

# Top 10 Stories of 2018



It was a successful, and eventful, 2018 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program. This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and several programs brought back state hardware to Louisburg.

Below are the Top 10 stories from 2018, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

This year was a blast to cover and I was blessed to have the opportunity to go along for the ride with many of these. As much fun as it was, I can't wait for 2019 to begin. Looking forward to it!



## **10. Dillon medals at state golf for second straight year**

EMPORIA – All season, Calvin Dillon had been atop or near the front of leaderboard and that didn't change in what was his biggest tournament of the season.

The Louisburg High School sophomore went up against the state's best during the Class 4A state golf tournament on May 19 at the Emporia Municipal Course and did more than old his own. Dillon earned a state medal as he finished 11<sup>th</sup> overall with a 3-over par 74.

It was the second consecutive state medal for Dillon after he finished 10<sup>th</sup> overall last season at Wamego as a freshman.

"It is a real honor to earn another state medal, especially with the quality players that were at

the state tournament,” Dillon said. “There were lots of good players and lots of good teams.”

It was another notch on Dillon’s list of accomplishments that included a Frontier League title and six straight tournament victories during the 2018 season.



Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein



Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley

## **9. Conley, Ebenstein named Class 4A Coach of the Year**

Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley and Wildcat football coach Robert Ebenstein both led their respective teams to special seasons.

Those seasons were special enough for both coaches to earn two big awards.

Conley was rewarded for all his hard work in June when it was announced that he was named as the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association's Girls Coach of the Year for Class 4-1A.

He guided the Wildcats to a 14-7 record and a spot in the state championship match, where the Lady Cats finished second overall. The

finish was something to remember for Wildcat fans as that was accomplished in just the program's third year of existence.

He has posted a 41-18-2 record during his time as the Wildcat girls head coach and also guided the Louisburg boys soccer team to its best finish in program history in 2017 with a fourth place finish at state.

As for Ebenstein, he guided the Wildcats to 10 straight victories and a regional championship to start the 2018 season, before getting knocked out in the sectional round against eventual state champion, Bishop Miege.

Following the season, the Kansas Football Coaches Association named Ebenstein as the Class 4A Coach of the Year. Ebenstein, who is just in his second season as head coach, has a 16-4 record with the Wildcats as he guided his team to a Frontier League championship this year.



## 8. Holtzen finishes Louisburg career with 12 varsity letters

Once Isabelle Holtzen received her diploma and walked out of Louisburg High School for the last time as a student, she officially became one of the most decorated female athletes in school history.

No, she doesn't have any individual state championships, or even one as part of a team. Holtzen's decorations aren't ones in the form of trophies or all-state honors, but instead, they can be found on the front of

her letter jacket.

Holtzen became the first female athlete in at least 20 years to earn 12 varsity letters, which means she lettered on the varsity level in three sports in each of her four years of high school.

In research done by Louisburg Sports Zone, it was unable to find the last athlete to accomplish the feat, which could mean Holtzen could be the first Lady Cat to do so. She competed in cross country, basketball and track and field

The last athlete to come close was in 2001 when Krystal Bowes earned 10 varsity letters before moving on to a collegiate track career at Wichita State.

“The biggest thing that it means to me is to just have an opportunity to participate in three sports at a school like Louisburg,” Holtzen said. “The bigger the school that you go to, the harder it is to play multiple sports at the varsity level and I think Louisburg is unique in that fact. The best part of this whole journey was I think my freshman year because there was no pressure and no one was expecting anything from me. It was surprising and exciting to be able to letter in all three sports.”

Holtzen is currently at Northern Iowa, where she received a scholarship to pole vault for the Panther Track and Field Team.



7.

## **Dixon earns All-American, Player of the Year honors, signs with Kansas State**

Louisburg

senior Anna Dixon led the Lady Cat volleyball program all season and she was recognized for her play on the court.

Dixon was named to the Under Armour Volleyball All-American team as she received a spot on the honorable mention squad when the list was released in November.

Dixon, the 6-foot-3 outside hitter, was recently named the Class 4A Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association, and along with that was also selected to the all-state first team.

It was the second year in a row Dixon was named player of the year, as she had to share the honor last season with Rose Hill's Gracie Van



Driel.

The honors certainly didn't stop there as Dixon was all named to the All-Frontier League first team as she helped guide the Lady Cats to an undefeated league season.

Dixon led the Lady Cats in kills with 584 in 105 sets played. She also finished with 325 digs, as she played all six rotations and also had 50 aces and 42 blocks.

In her four years with the program, Dixon finished with 2,003 kills, which would place that total among the best the school has ever seen.

All that success resulted in a dream come true for Dixon as she made it official last November when she signed to play volleyball at Kansas State.

"I have always known Kansas State was going to be my home," Dixon said. "Even since I committed as a sophomore, I always wanted to go up to Manhattan and see the girls and spend time with the team. K-State is where I need to be."



## **6. Louisburg wrestling sends six to state, Holtzen earns first state medal**

SALINA – As the final whistle sounded in his blood round match, Cade Holtzen looked up into the rafters of the Tony’s Pizza Events Center and smiled.

He had finally reached his goal.

Holtzen defeated Columbus’ Gabe Porter by a 6-0 decision Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships in Salina and secured his state medal.

“It is one of the best feelings that I have had in my life,” Holtzen said. “Just knowing that I’m going to place – you just can’t match that with anything else.”

It certainly wasn’t

easy for the Louisburg freshman as he faced a win or go home with nothing scenario heading into his match with Porter. Holtzen pulled out the victory and eventually finished sixth overall at 113 pounds to give Louisburg a state medalist for the third consecutive season.

“It is pretty cool,” he said. “I have been working for this all season, so to get a state medal is great. It may not have been as high as I wanted, but any state medal is pretty amazing.”

Holtzen had a special year for the Wildcats as he finished with a 45-6 record and broke the school record for most wins in a single season. He won four different tournaments and was a Frontier League and regional tournament runner-up.

To add to his resume, he became only the second freshman in school history to earn state medal – second to only Austin Hood, who would go on to win three state titles.

Austin Moore finished one victory shy of earning his first state medal, while Ryan Adams, Thad Hendrix and Blue Caplinger also picked up wins at the state tournament.



**5. Moore, Johnson finished in top 10 at state cross country, girls qualify for second straight year**

WAMEGO – It was going to be hard for the Louisburg High School girls cross country team to duplicate its magical season of 2017.

Not only did the Lady Cats qualify their team for state for the first time in program history, but they also had a top five finisher in Trinity Moore.

Fast forward to 2018, Louisburg wasn't able to match that successful run – the Lady Cats took it a step further.

Moore, along with freshman Reese Johnson, each had a top 10 finish during the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club, and it is the first time

in school history that two female runners had medaled at a state meet. Louisburg added on to that as the girls finished fifth in the team standings with 154 points, which is also the highest finish in school history.

