors Hayden Ross and Jaden Vohs will try to make a run at state as well. The Wildcats also return a state qualifier in Ryan Rogers in the 1,600-meter run.

“We are still going to be strong in the 4×400,” Wright said. “We will mix and match the beginning of the season and find the four that will run together later in the year.

“The 4×100 will still be competitive and I think the sprints are going to be our strength. But I am excited because we have enough long distance runners to have a 4×800 team this year and I am looking forward to seeing what this group can do together.”



Louisburg senior Luke Faulkner will try and improve on his fourth place state finish two years ago.

The Wildcats also return a state medalist in the pole vault in Luke Faulkner. The Louisburg senior finished fourth at state as a sophomore and is looking for even bigger things this year.

“Luke is one of the best vaulters in the state,” Wright said. “After a few meets and nice days of practices, he should surpass from where he was his sophomore season.”

Koontz is also a returning state qualifier in the 300-meter hurdles for Louisburg and he will look to qualify in both the 110 and 300 hurdles this season. Sophomore Mason Dobbins will be pushing Koontz throughout the year, as both will look to score a lot of points throughout the year.

In the jumps, Feikert and Will Finestead just missed out at

the state meet two years ago in the long and triple jumps, respectively, and both have their eyes on a state berth this season.

Senior Jay Scollin has the same goal in the javelin as he finished sixth at regionals as a sophomore.



Louisburg junior Delaney Wright recorded four medals at the state meet two years ago, and is looking to improve on those marks this season.

GIRLS

Delaney Wright was considered one of the top track athletes in Class 4A a season ago after she earned four medals at the state meet in 2019.

She did all that as a freshman.

Now as junior, Wright will look to continue to make strides as she has her eyes on a state title in multiple events.

Wright will compete in all three sprints – 100, 200 and 400 – along with the long jump. She finished fourth in the 400 at state in 2019, and went on to take seventh in the 200 and eighth in the long jump.

“Delaney will be very competitive this year,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “She really did not miss a season as she has continued to do track work since last year and looks to be stronger in her individual events. It will be fun to watch her progress this season.”



Alyse Moore took fourth at state in the javelin as a sophomore as she will try for a state title in her senior season.

Another Lady Cat who figures to be in the mix for a state title is Alyse Moore. The Louisburg senior finished fourth at state in the javelin as a sophomore after splitting time between softball and track.

Now that track is her main focus, Moore will look to take the next step in the javelin, along with throwing the discus and shot put.

“Alyse will pick up where she left off from two seasons ago and be a top thrower in the javelin,” Reece said. “Also look for her to pick up the shot and disc from time to time where I see her becoming very competitive as we go through the season. I think we will see some shoulders drop from other schools when she leaves the javelin runway to throw in the ring.”

Also in the throws, seniors Sydney Thornton and Lexi Rogers will compete in the javelin, while senior Aiyana Penca and junior Rinny McMullen will throw the discus.

Numbers are down for the Louisburg girls this season, but Reece is looking forward to seeing what he can get from some of his younger athletes.

“We are few in numbers with four girls sports in the spring,” Reece said. “We have a strong throwing group that will be competitive in meets and intrasquad as well. To be a top three and compete at varsity meets, it will be a constant competition amongst the girls.

“We only have two distance runners, Erin (Apple) and Alexis (French) who will make great individual gains this season and hopefully sneak a few points for us. Delaney and Emma Vohs will score points in the sprints in most meets and being a junior and freshman, they will be working together for a couple of years.”

Top Louisburg Sports Stories of 2020

There hasn’t been a year like 2020, and for most people, they are ready to put it behind them and forget it ever existed.

Still, with all the challenges that 2020 brought, there were still plenty of positives to talk about when it came to Louisburg High School sports. History-making state places and state medals were plentiful on this list, but it wasn’t all positive. Louisburg had to say goodbye to a beloved town figure and athletes had to deal with the loss of spring sports.

Below are the top stories from 2020, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site. Thanks to the cancellation of spring sports, I don’t have the top 10 like I normally do, but I got close.

This year was a blast to cover, when I had the opportunity, anyway. Still, I am looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Thank you for everyone’s support and can’t wait for it all to begin again.



8. Ratliff-Becher wins state powerlifting title

After winning a state championship in 2019 Reilly Ratliff-Becher had every intention of backing up her performance during the Class 4A State Powerlifting Championships on March 7 at Piper High School.

