

2020 Senior Spotlight: Carlee Gassman



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

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

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

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

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

the 300 hurdles."

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

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

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

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

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

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

to help get her through it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CG: I don't have many hobbies outside of sports, but I do enjoy taking photos of my siblings at their athletic events. I also love to walk for hours and I enjoy teaching myself American Sign Language.

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

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

track meet is going to be held but its keeping me motivated and will be a lot of fun.

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

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

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

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

Carlee's Favorites

Pro athlete: Tom Brady

Pro team: New England Patriots

College team: University of Northern Iowa

Movie: Footloose (1984)

TV Show: Friends

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

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

Pregame meal/snack: Blueberry bagel with ham on it

Class/subject: Science

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

Previous Senior Spotlights

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

2020 Senior Spotlight: Charlie Koontz



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

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

Koontz, who was a sprinter on the Louisburg boys track and field team, found his way to the medal stand at state and left his mark on the Wildcat program. Koontz, along with Blue Caplinger, Justin Collins and Ben Wiedenmann broke the school record in the 4x100-meter relay at the Class 4A regional meet last May.

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

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

"This season was going to be really good for us considering we still have a bunch of speed and other weapons," Koontz said. "There were a lot of kids that were going to step up and possibly help us out in the long run as the season went along.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CK: My favorite thing to do outside of sports is probably

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

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

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

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

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

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

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

Charlie's Favorites

Pro athlete: Troy Polamalu

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: Kansas State Football

Movie: Dances With Wolves

TV Show: Supernatural

Song: California Love by 2Pac

Band/Musician: Jimi Hendrix or AC/DC

Pregame meal/snack: Pasta

Class/subject: Any kind of history

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

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer

Garrett Harding – Track

Mackenzie Scholtz – Soccer

Calvin Dillon – Golf

Kat Coolidge – Softball

**2020 Senior Spotlight:
Garrett Harding**



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

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

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

Enter track.

Harding decided to put baseball on the backburner and give track a try – more specifically the shot put. He wanted a different challenge in his life.

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

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

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

Unfortunately, Harding will not get the opportunity to see how

it all would have turned out as his senior season was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

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

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

Although that game is still in limbo as the Shrine Bowl is trying to find a new facility to host the event, Harding can only focus on what he can control.

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

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

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

GH: I miss being away from my friends and I especially miss

pestering Coach Skakal.

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

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

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

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

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

GH: I am going to play football at Truman State University and pursue a degree in Business Administration/Management and Finance. After that I want to go to graduate school and get my MBA.

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

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

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

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

Garrett's Favorites

Pro athlete: Anthony Sherman

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: Kansas State

Movie: Battleship

TV Show: The Ranch

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

Band/Musician: Kenny Chesney

Pregame meal/snack: Ibuprofen

Class/subject: History

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

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer

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



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

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

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

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

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

The first two weeks of conditioning sessions will not involve weights, indoor facilities or sporting equipment to ensure safety. Masks will be optional at workouts, but six feet of

distance will be in place along with no more than the 90 gathering restriction under the phase 3 guidelines put out by the state.

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



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

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

administrators have been very supportive throughout this process."

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

and students again."

2020 Senior Spotlight: Carter Anglin



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo by Jennifer Mullinax

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

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

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

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

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

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

Carter's Favorites

Pro athlete: Ken Block

Pro team: Kansas City Royals

College team: Pitt State Gorillas

Movie: Talladega Nights

TV Show: Breaking Bad

Song: Second Chance by Shinedown

Band/Musician: Shinedown

Pregame meal/snack: Footlong turkey and cheese Subway sandwich

Class/subject: Algebra

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

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook - Golf

Morgan Messer = Soccer

August Daniels - Softball

Gassman excited for opportunity at Northern Iowa



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2020 Senior Spotlight: Sydni Keagle



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

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

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

Not everyone had the same views Keagle had.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

spending time with family."

