

Three schools to join Frontier League



Three schools have accepted invitations, or will soon, to join the Frontier League for the 2018-19 season and beyond.

Piper, Bonner Springs and Tonganoxie will be leaving their current home – the Kaw Valley League – to join the Frontier after all three were offered spots during a meeting in early April.

Their addition will now bring the Frontier League to 10 members, along with Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Spring Hill, De Soto, Baldwin and Eudora. The trio of schools made presentations to the current Frontier League members for admittance due to the fact the Kaw Valley is in the process of breaking up. Current member Bishop Ward is leaving the league next school year, which leaves them at six.

Piper quickly accepted the invitation following a vote of its board of education and is looking forward to joining the Frontier.

“We are extremely excited to get into a league with like-size schools and competition levels,” Piper High School activities director Doug Key said. “We believe Piper High School is good fit for the league due to the competition level in all activities and will match up well. We have played all current schools in various activities and felt like this would be a positive move for the future.

“Being in a league with various size schools and us being the smallest wasn’t going to be optimal. We are still are competitive in many areas, but we needed to secure a more balanced future. We feel like being in the middle, size-wise, will keep us competitive for years to come.”

According to this year’s classification numbers, Piper has a current enrollment of 601 students. Turner is the Kaw Valley’s biggest school with 1,114 students, followed by Lansing (910), Bonner Springs (758), Basehor-Linwood (710) and Tonganoxie (618).

Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie compare to other Frontier League programs. De Soto is the biggest school in the league with 854 students, followed by Ottawa (709), Spring Hill (699), Paola (612), Louisburg (563), Eudora (471) and Baldwin (410).

Bonner Springs’ board of education also approved the move to the Frontier League and Bonner Springs High School principal Rick Moulin echoed Key’s statement.

“We have competed against teams in the Frontier League the past several years,” Moulin said. “The schools in the Frontier League are a lot like Bonner Springs – we are competitive and value sportsmanship. The teams in the Frontier League are similar in size to Bonner Springs, which will be a great gauge for us as we try to compete at the highest level possible in 4A. Bonner Springs is a small town community, with great community support, much like the schools in the Frontier League.

“We are excited to be joining with Piper and Tonganoxie. We hope to continue to be able to compete against Basehor-Linwood, Lansing and Turner. I have a lot of respect for their schools and their programs. Ultimately, the Frontier League was a better fit for our students and our community.”

Tonganoxie hasn’t officially accepted the invitation, but it

is just waiting for its board of education to approve the move during its May 8 meeting. At that point, according to Tonganoxie High School principal Mark Farrar, it will immediately send letter accepting the invite.

"We are very excited to join the Frontier League," Farrar said. "This new partnership will be very good for our students as well as our community. Joining the Frontier League will provide some great opportunities for our students from an athletic and activities standpoint. Tonganoxie mirrors many of the activities that most or all Frontier League schools offer. We see it as a league that will be a good fit for many years to come.

"One of the things that I think gets overlooked is the idea that a strong league doesn't just offer opportunities on a playing field, but it also offers a chance for kids to network and make lifelong connections with students from all across the league. The Frontier League is a strong and stable league and we believe that it can advance the overall mission of what we want to do at Tonganoxie."

Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin now believes the league is healthier than ever.

"By adding teams to our league, it solidifies our league numbers for years to come ensuring that we, as a league, will remain strong and competitive whether schools decide to leave or stay," Gagnebin said. "We could have been in a situation in which the Frontier League could have dwindled to four or five schools, but instead we will be stronger at 10 teams, if all teams decided to stay.

That situation came about in March when it was reported by the Tonganoxie Mirror that Kaw Valley League member Lansing wanted to create a larger league that would have contained all or some combinations of Lansing, Blue Valley Southwest, De Soto, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs, Basehor-Linwood, Tonganoxie,

Ottawa, Piper, Spring Hill, Turner and Topeka schools Seaman, Shawnee Heights and Topeka West.