In fact, the Louisburg senior wanted to improve it. Last

season, Ratliff-Becher took first in everything but squat, which she got runner-up.

This time around, she got the clean sweep.

Ratliff-Becher took first in bench, squat and clean and that led to her second straight state championship in the 180-pound class.

“It means a lot to me that I was able to win the state title again,” Ratliff-Becher said. “I set a goal for myself to win first in everything since I had got second in squat last year and I achieved it. Even though it wasn’t my best showing with the numbers I got on my lifts.

“The competition was very good this year, as it always is. But, fortunately with all the work I put in to at least maintain my numbers from last year, meant I was able to lift bigger amounts than my competition.”



7. Conley named state and midwest coach of the year

After a third place finish to end the year, Louisburg boys

soccer coach Kyle Conley was recognized among the state's best.

Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association in November.

He guided the Wildcats to a 16-2 record on the season and the team's highest finish in program history when Louisburg ousted Rose Hill, 3-0, in the state third-place game.

Just a few weeks later, Conley was honored once again – this time on the girls' side.

Despite the lost season, the United Soccer Coaches wanted to recognize coaches for their past accomplishments and for what this past spring was supposed to hold.

Atop that list was Conley as he was named as the Small School Midwest Coach of the Year.

"I am absolutely honored to receive this award," Conley said. "There are so many great coaches in the Midwest, but to me this is a program award. None of this is possible without everyone involved; girls coming to work their tails off everyday, parents traveling and supporting us anywhere and everywhere, community helping with supporting the program, the school supporting the girls, etc. Without the support and buy in from the girls, parents and community none of this is possible."

The Wildcat girls program has had a successful start in its four years. Conley has a 54-22-2 record during that span, that included two state runner-ups and another state final four appearance.



6. Louisburg cheer places third at state

The Louisburg cheer squad had to do its postseason competition a little different this year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It didn’t seem to bother them much as the defending state champions found themselves right in the thick of things again.

Although they didn’t repeat as champs, they were still among the state’s best as the Wildcats cheerleaders finished third in the state back in November.

Unlike performing in front of judges like they did in 2019, the Wildcats had to video tape their performance and send it in to be judged. It fared well as they tallied 83.35 points to finish in the top 3.

Baldwin earned the state title with 88.85 points and Abilene was second with 85.25.

Members of the Louisburg cheer squad are Bella Feikert, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Jayden Trester, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sophie Katzer, Sammy McDaniel, Julia Arriola, Andrea Gaza, JoJo Hendrickson, Sydney Dudzik, Abby Bradley, Anna Poe, Sienna Finch, Mable Graham, Audrey Anderson, Zoe Weers, Anna Morrison and Maggie Madison



5. Holtzen, Owens earn state medals for Wildcat wrestling

Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen both had their own agendas going into the state wrestling tournament.

Owens, qualified for state last year, but left without a win and he vowed to fix that this time around. As for Holtzen, he came up short in his efforts for a second state medal as a

sophomore last season and had all the motivation not to come home empty-handed again.

Both wrestlers more than made up for their rough patches a year ago.

Owens and Holtzen left Salina with a state medal during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships on Friday and Saturday at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center.



Owens made it to the semifinals and wound up earning a fourth-place medal at 120 pounds, while Holtzen finished fifth at 126 pounds.

It also marked the first time since 2016 that Louisburg finished the season with multiple state medalists, when Nathan Keegan and Mason Koechner each brought home medals.

The Wildcats nearly had three medalists as sophomore Brandon Doles finished one win shy of a state medal at 160 pounds with a 2-2 record.



4. Dennis steps down as LHS team doctor

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.