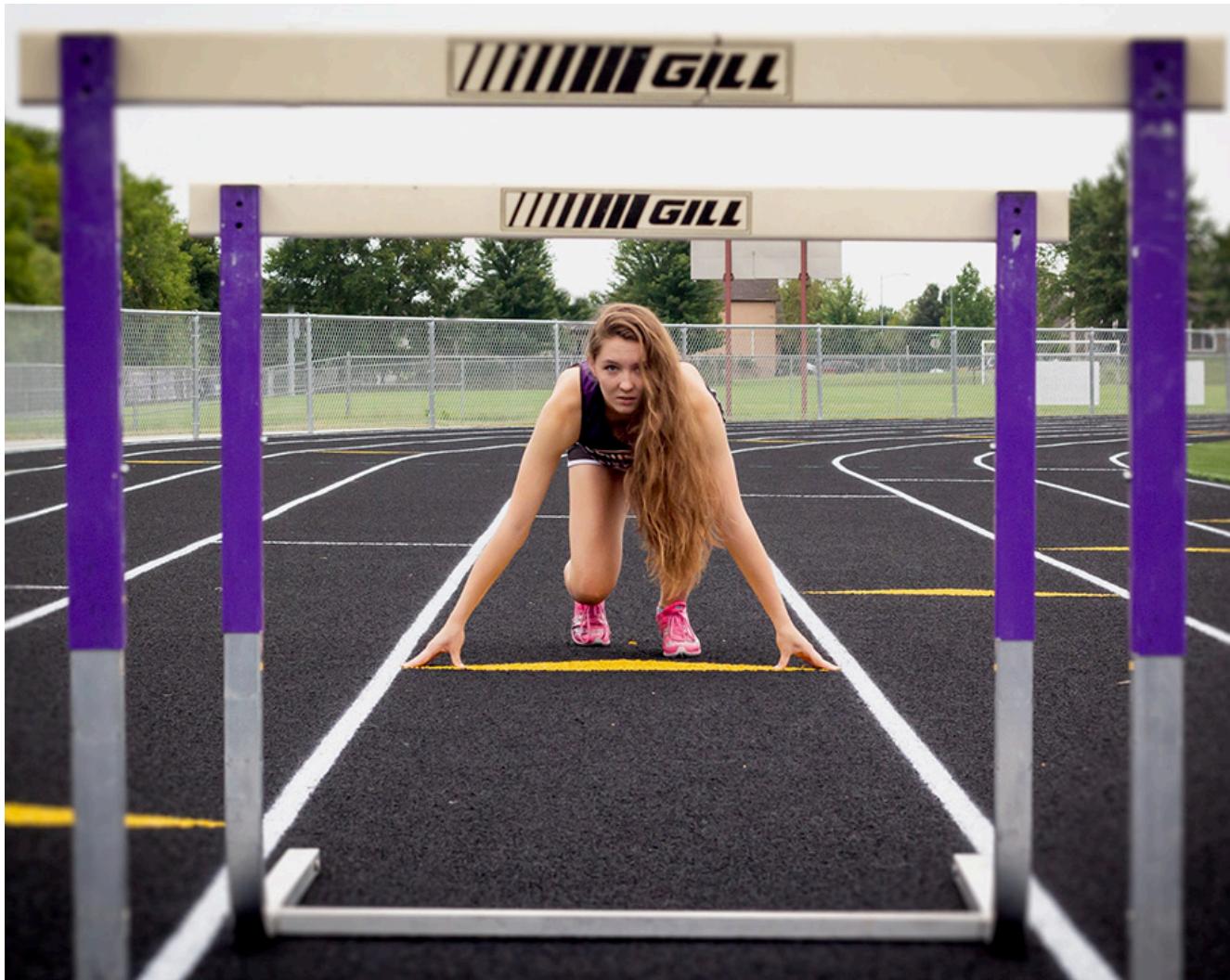


Photo by Kristin Davis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

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

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

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

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

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

Sydni's Favorites

Pro athlete: Stephen Curry

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: KU Basketball

Movie: Aladdin

TV Show: Gilmore Girls

Song: If Today Was Your Last Day by Nickelback

Band/Musician: Jonas Brothers

Pregame meal/snack: Gatorade and a Subway sandwich

Class/subject: History

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

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

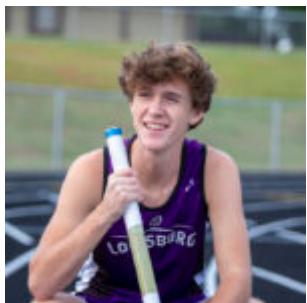
Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

2020 Senior Spotlight: Trent Martin



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

For the last two years, Trent Martin has found himself on the biggest stage in Kansas high school track and field and he was ready for a third opportunity.

Martin, a pole vaulter for Louisburg High School, was making sure his final season as a Wildcat was a good one as he had

been prepping for one last trip to the state meet. He already had one state medal under his belt, but he was looking for more.