Moore, who finished fifth at state a year ago, bested her performance by one place as she took fourth with one of her better performances of the season. Johnson was right behind her as she crossed the finish line in sixth.

Shaylor Whitham, Carlee Gassman, Kaitlyn Lewer, Delaney Wright and Kennady Wilkerson were also members of the Lady Cats' team to run at state. Emily Williams was a member of the regional team that finished second overall.



**4. Louisburg track earns six state medals, Gassman state runner-up in**

## 300 hurdles

WICHITA – Carlee Gassman had broken the Louisburg High School 300-meter hurdle record three different times in 2018 prior to the state track meet.

She picked the perfect time to make it a fourth.

Gassman broke her own school record in the 300 hurdles in May at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita as she ran a time of 45.68 seconds to earn a silver medal as she was the Wildcats' top performer on the weekend. Andale's Abby Smarsh, who is a senior, won the event in 44.73.

It was the Louisburg sophomore's first time competing at the Kansas meet as she transferred in from Iowa last year, where she qualified for the state meet there in the 400 hurdles.

Gassman's medal in the 300 hurdles was just one of six the Wildcats were able to bring home following the two-day meet. Those six medals were the most Louisburg has earned since 2011, when the Wildcats combined to medal in 10 events and the boys won their first team state title.

The 300 hurdles wasn't the only event Gassman found success in as she also medaled in the long jump. Gassman, who hadn't competed in the event prior to this year, finished fifth with a mark of 17 feet, 0.25 inches.

Isabelle Holtzen would go on to finish sixth in the pole vault, the boys 4x400 team of Chris Williams, Blue Caplinger, Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins went on to take seventh. Williams finished eighth in the 400-meter run and

Trent Martin medaled eighth in the boys pole vault.



### **3. Louisburg volleyball takes runner-up at state for second straight season**

HUTCHINSON – The feeling was much of the same.

The pride of finishing as a state-runner up was a popular one among the members of the Louisburg volleyball team. At the same time, the frustration of taking second in state in back-to-back seasons was just as prevalent.

Louisburg wasn't quite sure what to feel following its 25-13 and 25-14 loss to Bishop Miege in the championship game of the Class 4A state tournament Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

In 2017, the Lady Cats fell to Rose Hill by two points in the championship

match, and fast forward to the present, they were in the same spot – holding the state runner-up trophy. It was the 15<sup>th</sup> time in program history that Louisburg finished in the top four at state.

The Lady Cats rattled off four straight wins to start the tournament, including knocking off No. 1 seed Independence, and defending state champions Rose Hill and Topeka Hayden. Louisburg then battled back to defeat Andale in the state semifinals.

“The loss was tough,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “To come so close to a state title two years in a row, only to come up short is tough. But with that being said, it is a huge accomplishment for this team to get back to the state championship and make it two years in a row. Finishing second is nothing to hang our heads on. Last year’s finish fueled the fire for the team this year, and I challenged the returning players to use this loss and feeling to fuel them for next year.”

Louisburg has been one of the more dominant teams in Class 4A in the last decade as the Lady Cats have made the state tournament seven out of the last nine years and have finished as a state runner-up on three different occasions, along with several third and fourth place finishes. They finished 2018 with a 36-9 record.





## **2. Louisburg girls soccer advances to title game, has best finish in program history**

NORTH NEWTON – The obstacle seemed insurmountable – and it was.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team found itself in the Class 4-1A state championship match in the program's third year of existence, but if they wanted to take it another step further, the Wildcats were going to have to knock the defending state champion of its perch.

Unfortunately, Bishop Miege wasn't about to be moved.

In a state title game that was played in the sweltering heat in late May at Bethel College, the Wildcats couldn't stay with the Stags in a 5-0 defeat. It was the third consecutive title for Bishop Miege, while Louisburg earned a state plaque for the first time in its short history.

It was special season for the Wildcats as the night before they knocked off Topeka Hayden, 1-0, in the state semifinals to secure the program's first state plaque. In 2017, Louisburg

both games in its state tournament appearance and finished fourth.

The road to this state championship appearance has been an interesting one for the Wildcats. More than three years ago, a group of Louisburg parents and citizens raised enough money to begin the girls soccer program and fund it for three years.

Louisburg was in the final year of that funding, and while the program isn't going away, the team realized they needed to play for more than themselves.

"We played for the community tonight," Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher said after the Hayden win. "We have to remember that when they raised money for this program, it was just through this year, so I think we owed it to them to play well. I really think it might have helped with how we played and I think it was one of the best games we played all season."

"It is a third-year program with 41 wins, three regional championships, two state final fours and now a state runner-up," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said after the title game. "We just have kids who come in and work their butt off. They are not soft, they aren't weak and from top to bottom they are going to work hard."

"We worked hard, but we just played Miego. That is one of the best teams in the state, and that stinks, but our kids played hard, worked

their tail off and it was a great year. We had people criticize us for how we got there, but we won games and that really motivated the kids. It got them fired up to go do something bigger than themselves. I couldn't be more proud of they stuck together and what they accomplished."



## **1. Football wins 10 straight, takes Frontier League title and regional championship**

It had been almost two months since Louisburg and Piper squared off on the football field in what was one of the more entertaining games on the Wildcats' schedule.

Back in early September, Louisburg left Piper High School with a seven-point win – a victory that would help propel them to a Frontier League championship and a perfect regular season.

The two teams squared off again and the stakes were a bit higher. The game, at least for Louisburg anyway, was even more exciting.

The Wildcats dominated action from the opening kickoff and never looked back in a 48-0 win over the Pirates. In the process, Louisburg won the school's first regional championship since 2016 and are off to a 10-0 start for the first time since 2010.

Louisburg advanced to the sectional round where it fell to eventual state champion Bishop Miege, 55-21, and finished its season with a 10-1 record.

It was a season marked with special moments, including a 28-7 victory over then-undefeated Paola late in the year to secure a league title.

"Being 10-0 and then having that first loss of the season was very disappointing," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "Losing always sucks, but losing in the playoffs and having to wait until next August is the worst. At the end of the day, Miege is a very good team and we did some good things. We got them to fourth down on multiple drives in the first quarter, we just couldn't make the plays on those big downs. Then we got behind a little and started pressing.

"Overall it was a great year. I am very proud of our guys and excited for them that they were able to get double digit wins for only the third time since 2000, and

there was a lot of really good football played during that time period. It was a lot fun to be a part of.”



**Austin Moore was named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl and was a first-team all-state player for the Wildcats. Moore was also named as the Kansas Small-Class Player of the Year by 810 Varsity.**

With all that success, honors started to roll in for its players as running backs Austin Moore and Blue Caplinger, along with linemen Brayden White and Kiefer Tucker all earned all-state honors.