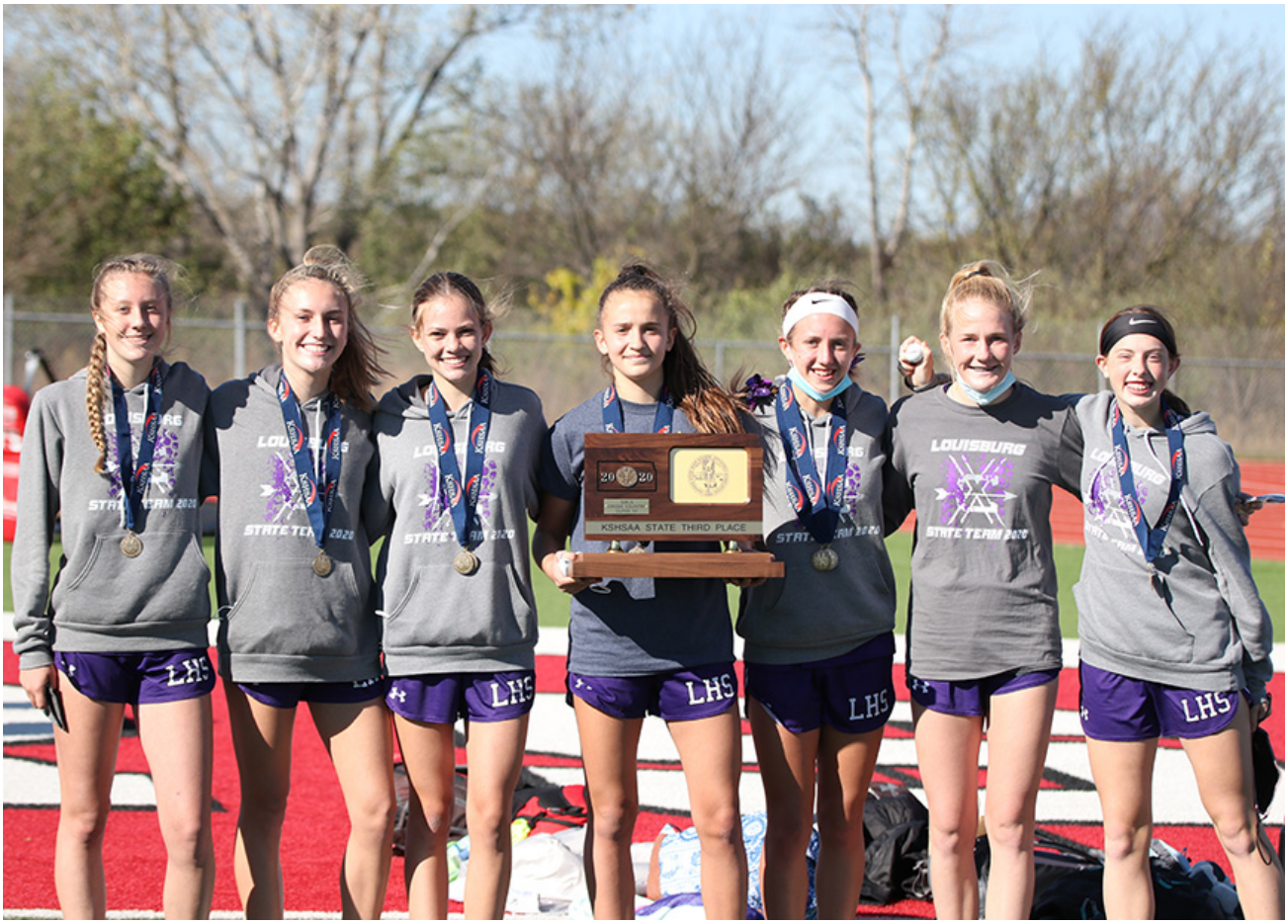
He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

In May, he left Louisburg Chiropractic Office and handed the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis also stepped away as LHS' team doctor and left 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.



3. Girls Cross Country Takes Third at State

For 23 years, the Louisburg cross country program has been chasing a top three finish at the Class 4A meet.

The Wildcats have had several teams qualify, especially in the last few seasons, but have always come up short of their goal. Following Saturday's race in Wamego, the Wildcats can finally stop running after it.

The Louisburg girls put together an historic performance at the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. The Lady Cats earned a state plaque with a third place finish as they surpassed Buhler by eight points to record the school's first top three state finish.

Junior Reese Johnson, sophomores Claire Brown, Bree Gassman and Nova Ptacek, along with freshmen Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple, will all go down in school history as they became the first Wildcat team to bring home state hardware.

“It means the world to me to be a part of the first team ever to place at state,” Rhamy said. “Coming into the state meet, I was just hoping our team would be in the top half, so you could imagine my excitement when our team placed third. I didn’t even know we made school history until our coaches told us.”

Rhamy was one of two freshmen who earned top 10 finishes individually, along with Edwards. Rhamy finished eighth overall in 20 minutes and 58 seconds, while Edwards was right behind her in 10th in 21:02.

Junior Reese Johnson also garnered a state medal as she was 15th in 21:28 to help the Lady Cats to an historic performance.

It was a proud moment for many in the Louisburg program, and included in that is John Reece. The longtime Wildcat head coach was all smiles following his team’s performance.