A meeting was held between all the schools to look at possibilities of building a stronger league that would rebuild the current Kaw Valley that has Lansing, Turner, Piper, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Basehor-Linwood.

The Frontier League responded with meetings of its own shortly after to discuss each member's happiness in the league after De Soto, Spring Hill and Ottawa attended the March meeting with Lansing.

De Soto mentioned needing more competition at the sub-varsity level since it has a growing enrollment and looked at the possibility of playing in a league with bigger schools since it has made the jump to Class 5A.

Spring Hill's enrollment also looks to make that jump in three to four years, while Ottawa's enrollment usually hovers around the line between 4A and 5A. Still, all three schools stated during league meetings they were happy in their current position, with De Soto and Spring Hill stating they might need to make a move due to increasing enrollment numbers.

Faced with the possibility of losing at least two members, the Frontier invited Kaw Valley members to make presentations to join the league in order to fill those spots. Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs all made presentations and the Frontier League principals all offered invitations shortly after.

At this point, it appears the league is going to move forward with 10 members as no school has stated their desire to leave the Frontier – however, it doesn't mean it can't happen in the near future.

"I cannot speak for other schools in the Frontier League about their desire to stay or to leave," Gagnebin said. "I know some

are considering their options and will do what they believe is in the best interest of their school, and I would support them in whatever they decide. I do believe though whatever they decide, with the addition of these new schools to our league, the Frontier League will remain solid in numbers and will continue to be one of the most competitive leagues in Class 4A.

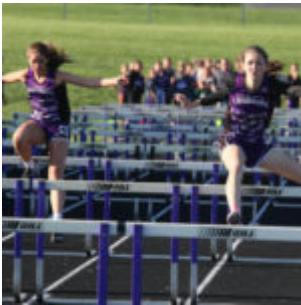
"I believe the three schools that chose to petition our league for membership will be a great fit for the Frontier League. They offer all sports and activities that are currently offered by the league at all levels. Their enrollments, though larger than Louisburg, will put them in the middle to upper middle in size within the league."

The league schedule will also look different beginning with the 2018-19 season, as there will no longer be a double round-robin schedule in certain sports and not every school will play each other in football.

"The biggest challenge will be league scheduling," Gagnebin said. "Although it will change how we schedule things as a league, most league schools already have some or all of these schools on some of their athletic schedules already. It could increase the amount of non-league games we have to go out and find in some sports, since with 10 teams you can no longer play a double-round-robin schedule as we have currently, due to the amount of games allowed by KSHSAA.

"This is both good and bad, meaning, it could increase travel and some expense, but it allows us greater flexibility in the schedule to play other teams outside the league as well. One negative will be in football. With 10 teams, we will not be able to play every team in the league as we do now. As stated before though, solidifying the league as far as numbers go and increasing the competitiveness of the league are also positives."

Lady Cats capture home meet; Renner wins three events



Louisburg freshman Sydni Keagle (right) and Haley Cain battle it out in the 100-meter hurdles Thursday during the Louisburg Invitational at Wildcat Stadium. Keagle won the event and Cain finished second.

The Louisburg High School girls track and field team picked a good time to put on one of its best performances of the season and the Lady Cats did it in front of their home fans.

The Lady Cats won their home meet Thursday at Wildcat Stadium as they racked up 200 points to win the Louisburg Invitational and finished 69 points ahead of runner-up Spring Hill.

Individually, Louisburg captured gold in nine events, including its three relays and all four jumping events.

"This was a good meet for the girls," Louisburg girls coach Greg Darrington said. "They went out and performed well and even pushed each other in the jumping events. I really like how hard these girls are working and how much fun it is this year to coach them."

Senior Chloe Renner jumped her way to three first-place

finishes in the jumps as she won all three of her events. Renner won the high jump after she cleared 4 feet, 10 inches, took first in the long jump with a mark of 15-6.5 and also won the triple jump title with a leap of 32-4.5.



Senior Chloe Renner lands in the sand pit during an attempt in the long jump Thursday Renner won the long, triple and high jump.