Moore and White went on to be semifinalists for the Simone Awards and Moore was also selected to participate in the Kansas Shrine Bowl in the summer of 2019. Ebenstein was also named as coach of the year by the football coaches association.

Most recently, Moore was named the Kansas Small-Class Player of the Year and Running Back of the Year by 810varsity.com, while White was named the Small-Class Lineman of the Year. Ebenstein was also named Kansas Small-Class Coach of the Year by 810 Varsity.

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## Hinkle ready to take on role as LHS activities director



Walking into Scott Hinkle's office, it doesn't appear he started a new job two weeks ago.

The moving boxes are mostly gone. His desk is organized with everything in its place, along with a calendar crammed full of upcoming events.

Hinkle is not shy to tell people about his love for the Boston Red Sox. Sitting on one wall are two older chairs from Fenway Park, along other memorabilia.

The one thing that Hinkle hasn't caught up on is his efforts to get some purple gear. An avid Kansas Jayhawk fan, he hasn't had need to purchase any purple flair in the past. Seems like that will change shortly as he was hired as the new activities director and assistant principal at Louisburg High School

earlier this summer.

“I have been a Jayhawk fan all my life,” Hinkle said. “It will be a little weird to wear purple that is for sure, but I am sure I will get used to it. Before I left my old job, people found out where I was going so they started giving me little gifts with purple on it, like markers and stuff like that. They definitely got a kick out of that.”

Hinkle takes over for Jeremy Holloway, who was promoted to principal at LHS and becomes the third activities director in as many years to take over that spot.

“My wife has family in Kansas City and I have family in Wichita and so we were looking to come this way,” Hinkle said. “I had a couple friends that told me that the Louisburg position had opened up. I had heard of Louisburg a long time ago. I actually coached at Ottawa University in the early 90s and was familiar with the area. I came up, interviewed and here I am. It has obviously worked out well.

“Everyone has been so helpful and friendly and it is a good time to be coming to Louisburg. I am excited to be here.”

Before taking the job in Louisburg, Hinkle had spent the last 22 years in the Liberal school district in a variety of roles. He served as the boys high school basketball coach, along with nine years as an activities director, a year as the head girls basketball coach at the local community college and last year he served as assistant principal at the high school.

Hinkle graduated from Valley Center High School, and went on from there to earn his bachelor’s degree from Friends University, where he played basketball, and his master’s from the University of Kansas.

Basketball has always been a passion for Hinkle, but during his time as activities director at Liberal, he had a chance to learn the life of other sports as well.

“Liberal changed a lot from when I first got there in the mid 90s when they were a football and track powerhouse,” Hinkle said. “There were just athletes galore, but the culture kind of changed. We were really good in soccer and decent in track and volleyball. We still had good kids and good athletes, but it was a big transition as far as sports go when I first got there. My kids grew up there and being involved and being able to watch their events was something that has always appealed to me.

“Basketball has always been in my blood. Other than my nine years as athletic director, I have coached in some capacity and I am a big basketball fan. Obviously, being an athletic director I am just a big sports fan in general.”

Still new in town, Hinkle is still trying to get to know his coaching staff, but he is excited about the situation he is walking into with the Wildcats finishing as state runner-ups in volleyball and girls soccer last season. Several cross country, golf, wrestling and track athletes also earned state medals.

However, if there is one thing he wanted to relay to everyone is that he wants to give his coaches the freedom to run their programs.

“I want to let the coaches, coach,” he said. “I am not going to be the guy that says this is how we did things in Liberal and I am not that type of leader. If it comes to the point where they need some advice, I want to be a resource for them. I don’t want to be someone that is looking for something.

“I have met a few of the coaches. I have let them know that I am here if they need anything. I have stopped by the weight room to speak to a few coaches and some have stopped by to introduce themselves. I am still learning names and faces. We have a coaches meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> and I will see and learn a lot more about them then.”



With all the success the Wildcats had last season in the sports arena, Hinkle is happy to be a part of the LHS family and is learning new things about the town every day.

“I have heard all types of things,” he said. “I have heard they take football pretty seriously here. I know they were state runner-up in volleyball and girls soccer last year and that is an exciting thing to walk into. I think expectations are obviously high in those sports, but I think everyone always has high expectations. I am not going to do anything different than normal and I am just going to sit back and observe for a while and take it all in.”

Hinkle will experience some different things along with his new position. This season, the Frontier League will welcome three new teams – Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie – and will say goodbye to De Soto.

Another big change will be the postseason formats with several sports as the Kansas State High School Activities Association reshuffled their classification system, eliminating Class 4A-Division II.

“With the changes in the league, the classification system and being a new AD, it is probably a good time to be coming on,” Hinkle said. “The learning curve is going to be the same for all of us.

“I walked into a good situation for scheduling because (Holloway) already had everything all taken care of,” he said. “I think the dynamics of the league are going to change. Liberal’s former girls basketball coach is the coach at Piper and I know a little bit about them. As far as the programs and rivalries, that is something that is going to come with time.”

Even with all the changes in his life – moving, starting a new job, getting to know new faces – Hinkle is ready for what lies ahead and the staff at Louisburg has helped with that transition.

“It has been a whirlwind and it has been information overload,” he said. “It is a lot of the same things I did in Liberal as athletic director, I just haven’t done it for the last five years. Being an assistant principal at Liberal last year, I think, helped me prepare for the principal side.

“People have just gone out of their way to be helpful. From the administration to the custodial staff to the secretaries, everyone has been super helpful. When I was out around town, people have welcomed me and it has been a friendly feel everywhere I have been.”

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## **Holtzen accomplishes rare feat earning 12 varsity letters**



Isabelle Holtzen became the first female athlete in Louisburg High School history to earn 12 varsity athletic letters after finishing out her senior season. Holtzen earned letters in cross country, basketball and track and field in each of her four years of high school.

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officially became one of the most decorated female athletes in school history.

No, she doesn't have any individual state championships, or even one as part of a team. Holtzen's decorations aren't ones in the form of trophies or all-state honors, but instead, they can be found on the front of her letter jacket.

Holtzen became the first female athlete in at least 20 years to earn 12 varsity letters, which means she lettered on the varsity level in three sports in each of her four years of high school.

In research done by Louisburg Sports Zone, it was unable to find the last athlete to accomplish the feat, which could mean Holtzen could be the first Lady Cat to do so.

The last athlete to come close was in 2001 when Krystal Bowes earned 10 varsity letters before moving on to a collegiate track career at Wichita State.

"The biggest thing that it means to me is to just have an opportunity to participate in three sports at a school like Louisburg," Holtzen said. "The bigger the school that you go to, the harder it is to play multiple sports at the varsity level and I think Louisburg is unique in that fact. The best part of this whole journey was I think my freshman year because there was no pressure and no one was expecting anything from me. It was surprising and exciting to be able to letter in all three sports."