"I was really excited for my last year of vaulting for LHS and I felt like this year was going to be a good year," Martin said. "I was hoping for my second state medal."

Instead, Martin won't ever get that sense of closure. The spring sports season was canceled due to the spread of COVID-19 and his pole vaulting career came to a premature end.

"When I found out the season was canceled, I was pretty upset," Martin said. "It was my last year to do the sport I love."

Pole vaulting has been a big part of Martin's life. He has been working on the event since middle school – and not just during the school season – but doing off-season workouts and instructional work in the Kansas City area. It had become a passion of his.

Martin took a big step forward as a sophomore as he medaled eighth at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita and returned as junior. He finished 12th overall in his final trip state.

It is a part of his life Martin is truly going to miss.

"I started pole vaulting in seventh grade," Martin said. "I just wanted to try pole vault because my dad was a good pole vaulter in high school. I have put a lot of time and effort into this sport throughout the years."

As for the team itself, the Wildcat boys returned several state qualifiers from a season ago were ready to infuse a lot of young talented athletes to the mix as well. It was all set to be a special year.



Louisburg senior Trent Martin was a two-time state qualifier for the Wildcat track team.

Even though the 2020 season won't happen, Martin still has plenty of good memories to fill the tough times.

"I think the boys team would have done great things this year," Martin said. "I think my favorite moment from track was placing at state my sophomore year because it was a big accomplishment for me. It showed that all my hard work had paid off."

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Trent 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?

TM: I have missed having social interactions with my friends, teachers and coaches.

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

TM: One of the most memorable moments was taking a trip to Wichita for state track with my teammates and friends.

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

TM: Fishing is my main hobby outside of sports, work and school. Fishing is a calming and relaxing activity to do either by yourself or with other people.

LSZ: What are your plans for after graduation?

TM: I am attending Pittsburg State University to major in Business Marketing

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

TM: One accomplishment was rebuilding the dock on my pond. It was in bad condition and it felt good to do something productive with our time off.

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

TM: Most people know quite a bit about me, but one thing not many people do know is I work at Home Depot.

Trent's Favorites

Pro athlete: Mondo Duplantis

Pro team: USA Track Team

College team: KU Basketball

Movie: Superbad

TV Show: Tiger King

Song: Graduation by Juice Wrld

Band/Musician: Juice Wrld

Pregame meal/snack: McDonald's

Class/subject: Coding

Teacher and why: Mr. Holloway – he was a great teacher in middle school and a great principal now.

Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

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Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Pickman named as new LHS activities director



Michael Pickman (left) was hired as Louisburg High School's new activities director and assistant principal last week following the USD Board of Education meeting. Current Louisburg AD, Scott Hinkle (right), will move to the middle school to serve in the same capacity starting next school year.

Louisburg High School will have a little different look to its activities department for the 2020-21 school year.

Following the USD 416 Board of Education meeting on April 13, Michael Pickman was hired to serve as the school's new assistant principal and activities director. Pickman will replace Scott Hinkle, who has been in that position for the last two years.

Hinkle will remain in the district and will move over to the middle school to serve in the same capacity.

"I had known for a while that I wanted to continue my education by getting a second master's degree, but I didn't really know which area," Pickman said. "I talked with current administration and was both inspired and encouraged to explore administrative leadership. This is the job I wanted because it meant staying in Louisburg and continuing to work with the

staff and coaches who I know have, can and will achieve great things when it comes to our students and student athletes.

"We are a Louisburg family and I want my daughter in the Louisburg community and school system, so I wouldn't have done this anywhere else. The atmosphere from district leadership to the building leadership is top notch and I am ready to grow as an educator and work alongside (principal) Jeremy (Holloway) and the administrative staff at the high school and the amazing coaches and support them."

Pickman has taught English at the high school for the last seven years and has also worked in the Prairie View, West Franklin and Maur Hill Prep school districts.

He has also spent a lot of time in the athletic arena as he has served as the Wildcat boys and girls soccer assistant coach, alongside head coach Kyle Conley, for the last five-plus years.

"It will be tough to give up all aspects of it, but the magic of these soccer programs will be especially difficult," Pickman said. "Kyle has been an amazing person to coach with and his passion is contagious. Getting to start the girls program with him and the immediate success has been amazing. State finals and big wins and the atmosphere – some don't ever get to experience that – and lastly the players, both boys and girls who have graduated and those who remain to carry on the greatness are why I said yes to coaching. They make the whole experience amazing and fun.