Junior Isabelle Holtzen also found success in the pole vault after she tied a personal best. Holtzen cleared 10 feet and won the competition by more than a foot.

Several other Lady Cats scored points in the jumping events as well. Sophomore Eileen Benne (4-8) and freshman Haley Cain (4-6) came in second and third, respectively, in the high jump.

Freshman Sydni Keagle recorded a mark of 14-11 in the long

jump to finish second, while junior Kaitlyn Urban was fourth with a leap of 13-9. Urban also finished runner-up (31-11.75) in the triple jump and Benne (29-0.5) took fourth.

“I thought Chloe did a good job coming off her injury and taking a few days off,” Darrington said. “We need her to make a strong squad in the jumping events.”

Also in the field events, junior Lexie Reece recorded a third-place finish in the discus with a toss of 94-8 and senior Ellie Katzer was fourth at 91-4.5. Sophomore Melia Rice (63-6) also took fifth in the javelin.

On the track, all three Lady Cats relays were able to cross the finish line first.

The 4×800-meter relay of Payton Shaffer, Alex Miller, Shaylor Whitham and Mikayla Quinn won with a time of 11 minutes and 35 seconds. Keagle, Jordon Leach, Cain and Urban helped the 4×100 relay to a first-place finish in 54.25 seconds.



Louisburg senior Kaitlyn Gaza (right) sprints to the finish with teammate Mikayla Quinn right behind her in the 400-meter dash Thursday.

The Lady Cats ended the meet on a strong note as Kaitlyn Gaza, Quinn, Urban and Holtzen won the 4×400 relay in 4:31.68.

“I think the relay teams are doing a nice job and beginning to build a bond as a unit,” Darrington said. “I am excited to see how they all finish this year in the league and regional meets.”

Earlier in the meet, Gaza won her first individual race as she took first in the 400-meter dash in 1:05.15, while Quinn (1:06.58) and Holtzen (1:09) finished second and third respectively.

Keagle and Cain found success in the two hurdles races as the Louisburg freshmen both earned medals. Keagle won the 100-

meter hurdles in 17.61 and Cain was second in 19.14. Cain also took second (53.48) in the 300 hurdles and Keagle (57.35) was third.

Leach fared well in the sprints as she was runner-up in the 100-meter dash in 13.70 seconds and third in the 200 dash in 28.46. Shaffer, a freshman, came in third in the 800-meter run in 2:47.

Louisburg returns to action Thursday when it travels to the Prairie View Invitational .

Other results are:

800 run: Alex Miller, seventh, 3:03.53; Shaylor Whitham, eighth, 3:03.98

1,600 run: Miller, eighth, 7:05

Long jump: Eileen Benne, 10th, 12-9.75

Shot put: Ellie Katzer, eighth, 28-1; Lexie Reece, 10th, 25-11

Discus: Melia Rice, 11th, 64-3

Wildcat boys track wins home invitational



Louisburg junior Frankie Hurst clears a height in the pole vault Thursday during the Louisburg Invitational at Wildcat Stadium. Hurst set a new personal record after he cleared 12 feet to win the event.

The Louisburg High School boys track and field team didn't waste its opportunity to compete in its home invitational Thursday.

In fact, the Wildcats relished it as they went on to win the Louisburg Invitational. Louisburg accumulated 181 points to win the meet going away at Wildcat Stadium – finishing 73 points ahead of runner-up Prairie View.

The Wildcats also won seven individual events, including five on the track that helped them capture their first meet of the season.

"I was really happy with the way we competed," Louisburg boys coach Gary Griffin said. "We scored points in most of the events and competed like I was hoping we would at our meet."

Tanner Belcher, Jarod Rose, Chris Williams and Ben Hupp got the track portion of the meet started right as they won the 4×800-meter relay in 8 minutes and 42 seconds and two of those runners went on to win individual races.

Williams won the 400-meter dash in 53.04 seconds and teammate Blue Caplinger took third in the event in 56.08. Belcher won the 800-meter run in 2:14 and Rose also earned a medal as he finished third in 2:16.