Thoughts of finding her way onto the varsity team her freshman year was one she couldn't even fathom four years ago. She wasn't experienced in cross country. She enjoyed basketball, but didn't even dream of playing with the school's best.

In track, Holtzen would qualify for state in the pole vault for all four years of high school and earned two state medals. It was that sport where she almost didn't get a letter her

freshman year.

It is the same sport where she earned a Division I scholarship offer to pole vault at Northern Iowa University next season.

“I was not very good my freshman year,” Holtzen said. “I wasn’t that great in pole vault and I remember throughout the season that I would add up all my points to see if I was going to have to have enough to letter. I actually barely lettered my freshman year. I think you had to get 20 points and I ended up getting 20.5 or something like that.

“In basketball, I was not expecting to letter at all and it didn’t even cross my mind that it would. We had some really good seniors that year in Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O’Keefe and they were all playing at a high level. I just remember standing next to them and I was about 4-5 inches shorter than they were and I felt like a little freshman. I wasn’t expecting to play any varsity at all. I thought freshman and maybe a little JV, so it was surprising when I got a few minutes on the varsity level.”

However, it was in cross country where she first realized that she had more to give and it was thanks in part to a special conversation from a senior.

Holtzen found herself holding back in practice and not wanting to pass the team’s upperclassmen. She was told that things needed to change.



“My freshman year I had some of the best seniors that I have ever gone through here,” Holtzen said. “Mary Kate Roy always pushed me in cross country. One time at practice she pulled me aside and told me that if I want to be faster that you are going to have push yourself and don’t be afraid to go ahead of us.

“Her saying that really impacted me because I was all about running with my friends, but I realized that I needed to push myself for my teammates and have a chance to get team medals and individually get better too. As a scared little freshman, what she said really meant a lot.”

Very quickly, Holtzen found her way to the varsity level in cross country and stayed there through her four years. This past season, Holtzen was on the Lady Cat squad that became the first team in school history to qualify for the Class 4A state meet.

“It is a big accomplishment to earn a varsity letter in any sport, but to do that all four years in three sports is amazing,” Louisburg cross country coach John Reece said. “Most freshmen find themselves waiting their turn to see varsity time and understand their role. Isabelle was looked to by her coaches to step up and fill voids at the varsity level as a freshman and even be a top performer for the team in some cases.

“She was prepared in her athletic skills to do so and also went through the growing pains of mentally developing at the next level of competition. Because of her never quit attitude, she took coaching criticism, both positive and negative, and used it to get better. In cross country, she ran her way into the top seven and never looked back. She was always a top five runner for the team and was that kid that would run their guts out to support her teammates in front of her.”

After seeing a little varsity time her freshman year in basketball, Holtzen eventually worked her way up the ranks to where she found herself as a starting guard and team captain her senior year.

“To accomplish something like this requires such significant commitment and determination,” girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry said. “She’s such an impressive student-athlete because of the leader she was for multiple teams at Louisburg High, her high level of success in the different programs and her outstanding academic performance.”



Earning 12 varsity letters might be impressive enough to some, but it certainly wasn't enough for Holtzen as she also had a lot of success in the classroom.

Holtzen was No. 1 in her class with a 4.0 GPA and was a fixture on the Wildcat debate team. She went on to finish third in the state in the 2-speaker competition for two years and was also a member of the 4-speaker team to take third at state last season.

To find time to participate in three sports, debate and find a way to get her school work done, Holtzen had to become a master planner.

"The biggest you thing you have to do, no matter what activity you are doing, is you have to prioritize your time," she said. "You have to choose what is the most important to you and what is going to help you most on the long run."

“For me, it was having good grades. Learning in school is going to transfer in my job later in life and the odds of me actually pole vaulting professionally are really, really slim, so you have to prioritize getting your homework done and staying on task in class. A lot of what I tried to do was to get as much stuff as I could in class and then after school I could just go to my sport and finish up the homework later.”

In a time where specialization in sports has become the norm, the multi-sport athletes are becoming harder and harder to come by.

At a smaller school like Louisburg, many believe it is important to have athletes out for multiple sports if it wants to compete at a high level and Holtzen enjoyed her time with the different activities. In fact, she believes it helped her in her sport of choice – track.

“On the athletic side, playing multiple sports keeps you from getting injured because you are working different muscles constantly and not overworking the same ones,” she said. “Outside of that, I like doing different activities because it is fun and I get bored when I have to do the same thing over and over again. Being active helps keep it more fun and exciting. Each sport taught me something different.

“Cross country teaches you to push through how hard it is because it is a big mental game and the most successful runners may not be the fastest, but they are most mentally strong. In basketball, I think it teaches you a lot of hard work and commitment and you have to work with other people and not just yourself. With doing pole vault, it is just fun for me because you have to learn a lot of different things and it teaches you patience.”





However, the drawback of being involved in so many things is that sometimes they will overlap, which has happened the last few winters with basketball and debate. Holtzen has had to miss games to attend state debate competitions.

“Basketball season is when it got the hardest for me because it was the same time as debate,” Holtzen said. “Both of those are team activities and I don’t get to set my own schedule. It was hard for me to balance the two and I definitely thought about quitting one or the other a few times, but I didn’t because I enjoy them way too much.

“It is really hard when I have to tell my coach I am not going to be able to be at the game, because it is going to be hard for the team. Everyone on the team has a role, and whenever I am not there to fill my role, it is hard for them and hard for me. I don’t want to miss any games because it is so much fun and you make memories from those.”

Despite all the hustle and bustle of being a 3-sport athlete and achieving academic success, Holtzen would do it all over again if she could.

“It will mean more to me later,” she said of the 12 letters. “My parents have always told me to do three sports and to be involved in as many things as you can. For me, I was going to do it no matter what. I know not everyone thinks that way or has the opportunity. When I look back at high school knowing that I got everything out of it that I could by being involved in three sports and other activities, I will definitely appreciate it more later on.

“It is awesome to see other people doing multiple sports because it is extremely fun and you get to meet and be involved with different people. You get to have a lot of memories with these girls and I think that is one of the best parts of high school.”

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## Holtzen earns Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Isabelle Holtzen had a senior year to remember when it came to the athletic stage at Louisburg High School.

For starters, Holtzen was a member of the first cross country team in Louisburg history to qualify for the Class 4A state meet. She was also a starting guard and team captain for the Lady Cat girls basketball team.

Holtzen topped it all off this past spring when she medaled sixth in the pole vault at Class 4A state track championships in May.

Those were just one of the many reasons why she was chosen as the 2018 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

The award, which is in its first year, is to recognize an outstanding Louisburg High School student athlete. Louisburg Sports Zone asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the winner.