"So it will be hard, but I would also not have gone anywhere else to do a different job and so I will still be able to support the soccer players and every other student and athlete through my new opportunity and to do so the Wildcat Way."

As for Hinkle, he spent the last two years as the LHS activities director after coming from Liberal High School. He is excited that his new position at the middle school will

allow him to spend more time with family.

"I really enjoyed my time at the high school, even though it was only two years," Hinkle said. "I am leaving behind a great workplace with a great culture and an unbelievable staff. It was not an easy decision.

"I made the move to the middle school to get back some evenings and weekends. I have been an athletic director for 11 years at the high school level in my career, and I was ready to free up some time. I know I am joining another great staff at LMS, and look forward to the new challenge ahead of me."

2020 Senior Spotlight: Michael Waldron



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.

Fifteen inches.

That is all that stood between Michael Waldron and his first state medal last year at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita.

Although he was a little frustrated at the time, Waldron recorded a personal-best throw in the javelin and it was a good way to go into his senior season. Not too bad for an event he only had two years of experience in – and one he nearly gave up on.

“I gave up baseball after my freshman year and went back to track, this time I was competing in the discus throw only, until my mom begged me to try javelin,” Waldron said. “I decided to take her up on her offer and I tried it. I was terrible. I barely threw it 60 feet and for two straight weeks I couldn’t figure it out. I told my parents I was done throwing javelin, but my mom insisted I keep trying.

“That next week, everything finally clicked and I threw one just around 100 feet. We were also measuring that day to see who would go to the first varsity meet and coach (Pete) Skakal gave me a chance. So yes, javelin is a huge part of my life at the moment. It has taught me that even when a situation or life seems hopeless and there’s no light at the end of the tunnel, you still have to power through and have faith.”

Waldron is using those words, now, more than ever.

Right before the start of his senior track season – that was all set to give him his first state medal – spring sports across Kansas were canceled due to the spread of COVID-19. Seniors everywhere were left speechless and angry, Waldron included.

“It was a slap in the face – a sucker punch,” Waldron said. “At first, I couldn’t believe I wouldn’t have a senior track season, senior prom or graduation day. Just recently, I thought of how there is also no senior skip day or senior prank day and how there was just so many more activities left in this school year. The hardest thing was thinking about how that last day before spring break, might have been the last time I see some of my fellow seniors for the rest of my life.

We are all going our separate ways and for some people that is far away from Louisburg.

"My so-called therapy for all this is just hoping that this pandemic comes to an end soon and maybe just maybe some of these events will be rescheduled, we may have a half-season possibly, who knows. The last thing, I can do is just be ready and stay positive, whether that's staying in shape or throwing my javelin."

Waldron was one of several returning state qualifiers from a season ago and the Wildcats were not only poised for individual success, but team success as well.

"Personally, I think with the addition of a few freshmen jumpers and sprinters, I think we could have won a league championship this year as a team," Waldron said. "On top of that, I think we could've had at least 15 or more boys qualify for state this year. But with the amount of 'point-getters' we had returning this year, I believe we had a chance to win every meet this year. We had some returning state qualifiers and placers from last year ready to rock and roll this year. Adding those guys and the platoon of newcomers this year, I was excited to see where we would compete as a team at league and regionals."

It has been a busy senior year for Waldron already as he was a starter on the Louisburg football and basketball team and it was a year that featured a lot of highs and lows. Even through all that, he was looking forward to the spring the most.



Louisburg senior Michael Waldron was poised for his state medal this year in the javelin.

"Let's just say I have always loved all my sports equally but this year, in terms of track, I was ecstatic," Waldron said. "I have my own javelin, so I would be throwing it and practicing in my backyard even during my other sports seasons as long as the weather was good. I could not hold back my excitement for the season and having new uniforms was even more thrilling. On top of that, 12 of the 16 javelin throwers last year at state were seniors, so I was ready to shine and hopefully make it back to state and take a step on that podium to receive a state medal."

Waldron's state medal dream, unfortunately, will stay just

that. He still has a lot of good memories to hold on to, and that helps during the difficult times as he prepares to throw in college at the University of Central Missouri.

"My favorite moment would have to be the opportunity to throw at KU relays last season," he said. "I mean the state track meet and everything that was included with it was memorable, no doubt, but KU relays was just so surreal. I was throwing against the best of the best in all classes in the state, like multi-time state champions and the nation's leading high school thrower from Manhattan High. I felt like I didn't belong there and that's what made it so special to me."