Wyatt Reece continued the gold medal performances on the track as he took first in the 1,600-meter run in 4:55 and also came in second in the 3,200 run in 10:57. Senior Jacob Benne earned his first varsity medal as he was runner-up (5:17) in the 1,600 and also took fifth (12:11) in the 3,200.

Junior Quinn Rigney got his first victory of the season in the 100-meter dash as he sprinted his way to a time of 11.30 seconds and later took second in the 200 dash in 23.53 seconds. Rigney recorded a personal record in both races.

“Quinn is running well right now,” Griffin said. “He is working hard and both of his individual races were his best of the season.”



Junior Quinn Rigney (right) sprints down the straightaway in the final leg of the 4x100-meter relay Thursday.

Senior Jackson Ewalt medaled third in the 100 dash in 11.78

seconds and he also took fifth in the 200 dash in 24.74 seconds. Sophomore Austin Moore was sixth in 25.36.

Ewalt, Caplinger, Rigney and Charlie Koontz finished runner-up in the 4×100-meter relay in 46.33 seconds, while the 4×400 relay of Williams, Caplinger, Hupp and Rigney was also runner-up in 3:44.

Hupp also took second in the 300-meter hurdles in 43.75 seconds and teammate Scott Murphy was fourth in 45.47.

In the field events, senior T.J. Dover won the discus for the second time this season as he recorded a season-best throw of 139 feet, 6 inches and also finished second in the shot put with a toss of 44-4.5.

"T.J. has been very consistent this year and I think he has some big throws in him in the next few weeks," Griffin said.

Junior Matt Holloway (41-11) and sophomore Kiefer Tucker (41-2) took fourth and fifth, respectively, in the shot put to earn points for the Wildcats. Tucker also finished third in the discus (114-1).



Senior T.J. Dover reaches back for throw in the discus Thursday during the Louisburg Invitational. Dover won the event and took second in the shot put.

Frankie Hurst picked the right time to set a personal record in the pole vault. Hurst cleared 12 feet to win gold, while teammates Trent Martin and Caplinger both cleared 11 feet to finish fourth and fifth.

“I think all the vaulters are doing well,” Griffin said. “Coach (Andy) Wright is doing a great job with them and Frankie is now getting back into the flow after missing a year.”

Junior Kris Light also scored points for the Wildcats in the jumps. Light finished second in the high jump after he cleared 5-8 and sixth (34-6) in the triple jump. Charlie Koontz took sixth (17-6) in the long jump.

The Wildcats return to action Thursday when they travel to the Prairie View Invitational.

Other results are:

100 dash: Austin Moore, seventh, 12.21; Will Ridley, eighth, 12.24

200 dash: Ridley, eighth, 25.42

110 hurdles: Scott Murphy, 10th, 21.93

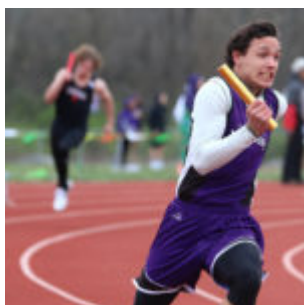
Long jump: Ridley, eighth, 17-0.5; Trent Martin, 12th, 15-8

Triple jump: Ridley, seventh, 33-11

Discus: Matt Holloway, 19th, 79-1.5

Javelin: Holloway, eighth, 114-4; Kiefer Tucker, 19th, 98-2

Wildcats win six events at Anderson County Invite



Louisburg senior Jackson Ewalt runs a leg of the 4×100-meter relay during a meet earlier this season. The Wildcats won six events total Thursday during the Anderson County Invitational in Garnett. In the team standings, both the boys and girls

finished fourth overall.

GARNETT – The Louisburg High School track and field teams ventured to the Anderson County Invitational on Thursday and left with several medals to show for their performance.

Both the boys and girls teams finished fourth in the team standings, while the Wildcats won six events total – four for the girls and two for the boys.