Holtzen finished her high school career on a high note as she racked up 12 varsity letters during her time as a Wildcat and did all that while earning a 4.0 GPA, which was the top in her class.



**Pictured (from left) is Louisburg track coach Andy Wright, cross country and track coach John Reece, Isabelle Holtzen and Lady Cat basketball coach Shawn Lowry.**

“Her hard work attitude once again helped her to succeed in all events and rewarded her with a school record in the pole vault and state medals,” Louisburg cross country and track coach John Reece said. “It would be cliché to say she is a hard worker as all of her teammates are hard workers and they really compete to do their best in any sport in Louisburg, but she has been a pleasure to coach.”

She made her biggest impact in track and field as she had a record-breaking year in the pole vault this past season for the Lady Cats. She broke her own school record in the event with a vault of 11 feet, 6 inches early in the year and went on to earn her second state medal at the Class 4A state track meet with a clearance of 11-0 and took sixth overall.

Holtzen was also a league and regional runner-up in the pole vault, while also running on legs of the 4×100 and 4×400-meter

relay teams.

She also spent a lot of time on the Louisburg cross country and basketball teams, where she was a key part in both of their successes.

“From Isabelle’s first day of basketball at LHS she had a great work ethic, competed hard every day and never gave less,” Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry said. “She embodies those things that are at the core of our program and leaves it so much better because of her involvement.”

Holtzen, who graduated in May, will continue her pole vault career at the University of Northern Iowa.

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## Moore named Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year



No matter the sport, Austin Moore didn’t back down from a challenge and it was evident whenever he took to the field, the wrestling mat or a track runway.

Moore was an all-league and all-state player on the football field, found himself one victory away from a state wrestling medal and improved throughout the season in the javelin.

It was his success in those athletic avenues that earned him

the 2018 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year honor.

The award, which is in its first year, is to recognize an outstanding Louisburg High School student athlete. Louisburg Sports Zone asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the winner.

On the football team, Moore was named a captain and had success on both sides of the ball. As a running back, he recorded 1,215 yards and 15 touchdowns. Defensively, he tallied more than 70 tackles from the linebacker spot.

Moore, a junior, was named to the all-Frontier League first team on both sides of the ball and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the Topeka-Capital Journal. He was also named an all-state, all-purpose player by K-Preps. Moore was also selected as the team's Offensive Player of the Year and recipient of the BAC Award.

"Austin is a great leader and is always looking to improve himself and his game," Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. "He is an extremely dedicated athlete to the program, but the most impressive thing about him is how he puts the team before himself all the time. Austin is not a real vocal kid, but actions speak louder than words and Austin is always leading by example."



**Pictured (from left) is Louisburg boys track coach Andy Wright, football head coach Robert Ebenstein, Austin Moore and Wildcat wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird.**

On the wrestling mat, he was also a team captain where he earned a 43-7 record and eclipsed the 100 career win mark. Moore was a state qualifier at 195 pounds and was a regional runner-up to go along with a Frontier League title. He won the team's Workhorse Award and set a program record with 38 pins. Moore also had the highest GPA on the team.

"Austin has been a pivotal part of our team's success since he joined us as a freshman," Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird said. "He has a phenomenal work ethic in the practice room, and he is a relentless warrior in competitions. He knows how to set goals and pursue them with all his heart. He doesn't panic in adverse situations and he finds a way to prevail. No one wants to wrestle him twice. He's all about competitiveness, dedication, improvement and honor."

Moore threw the javelin for the Wildcat track and field team as recorded a season best throw of 151 feet in the regional meet and finished eighth.

With all he accomplished during the 2017-18 season, Moore will

get another crack at it all when he competes for the Wildcats in his senior season.

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## 2018 Male Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the past two years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and highlight them a little bit. So this year, I wanted to take it a step further.

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

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. In the next couple of weeks, I will announce this year recipient.

Below are the male nominees for this year’s award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who



were nominated and best of luck!

## 2018 LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



### **Blue Caplinger – Junior – Football, Wrestling, Track and Field**

Caplinger played a big role for the Wildcat football team as he shared quarterback duties to start the year and then moved over to the tight end spot, but his biggest impact came on defense where he earned honorable mention all-Frontier League honors. He finished the season with 32 tackles and two interceptions from his secondary spot.

On the wrestling mat, Caplinger was a state qualifier for the Wildcats at 160 pounds and finished his season with a 34-14 record. He won titles at two different tournaments and holds the team record with most career reversals with 71.

Caplinger also fared well on the track where he ran sprints and relays for Louisburg. Caplinger was a member of the 4×400-meter relay team that finished seventh in the state in Class 4A, and also ran on the 4×100-meter relay team that qualified for the Kansas Relays.



**Cade Holtzen – Freshman – Cross Country,  
Wrestling, Track and Field**

Holtzen thrived on the wrestling mat this past season as he earned the Wildcats' lone state medal. He finished sixth overall at 113 pounds and became the second freshman in school

history to place at state with a 45-6 record.

He also broke two team records in the process. Holtzen currently holds the mark for most wins in a season (45), most nearfall-2 (23). He also led the Wildcats in five other statistical categories.

Holtzen was a Frontier League and regional runner-up and won tournament titles at four different competitions.

He also ran on the Louisburg varsity cross country team and ran distance races for the Wildcat track team.



## **Austin Moore – junior – football, wrestling, track and field**

On the football team, Moore was named a team captain and had

success on both sides of the ball. As a running back, he recorded 1,215 yards and 15 touchdowns. Defensively, he tallied more than 70 tackles from the linebacker spot.

Moore was named to the all-Frontier League first team on both sides of the ball and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the Topeka-Capital Journal and Wichita Eagle. He was also named an all-state, all-purpose player by K-Preps. Moore was also selected as the team's Offensive Player of the Year and recipient of the BAC Award.

On the wrestling mat, he was also a team captain and recorded a 43-7 record. Moore was a state qualifier at 195 pounds and was a regional runner-up. He won the team's Workhorse Award and set a program record with 38 pins. Moore also had the highest GPA on the team.

Moore threw the javelin for the Wildcat track and field team as recorded a season best throw of 151 feet in the regional meet and finished eighth.



## **John Wyatt Reece – Senior – Cross Country, Track and Field**

Reece became the first state cross country medalist in several years for Louisburg High School. He finished 11<sup>th</sup> overall at the Class 4A meet in Wamego to earn a medal and also earned all-state honors for his effort.

He also finished runner-up in the Frontier League meet and currently holds the third fastest time in school history. He earned first-team all-league honors. Reece also competed at the CCCNC National Race where he medaled individually and was a part of the second place team.

In track, Reece qualified for state in the 1,600 and 3,200-meter runs and finished ninth at state in the 3,200. He was also a regional runner-up in both events.