"To add onto that, having the opportunity to see all the collegiate throwers compete was also extremely cool. I went to this week-long KU Track and Field camp in the summer before my junior year and I met a ton of kids my age doing all sorts of different events and those memories and friendships I created there carried over into this meet. Every 15 minutes, I saw one of my friends from camp and getting to watch them compete and seeing them in the crowd when I was competing was just really special and honestly one my favorite parts of the moment."

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Michael 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?

MW: Besides missing track the most, I definitely miss seeing my friends and teachers. Also, not being able to go to the gym, movie theater, or simply leave my house is also a huge bummer. I like having school in session, because not only do I see my friends but I feel like I just understand the material and subject better while learning at school. Online school is definitely weird, mostly because I have never taken an online

class, but you are also missing that face to face instruction. I guess, you could say I'm missing the "usual" or everyday life. I just feel out of routine.

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

MW: I know this isn't spring sports related, but I want to say my most memorable moment as an athlete would be the 25-7 victory (2018) over Paola on their home football field. Both teams were undefeated and fighting for a league championship. We were able to pull off a win there but it wasn't that close of a game. Sure, we didn't score a lot of points but we just dominated. That would be a game and memory I will never forget. As a student, I want to say my most memorable moment would be the Homecoming Day Talent Shows, just remembering all of my classmates up there performing their songs, dances or special talents. But also being able to be up there with my friends my senior year and doing that Mr. LHS pageant was definitely something ingrained into my mind.

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

MW: I think most boys can agree with me on this one, my favorite hobby outside of sports would be just playing video games. It's even better playing with your friends because then there's the laughter and the fun that comes with playing the game. It is just a good way to get your mind off of the busyness that surrounds high school athletes and the amount of homework. Now, I only play video games when I have the free time, but it is definitely my favorite hobby.

LSZ: I know you are going to throw at Central Missouri next year, but how tough has it been to kind of stay in throwing shape and have you been able to work on that at all on your own?

MW: Well, being able to go throw at Central Missouri next year

is a blessing, but the preparation surprisingly hasn't been stopped, since I have my own javelin and just about 75 yards of open space in my backyard, I can just throw in my backyard every day. Now, obviously it is different, because not having the instruction that I would have had this track season and not being able to have a coach telling me what I am doing wrong or what I need fix, makes training and preparing a little bit harder. Also, in terms of staying strong and keeping my body in shape, workout equipment is slim at my house which makes workouts difficult to come up with. It's hard not having a weights class or the local gym open, but I do what I can. The positive is that having some equipment rather than none is good and owning a javelin is great, so I can take this extended time and really perfect some techniques before my first collegiate season.

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

MW: Well, being on the honor roll and getting good grades every year has always been a thing I work for. My GPA is something I am proud of, but I think there is always room for improvement. Taking the advanced science and math classes throughout high school was definitely challenging and I'm glad I could say I had a 3.8 GPA in classes like physics, AP Biology and AP Calculus. But definitely, being a member of National Honor Society would be my favorite achievement. Lastly, finishing with so many college credits in AP courses and my Accounting classes was my biggest accomplishment, I think, as a student because now I am just more ready for college and the next step in life.

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

MW: Honestly, I don't think that most people know I was originally born in California. I moved here when I was 3, so like it isn't that big of a deal. I have been around here for

a bit so no one really knows. All of my relatives are out in California, so not having any of them around throughout my life has been weird. Most people I see have their grandparents at sporting events or awards ceremonies but no one has really asked me about my grandparents, so most people may not know that I grew up in Southern California.

Michael's Favorites

Pro athlete: Well, my all-time favorite would be Kobe Bryant, but my current favorite would be Mike Trout.

Pro team: Kansas City Chiefs

College team: My beloved Kansas State Wildcat Football Team

Movie: Remember the Titans

TV Show: The Office

Song: Stayin' Alive by The Bee Gees

Band/Musician: The Bee Gees

Pregame meal/snack: My meal would definitely be a chicken bacon ranch sandwich from anywhere. My snack would be a Nature Valley protein bar with a glass of milk.

Class/subject: Anything history because it comes easy to me.

Teacher and why: Mrs. Lane is definitely my favorite, not only because I have a lot of classes with her, but I just took accounting my junior year not knowing what would become of it. She helped me find what I wanted to major in, I ended up loving accounting and that's what I want to do with my love and that's because of her.

Previous Senior Spotlights

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