“I think overall this week was better than last week,” Louisburg boys coach Gary Griffin said. “The weather was good, and so a lot of the performances were better.”

Junior Kaitlyn Urban continues to find success in the triple jump as she won the event for the second consecutive week. Urban took first with leap of 31 feet, 9.25 inches and wasn’t the only Louisburg jumper to have success.

Isabelle Holtzen, a junior, won the pole vault competition after she cleared 9-6 and captured the gold medal by more than a foot.

“In the jumps it’s nice to see Kaitlyn and Isabelle having success,” Louisburg girls coach Greg Darrington said. “Both girls have worked hard in the off-season and are competing in the running events this year. The more speed they develop, the better they will be in the jumps.”

The jumpers carried their success over to the track as Urban and Holtzen teamed up with senior Kaitlyn Gaza and junior Mikayla Quinn to win the 4×400-meter relay in 4 minutes and 26.43 seconds as they edged out Eudora (4:26.55) at the finish line.

Quinn, Reilly Alexander, Shaylor Whitham and Payton Shaffer also took the top spot in the 4×800-meter relay as they finished first in 11:14. Urban, Sydni Keagle, Jordon Leach and

Haley Cain took second in the 4×100 relay in 54.54 seconds.

"I was proud of all our relays and they did a good job," Darrington said. "The fact that Mikayla and Kaitlyn are battling in the open 400 make the relay much better. I feel adding Isabelle in the open 400 helps as well. All of the girls are competitive and are pushing each other. If they can each cut four or five seconds of their splits they could have a chance to qualify for state and maybe even make finals."

Quinn and Gaza battled for position in the 400-meter dash as Quinn took second in 1:05.55 and Gaza was right behind her in third in 1:05.75.

The Lady Cats also scored points in the hurdles as Keagle (19.46), Kristen Bell (19.98) and Cain (20.40) finished fourth, fifth and sixth, respectively, in the 100-meter hurdles. Cain also came in fourth (54.39) in the 300 hurdles.

In the field events, Lexie Reece and Melia Rice also scored points for Louisburg. Reece took fifth in the discus with a toss of 92-0 and Rice was sixth in the javelin with a throw of 72-6.

Wyatt Reece and Chris Williams came up big for the Wildcat boys as each won events.

Reece led the pack in the 3,200-meter run and finished in first place with a time of 10:59. Earlier in the day, Reece ran a season best time of 4:48 in the 1,600-meter run to finish second overall, while teammate Tim Smith returned to finish fourth in 5:00.

As for Williams, he earned the 400-meter dash title in 52.54 seconds to win by more than a second. Blue Caplinger also scored points in the event with a sixth-place finish in 55.6 seconds.

"Wyatt had a good day in both of his races and he is starting

to gain some confidence,” Griffin said. “Tim ran well in the 1,600 and then kind of hurt his foot again, so we will see what happens with him this week.”

Also on the track, Quinn Rigney finished runner-up in the 200-meter dash in 23.77 seconds and earlier took fourth in the 100 dash in 12.05.

The 4×100-meter relay of Jackson Ewalt, Caplinger, Austin Moore and Quinn Rigney ran a personal best of 45.98 seconds to finish fourth, while Ben Hupp, Tanner Belcher, Jarod Rose and Williams came in second in 8:49.74 in the 4×800 relay. The Wildcat 4×400 relay team finished sixth overall.

Belcher also scored points in the 800 run as he took fifth in 2:11, while Hupp was sixth in the 300 hurdles with a time of 45.16.

In the field events, senior T.J. Dover had a runner-up finish in the discus with a throw of 133-1 and later came in fourth in the shot put with a toss of 44-6.25.

Trent Martin and Frankie Hurst also had big days in the pole vault as both jumpers recorded personal records. Martin cleared 12-0.25 to take fourth and Hurst was seventh at 11-6.

Charlie Koontz also scored points for the Wildcats as he took fifth in the long jump with a leap of 18-1.5., and Kristopher Light cleared 5-5.5 in the high jump and finished sixth.