Reece was a Kansas Relays qualifier and medalist in the 2,000-meter steeplechase and currently holds the school record.

Reece has signed with Southwest Minnesota State next season and will run for the Mustangs starting next fall.



### **Madden Rutherford – Sophomore – Football, Basketball, Baseball**

Rutherford took over the starting quarterback role as a sophomore for the Wildcat football team and became a dual-threat athlete at that position. He finished with 670 yards through the air and had eight touchdowns. On the ground, he racked up 318 yards and two more touchdowns. His performance helped him to a second-team honor on the all-Frontier League

team.

On the baseball diamond, Rutherford was the Wildcats' top pitcher on the season and also did his job out on in the field as he earned second team all-Frontier League honors as an outfielder. Rutherford started six games this season and pitched 28 innings with a 5.12 earned run average and struck out 23 batters. At the plate, he finished the season with a .408 average, three doubles, a triple, a home run and had 10 RBIs. He also ended the year with only three errors in 19 games.

Rutherford also saw a lot of varsity time for the Wildcat basketball team as he played in 17 games.



## **Grant Ryals – Senior – Soccer, Golf**

Ryals led the Louisburg boys soccer team as he garnered first team all-league and all-state honors this past season. He served as team captain the past two seasons and scored seven goals and had 11 assists from the midfield spot.

His 11 assists put him fourth in the all-time Louisburg single season record and his 23 career assists place him second all-time.

Ryals will continue his soccer career at William Jewell College next season.

Ryals was also a member of the Louisburg varsity golf team and was a part of several runner-up team finishes with the Wildcats.

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## **2018 Female Athlete of the Year Nominees**



For the past two years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and highlight them a little bit. So this year, I wanted to take it a step further.



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

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. In the next couple of weeks, I will announce this year's recipient.

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

## **2018 LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE**

### **FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES**







## **Bailey Belcher, Senior, Basketball and Girls Soccer**

Belcher led the Wildcat girls soccer team to a state runner-up finish this past season as she was among the leading scorers on the team with 28 goals and 14 assists, which included five hat tricks. She is a three-time all-Frontier League and all-state first teamer, and has been a team captain for the last two seasons.

She holds the Louisburg record for most goals in a season with 33 and in a career with 91. She is will continue her soccer career at Missouri Southern next season.

Belcher was also a starter on the Lady Cats' basketball team and earned honorable mention all-league honors after averaging eight points, four rebounds and two steals a game.



## **Carson Buffington – Junior – Volleyball, Basketball and Girls Soccer**

Buffington helped the Louisburg volleyball team to a state runner-up performance in the Class 4A-Division I state tournament as the team's setter. She finished the season with more than 1,100 assists and had 30 aces. She also helped out defensively with 244 digs.

She earned second team all-Frontier League honors and was also placed on the Kansas Volleyball Association's (KVA) all-state second team. Buffington was also selected to the KVA all-state tournament team.

On the basketball court, Buffington earned second team all-Frontier League honors and led the league in rebounding for the third straight season. She averaged 11.6 rebounds a game

to go along with 9.2 points and 2.7 steals from the forward spot.

Buffington also served as the back-up goalie for the Wildcat soccer team and saw action in several varsity games.



## **Anna Dixon – Junior – Volleyball**

Dixon played a big role in the Lady Cats' state runner-up volleyball team this past season. As an all-around player, Dixon led Louisburg with 613 kills and 61 blocks on the season. She was also third on the team with 58 aces and 329 digs.

She earned first team all-Frontier League and all-state honors. Dixon was named as the Kansas Volleyball Association's Class 4A-D1 Co-Player of the Year and was selected to the KVA

all-state tournament team.

Dixon also earned Best of Kansas Preps selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal, which is a new award this season. She has committed to Kansas State University to play volleyball in the fall of 2019.



### **Carlee Gassman – Sophomore – Cross Country, Basketball, Track and Field**

Gassman had a record-breaking season for the Louisburg track team. She broke a 29-year old school record in the 300-meter hurdles in early April and then broke her own school record several more times this season, including at the Class 4A state meet where she ran a time of 45.68 to finish second in the state.

It was her first of two state medals on the season as she also finished fifth in the state in the long jump with a mark of just more than 17 feet. She also won a regional title in the 300-meter hurdles.

Gassman was also a consistent runner on the Wildcat cross country team that qualified for the state meet for the first time in school history. She served as the No. 2 runner for most of the season.

On the basketball court, Gassman saw a lot of varsity time for the Lady Cats as well as one of the team's point guards.



### **Isabelle Holtzen – Senior – Cross Country, Basketball, Track and Field**

Holtzen had a record-breaking season in the pole vault this past season for the Lady Cats' track and field team. She broke her own school in the event with a vault of 11 feet, 6 inches



and went on to finish sixth at the Class 4A state track meet with a clearance of 11-0.

She was also a league and regional runner-up, while also running on legs of the 4×100 and 4×400-meter relay teams.

On the cross country team, Holtzen was a consistent runner on a varsity team that qualified for state for the first time in school history.

On the basketball court, Holtzen served as a team captain and was a full-time starter for the Lady Cats at the guard spot.

At the end of the school year, Holtzen became the first Lady Cat in several decades to earn 12 varsity athletic letters and did so while earning a 4.0 GPA, which is first in her class.



## **Sophie McMullen – Senior – Volleyball**

McMullen was another key piece to the Lady Cats' success this past season on the volleyball court. She made the switch from setter to outside hitter and defensive player to help Louisburg to a state runner-up campaign.

She was first on the team with 114 aces to go along with 437 digs defensively. As an outside hitter, McMullen added 381 kills.

McMullen was selected to the all-Frontier League and all-state first team and was named to the Kansas Volleyball Association all-state tournament team. She was also selected to the Greater Kansas City Coaches Volleyball Association all-star team.

McMullen signed to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State this coming fall.

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## **Gassman earns state runner-up; 'Cats bring home 6 state medals**



Louisburg sophomore Carlee Gassman clears a hurdle during the preliminaries of the 300-meter hurdles Friday at the Class 4A

**Kansas State Track and Field Championship in Wichita. Gassman finished second overall with a new school record time.**

WICHITA – Carlee Gassman has broken the Louisburg High School 300-meter hurdle record three different times this season prior to last weekend's state track meet.

She picked the perfect time to make it a fourth.

Gassman broke her own school record in the 300 hurdles Saturday at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita as she ran a time of 45.68 seconds to earn a silver medal as she was the Wildcats' top performer on the weekend. Andale's Abby Smarsh, who is a senior, won the event in 44.73.

It was the Louisburg sophomore's first time competing at the Kansas meet as she transferred in from Iowa last year, where she qualified for the state meet there in the 400 hurdles.