“It is 23 years the making,” coach Reece said. “You always have the plans and goals to get to state and then you get a group to go to state and do something great. This year was one of those. With the Frontier League as tough as it is, and then getting third there, put it in our heads that maybe we could do this. They all went out and ran their races, and that just shows their grit and determination and who they are.”

A week earlier, the Wildcats also made history as its was the first time in school history when they qualified the entire boys team to the state meet as they took third at regionals.



2. Boys Soccer Finishes Runner-Up At State

As the Louisburg players huddled around their state plaque, many of them looked at it in awe and wonder.

“Hey guys, we won this,” a player shouted.

The statement was obvious at the time, but nonetheless, their excitement was more than warranted.

For the first time in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team brought home a plaque from the state final four as the Wildcats defeated Rose Hill, 3-0, on Saturday in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

It was only the second time in school history that the Wildcats had it made it this far, with the other being in 2016, when they finished fourth.

“There are only six teams in the entire state that get to end their year with a win and we wanted to be one of those teams,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We want to be able to hang up a banner on our field and we wanted a plaque so that no one can forget what these kids earned and what they did this season. I am so proud of all of them.”

It was a program defining moment for the Wildcats as they began the weekend searching for a state championship, but lost 2-0 to Bishop Miege on Friday in the semifinals. Still, recording the best finish in school history is nothing for someone to hang their head about, and the Wildcats came out Saturday wanting to make sure they brought some hardware home.

“It’s absolutely crazy to think about what we have accomplished this year, partly because I have only played soccer in high school,” senior captain Logan Faulkner said. “Bringing a state plaque back will just be a reminder of what we did and how we reached our goal.”



1. COVID-19 Cancels Spring Sports

In March, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly closed all schools for the rest of the 2019-20 school year due to the spread of COVID-19.

When most students hear school has been closed, especially in the winter, cheers erupt. In this case, however, the tone was much more somber – especially among the senior class.

Proms were canceled. Any plans they had for a graduation ceremony were put on hold, and for more than 30 seniors, their last opportunity at playing a sport at Louisburg High School was taken away.

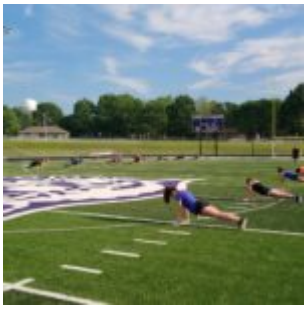
In fact, close to 200 students were planning on participating in an activity in the spring, but with no school, the Kansas State High School Activities Association followed suit and canceled the spring season the day after Gov. Kelly's declaration.

Students, parents and coaches alike have had to come to grips that a season they had been looking forward to all year, was never going to happen. Tears flowed, walls were punched in frustration and some were left speechless.

There would be no game days, no Senior Nights and no postseason runs. Athletes had to figure out how to cope with this fact and it was a challenge for the Louisburg girls soccer, track and field, baseball, softball, golf and swim teams.

Many of those teams had big postseason aspirations after success in 2019 and were left wondering what could have been.