Louisburg returns to action this Thursday when it hosts the Louisburg Invitational at Wildcat Stadium.

Other results are:

GIRLS

100 dash: Jordon Leach, 10th, 14.73; Tomi Frederes, 17th, 15.36

200 dash: Frederes, 15th, 31.83

800 run: Payton Shaffer, 9th, 2:45; Shaylor Whitham, 12th, 2:50;
Reilly Alexander, 13th, 2:56

1,600 run: Alex Miller, 12th, 6:44

3,200 run: Miller, 8th, 16:02

300 hurdles: Sydni Keagle, 8th, 57.84; Kristen Bell, 14th, 1:02

High jump: Haley Cain, 7th, 4-6

Long jump: Keagle, 7th, 14-3; Kaitlyn Urban, 11th, 13-3.5

Shot put: Ellie Katzer, 10th, 27-2.5; Lexie Reece, 11th, 27-0.5

Discus: Katzer, 8th, 82-6; Melia Rice, 12th, 73-0

Javelin: Eden Strumillo, 20th, 38-4

BOYS

100 dash: Charlie Koontz, 11th, 12.45; Jackson Ewalt, 14th,
12.58; Austin Moore, 17th, 12.62; Will Ridley, 21st, 12.76

200 dash: Ewalt, 7th, 24.66; Moore, 12th, 25.37; Ridley, 13th,
25.63; Koontz, 15th, 25.65

800 run: Jarod Rose, 9th, 2:16

1,600 run: Jacob Benne, 13th, 5:23

3,200 run: Benne, 8th, 12:02

100 hurdles: Scott Murphy, 11th, 20.04

300 hurdle: Murphy, 9th, 45.93

High jump: Jack Mick, 10th, 5-2

Pole vault: Mick, 13th, 9-6

Long jump: Trent Martin, 14th, 16-10.5; Kyle Allen, 14th, 16-10.5; Ridley, 16th, 16-10.25; Frankie Hurst, 24th, 15-8

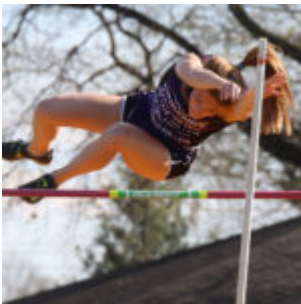
Triple jump: Allen, 7th, 36-1.5; Ridley, 12th, 34-1.25

Shot put: Kiefer Tucker, 11th, 36-7.25

Discus: Tucker, 18th, 93-11

Javelin: Tucker, 14th, 113-0

Jumping events propel Wildcat track at Paola



Louisburg junior Isabelle Holtzen clears a height in the pole vault Thursday during the Paola Invitational at Paola High School. Holtzen recorded a personal best 10 feet to finish

second overall.

PAOLA – The jumps have been a strength for the Louisburg High School girls track and field team this season and that continued last Thursday at the Paola Invitational.

The Lady Cats won the triple jump, finished second in the pole vault, third and fourth in the high jump and took fourth in the long jump during the 12-team meet at Paola High School. Those high finishes helped the Louisburg girls to a fourth place team finish with 66.5 points.

“I really felt the girls did a great job competing on the track and in the field events,” Louisburg girls coach Greg Darrington said. “We will get better each week and get into better shape. I hope we really hit our stride when the weather begins to warm up. I thought the girls did a great job in the jumping events.”

Junior Kaitlyn Urban had her best day so far this season in the triple jump. Urban won the event with a personal best leap of 32 feet, 2.5 inches and was the lone Wildcat to win an event on both the girls and boys sides.

“Kaitlyn is getting stronger in the jumping events and I really think her sprinting this year is paying off for her,” Darrington said. “I feel she is just starting to tap into her full potential. Speed is a big plus in any jumping event. Her work in the off season is really starting to pay off.”

Louisburg’s success continued in the pole vault when junior Isabelle Holtzen set a personal best in the event. Holtzen cleared 10 feet and finished second overall to Paola’s Samantha Van Hoecke, who cleared 10-6.