"It meant a lot to me when I broke the record again," Gassman said. "It gives me confidence that I can keep improving. I was so happy about the second place medal. To come from Iowa, where everything's a lot different and to take on a challenge and to come out successful means a lot to me."

Gassman's medal in the 300 hurdles was just one of six the Wildcats were able to bring home following the two-day meet. Those six medals were the most Louisburg has earned since 2011, when the Wildcats combined to medal in 10 events and the boys won their first team state title.

The 300 hurdles wasn't the only event Gassman found success in as she also medaled in the long jump. Gassman, who hadn't competed in the event prior to this year, finished fifth with a mark of 17 feet, 0.25 inches.

"That medal was very special to me," she said. "This is my

first year long jumping and to come out that successful gives me hope that I can try anything. Obviously, I was very happy with it.

“This track meet gives me so much confidence for next year and the future. I have a dream and I can’t wait to continue on this adventure.”



**Isabelle Holtzen successful clears a height in the pole vault Saturday during the state meet in Wichita. She finished sixth overall at 11 feet.**

Senior Isabelle Holtzen finished out her high school pole vault career on a positive note as she medaled sixth overall in her final meet as she cleared 11 feet. Holtzen, who broke her own school record at 11-6 earlier in the season, faced some difficult competition.

Paola’s Samantha Van Hoecke, who is one of the nation’s top

pole vaulters, won the event after clearing 12 feet and Marysville's Grace Stohs also cleared 12 feet to take second.

Holtzen's clearance of 11 feet would have won her a state title in four other classes and she also had a top 10 vault at the state meet. Her state medal was her second straight after she finished seventh a year ago.

"It is exciting," Holtzen said. "This is such a big meet and there is a lot of competition, especially on the 4A level. I think it is an honor to be able to stand on a podium with such a great group of kids who are some of the best vaulters in the nation. It is a little disappointing because I was hoping to get a PR, or maybe even tie my record and medal a little higher, but it is alright. It was a good year."



Louisburg junior Chris Williams sprints to the finish line in the 400-meter dash. Williams took eighth overall.

On the boys side, junior Chris Williams picked up a pair of medals after he ran a personal best in the 400-meter dash in the prelims on Friday that helped him qualify for the finals. Williams ran a time of 50.01 to take the last spot in the finals by just .02 seconds.

Williams officially earned his first state medal Saturday after he finished eighth in the 400 meter finals Saturday with a time of 52.18.

For his second medal, he had some help to get that one as Williams, along with junior Blue Caplinger and freshman Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins also ran a personal best time in the preliminaries to qualify for the finals. The Wildcat quartet took the final spot in 3:26.49.



**Junior Blue Caplinger hands the baton to teammate Justin Collins during the prelims of the 4x400-meter relay. The Wildcats took seventh overall.**

Then in the final event of the day Saturday, the 4×400 team took to the track one more time and ran a 3:30.69 to finish in seventh.

The medalists continued in the boys pole vault as sophomore Trent Martin, in his first state meet action, left Wichita with some hardware as he placed in the top eight.

Martin tied a season-best Friday by clearing 13 feet and finished in a tie for eighth, but won the tie-breaker based on the number of misses to take the final medal. Freshman teammate Luke Faulkner also competed for the Wildcats and took 13<sup>th</sup> overall after he cleared 12 feet.



**Sophomore Trent Martin pumps his fist after he cleared 13 feet in the pole vault Friday at the state meet in Wichita.**

“It was one of my best achievements in track and it meant a lot to me to be on the podium at state,” Martin said. “The competition was pretty good this year at regionals and at state. It was a big relief to clear 13 feet again.

“I feel very good about next season and I think I will have an even better chance at getting a higher place next year.”

Also on the track, Louisburg senior Wyatt Reece finished one spot out of a medal in the 3,200-meter run Friday morning. Reece ran a personal best time of 10:11 to take ninth overall.

Reece also competed in the 1,600 run on Saturday afternoon and finished 13<sup>th</sup> in 4:47.

In the girls triple jump, senior Kaitlyn Urban ended her Wildcat track career as she finished 14<sup>th</sup> with a mark of 31-6.25. Urban had a successful final year as she was the Frontier League champion in the event and also set a personal record of 34 feet at the regional meet two weeks ago.

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## **Gassman, Williams win regional titles, ‘Cats qualify for state in 9 events**



Louisburg sophomore Carlee Gassman clears the final hurdle on



**her way to a regional title in the 300-meter hurdles Friday during the Class 4A regional meet in Eudora. Gassman qualified for state in two events.**

EUDORA – When the Kansas State Track and Field Championships kick off this Friday in Wichita, Louisburg will have its fair share of representation at Cessna Stadium and they hope to return with more than what they came with.

The Wildcats qualified for state in nine different events last Friday during the Class 4A regional meet at Eudora High School and also left with a pair of regional champions under their belt.

Junior Chris Williams won the 400-meter dash and sophomore Carlee Gassman captured gold in the 300-meter hurdles to lead the Wildcats as both qualified in two events.

It was a successful day for the Louisburg program, as Isabelle Holtzen (pole vault), Trent Martin (pole vault), Wyatt Reece (1,600 and 3,200-meter run) and the boys 4×400 relay each finished second in their events to qualify. Kaitlyn Urban (triple jump) and Luke Faulkner (pole vault) came in third, while Gassman qualified fourth in the long jump.

“We always want more kids to go to state but it is tough to get there,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “Our regional meet was tough. All of the Frontier League was present except for DeSoto, and the teams that rounded out the 16 schools made it even more competitive.”

Gassman blew the competition away in the 300-meter hurdles as she recorded a time of 46.03 seconds to win by nearly a full second. Earlier in the day she even surprised herself when she recorded a personal-best in the long jump with a mark of 17 feet, 3.25 inches.

“It is special to me because this is my first year long jumping and it is has been a lot of fun,” Gassman said. “I blew my own mind when I found out I jumped 17-3 and I definitely didn’t think that was going to happen.

“It was also pretty amazing to qualify in the hurdles. I wasn’t sure what to expect coming out here because there are some talented girls. It was a lot of fun though and it is my favorite race.”

The Louisburg sophomore is currently ranked No. 2 in Class 4A in the 300 hurdles behind Andale senior Abby Smarsh, who will be competing for Wichita State next season.

“Carlee ran well and is setting herself up to be a top finisher at state,” coach Reece said. “She could medal in both of her events as her long jump distance gives her a chance to be in finals as well as the 300m hurdles.”



**Junior Chris Williams sprints to the finish to win the 400-meter dash.**

As for Williams, he was able to hold off Burlington’s Jayden Payne at the finish line of the 400 dash as he won his regional title in 50.80 seconds – just .01 seconds in front of

Payne.