Wildcat athletes report back for summer conditioning



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

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

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

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

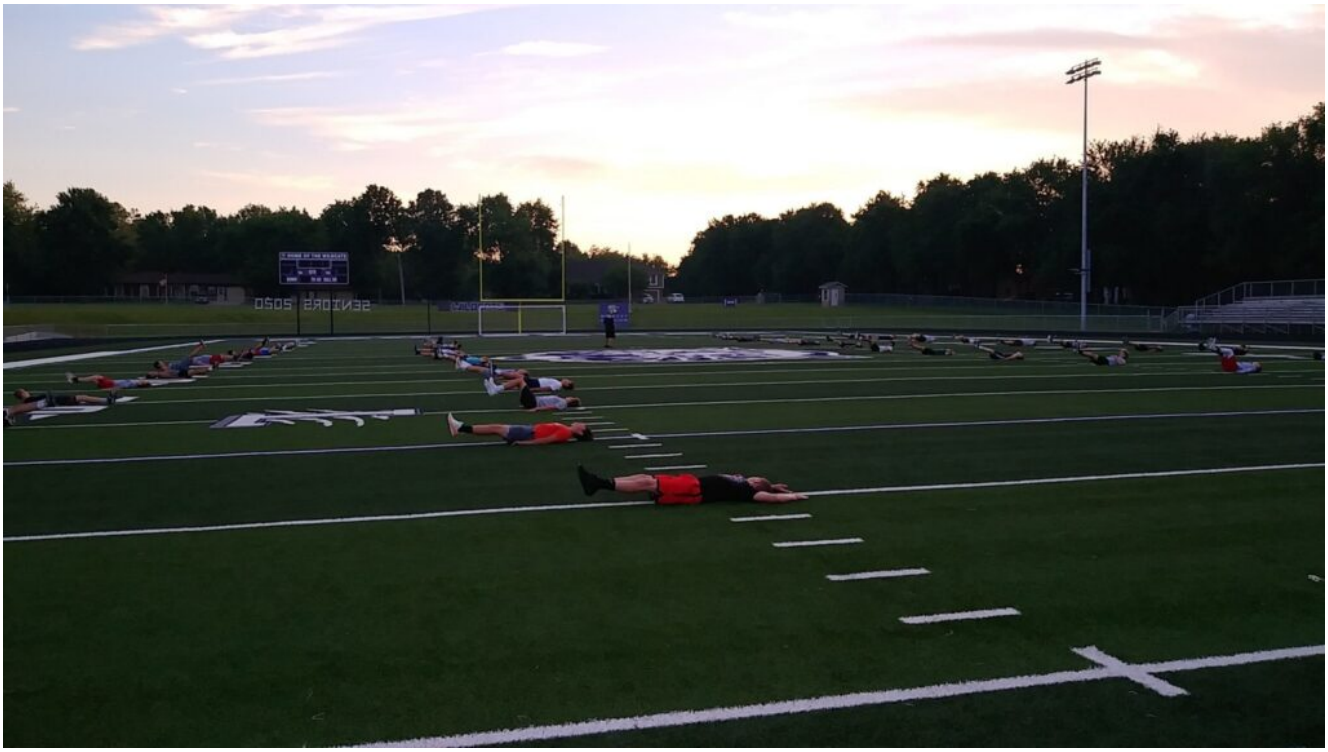
This was all following the cancellation of the spring season to the spread of COVID-19 and KSHSAA allowed school districts to begin conditioning exercises on June 1. The Louisburg school district started this past Monday and each athlete must participate in 10 sessions before being able to attend in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

Several coaches were in attendance running athletes through drills in three separate stations that would allow some space

between everyone. Football coaches Robert Ebenstein, Ty Pfannenstiel, Joel McGhee and Drew Harding were on hand to lead drills, along with other staff from within the USD 416 school district.

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

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



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

To start the day, each athlete is screened before the start of conditioning with a temperature check and then they are divided into three groups. Each of them will participate in

three stations that focuses on different workouts. There are no more than 45 athletes in a group and the coaches design workouts to promote the six feet of distance.

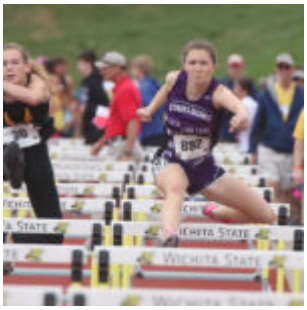
“There were temperatures that needed to be taken and protocol for sanitizing hands and checking in that went efficiently and smoothly overall,” Pickman said. “A lot of planning went into this with the coaches to make sure it went well. And Mr. Holloway (LHS principal) volunteered his time to help take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

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

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

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

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.

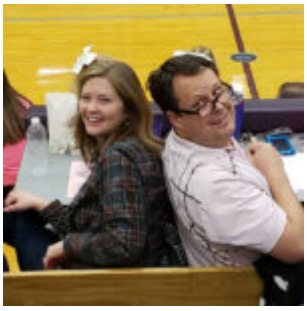
“The big reason other than track was that all of the staff and students there are so warm and welcoming in ways that I never got at other schools,” Keagle said. “They show that they care and are interested in your future, academically and athletically. Plus, they have a great education program that I’m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

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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.

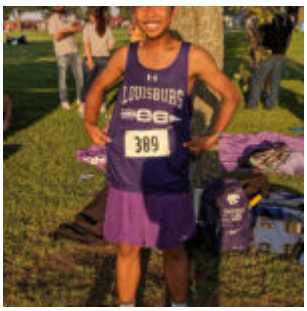
"I want everyone to know how much I appreciate their kind words," Dennis said. "There has been talk of various activities surrounding my career change that have been proposed. While I genuinely appreciate this, I don't think I can handle the attention. My emotions have gotten the better of me and I am 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