“It was really cool and winning the regional is pretty exciting,” Williams said. “I felt I ran pretty good for the most part. I died basically on the last 100 meters and that guy from Burlington scared me a little bit, but it was pretty fun.”

Williams picked up the pace again in the 4×400-meter relay as he helped Blue Caplinger, Justin Collins and Ben Wiedenmann to a personal record time of 3 minutes and 26.76 seconds.

The Wildcats were sitting in fifth place through half of the relay before Wiedenmann made up ground and then Williams followed suit as he put the team into second place after he passed Spring Hill and Eudora.

“Going into regionals we knew we would have to PR or run close to our very best to be in the top four,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. “I couldn’t be happier with all four runners as they came and competed, with each of them running a PR split.”



**Senior Wyatt Reece celebrates his state berth in the 1,600-meter run.**

Louisburg continued its success on the track as Reece, a senior, was able to qualify in both distance events and exercise some demons in the process.

The last two seasons, Reece had finished one spot out of qualifying for state in the 1,600 run, but he left no doubt this time around. Reece held off a pair of four runners to take second in 4:42 and raised his arms with excitement following the finish.

He later went on to take second in the 3,200 in 10:49 and will have a busy state experience this coming weekend.

“It is awesome,” Reece said. “I went to state with the 4×800 relay before, but the last two years have either been in fifth place or sixth place in both events at regionals, so it is

just nice to be able to go and it really means a lot to me. It means a lot because I was able to get second in both events and I can see that I am improving.

“The mile has always been my race. It hasn’t always been my fastest, but it is definitely a fun race for me. When I crossed the finish line, it was just a big relief to realize that I had finally done it. It took four years to get here, but I did it.”

Louisburg will also be represented well in the pole vault as the Wildcats will take three vaulters to Wichita.

On the girls side, Holtzen will look to get her second straight state medal after she cleared 10-6 to take second overall. Last season, she finished seventh at state to earn a spot on the medal stand.

“I sprained my ankle a little bit in practice, so I was a little bit nervous coming in and I didn’t have the best warm up,” Holtzen said. “It wasn’t the best meet for me, but all that matters at regionals is just getting to state. This week I am just going to work hard and perform to the best of my ability.”

Martin, a sophomore, cleared 12-6 to take second overall and will make his first state appearance. Faulkner, who is in his first season of varsity action as a freshman, will also make his state debut after he took third and cleared 12 feet.

“Trent and Luke were ready when the opportunity to make state presented itself,” Wright said. “They competed hard, mentally and physically were focused, and used their determination to earn their spots competing against some of the best vaulters in 4A. State competition is going to be hard against a very tough field of vaulters. Trent and Luke both have continued to work very hard in practice, and hope to improve their heights at state.”



**Kaitlyn Urban took third in the triple jump with a personal best mark of 34 feet.**

The success continued in the jump as Urban, a senior, will be making her second trip out to state in the triple jump and pulled out a personal record in the process. Urban jumped 34 feet to take third overall.

“I am so excited because last year at state I feel that I didn’t do as well as I wanted, so this year I am already starting off better than I was going into it,” Urban said. “I am excited to go and try my best and hopefully PR again.”

State action will begin Friday morning at 7:45 a.m., and will continue through the afternoon. Action will then pick up again Saturday morning with more field events and finals on the track.

To view a photo gallery from the regional meet, make sure to click [here](#).

Other regional results are:

### **GIRLS**

400 dash: Mikayla Quinn, seventh, 1:05

800 run: Shaylor Whitham, 11<sup>th</sup>, 2:45

100 hurdles: Sydni Keagle, 8<sup>th</sup>, 24.22

4×400 relay: Isabelle Holtzen, Quinn, Kaitlyn Urban, Carlee Gassman, fifth, 4:16

High jump: Eileen Benne, 10<sup>th</sup>, 4-10

Pole vault: Avery Graham, sixth, 9-6

Shot put: Shea O'Hara, 15<sup>th</sup>, 27-8

Discus: Lexie Reece, seventh, 101-4; Melia Rice, 18<sup>th</sup>, 75-8

Javelin: Lakin Cunningham, 13<sup>th</sup>, 79-4

### **BOYS**

100 dash: Brandon Cooper, 7<sup>th</sup>, 11.42

200 dash: Blue Caplinger, fifth, 23.11; Cooper, 10<sup>th</sup>, 23.31; Ben Wiedenmann, 12<sup>th</sup>, 23.40

4×100 relay: Cooper, Caplinger, Wiedenmann, Justin Collins, fifth, 44.70

Shot put: Kiefer Tucker, fifth, 45-1.5; Brayden White, 14<sup>th</sup>, 40-6.25

Discus: Tucker, ninth, 128-8

Javelin: Michael Waldron, seventh, 159-5; Austin Moore, eighth, 151-4

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## **Photo gallery: Wildcats qualify several for state**



Louisburg freshman Ben Wiedenmann takes a handoff from fellow freshman Justin Collins during the 4×400-meter relay Friday in Eudora. Wiedenmann and Collins, along with Blue Caplinger and Chris Williams, finished second and qualified for state.

The Louisburg High School track and field teams found a lot of success Friday during the Class 4A regional meet at Eudora High School. The Wildcats qualified for state in nine events and are as follows:

- Chris Williams, regional champion, 400-meter dash
- Carlee Gassman, regional champion, 300-meter hurdles
- Chris Williams, Ben Wiedenmann, Blue Caplinger and Justin Collins, second place, 4×400-meter relay



- Wyatt Reece, second place, 1,600-meter run
- Wyatt Reece, second place, 3,200-meter run
- Trent Martin, second place, pole vault
- Isabelle Holtzen, second place, pole vault
- Kaitlyn Urban, third place, triple jump
- Luke Faulkner, third place, pole vault
- Carlee Gassman, fourth place, long jump

Here is a photo gallery of all the qualifiers from Friday. Congrats again to all who made it state tonight.



Isabelle Holtzen finished second in the pole vault



Kaitlyn Urban took third in the triple jump with a personal best.



Carlee Gassman finished fourth in the long jump.



Freshman Luke Faulkner clears a height to take third in the pole vault.



Sophomore Trent Martin finished second overall in the pole vault.



Senior Wyatt Reece celebrates his state berth in the 1,600-meter run.



Junior Chris Williams sprints to the finish to win the 400-

meter dash.



Sophomore Carlee Gassman won the 300-meter hurdles.



Coach John Reece congratulates his son Wyatt after he took second in the 3,200-meter run





Junior Blue Caplinger gets off to a good start in the 4x400 relay.



Freshman Justin Collins ran the second leg of the 4x400 relay.



Chris Williams takes a handoff from Ben Wiedenmann for the final leg.



Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright congratulates with his 4x400 team after they qualified for state.