“It’s great seeing Isabelle starting to improve on her heights,” Darrington said. “I really feel if she can increase

her confidence and keep improving throughout the year she could contend for a medal at the state competition.”



Junior Kaitlyn Urban takes off for an attempt in the triple jump Thursday at the Paola Invitational. Urban set a personal record and won the event.

Senior Chloe Renner added to the point total for the Lady Cats

as she took third in the high jump after she cleared 4-10 for the second straight week. Sophomore teammate Eileen Benne tied for fourth after surpassing the 4-8 mark.

Renner also earned points in the long jump as she finished fourth with a mark of 15-5.5. In the throws, senior Ellie Katzer was seventh with a toss of 93-8.

On the track, freshmen Sydni Keagle and Haley Cain provided the Louisburg girls with points in the hurdles. Keagle made the finals in the 100 hurdles and finished fourth in 17.66 seconds. In the 300 hurdles, Cain was fifth with a time of 54.73.

Junior Mikayla Quinn (1:07.84), senior Kaitlyn Gaza (1:07.87) and Holtzen (1:09.71) all scored in the 400-meter dash for the Lady Cats as they took fifth, sixth and eighth, respectively.

Quinn, Urban, Gaza and Holtzen also ran the 4×400-meter relay and finished fourth in 4:32. Urban, Jordon Leach, Keagle and Haley Cain ran the 4×100 in 55.99 seconds and also took fourth.

Shaylor Whitham, Reilly Alexander, Payton Shaffer and Quinn ran the 4×800 relay and crossed the finish in sixth place.

The Wildcat boys had three top three finishes on the day and finished in sixth in the team standings with 51 points.

On the track, Chris Williams, Wyatt Reece, Ben Hupp and Tanner Belcher had Louisburg's best outing on the day with a runner-up finish in the 4×800 relay. The four runners finished 8:42.98 to come in second, just three seconds behind Paola.



Sophomore Tanner Belcher sprints the final few meters of his leg in the 4×800-meter relay Thursday in Paola.

Williams and Reece also ran well in their individual events. Williams, a sophomore, was third in the 400-meter dash in 53.51 seconds. In the 1,600-meter run, Reece ran his best race of the season with a time of 4:52.93 and also took third.

“I thought we were good in some areas and not so good in others,” Louisburg boys coach Gary Griffin said. “It was a tough meet with really good competition. We did not have as many people with PRs (personal records) as I would have liked but we will keep working and getting better.”

The 4×100 relay of Jackson Ewalt, Will Ridley, Austin Moore and Blue Caplinger finished fourth (47.67), while the 4×400 team of Williams, Blue Caplinger, Ben Hupp and Tanner Belcher came in fifth (3:44).

Belcher also scored points in the 800-meter run and finished fifth in 2:11. Hupp took seventh in the 300-meter hurdles in 44.63.

On the track, senior T.J. Dover led the Wildcats in throws. Dover was fourth in the discus with a throw of 133-5 and was sixth in the shot put with a mark of 43-9.

Junior Frankie Hurst and freshman Trent Martin each cleared 10-6 in the pole vault and took fifth and seventh, respectively.

Louisburg returns to action this Thursday when it travels to the Anderson County Invitational in Garnett.

Other results are:

GIRLS

100 dash: Jordon Leach, 17th, 14.24

200 dash: Leach, 13th, 29.67

800 run: Payton Shaffer, ninth, 2:45; Shaylor Whitham, 17th, 2:55; Reilly Alexander, 18th, 2:58

1,600 run: Whitham, 13th, 6:32

100 hurdles: Haley Cain, 14th, 19.79

300 hurdles: Sydni Keagle, 13th, 1:00

Long jump: Kaitlyn Urban, 16th, 12-11.50

Shot put: Ellie Katzer, 12th, 29-2; Lexie Reece, 17th, 27-8

Discus: Reece, ninth, 88-11

BOYS

100 dash: Jackson Ewalt, ninth, 11.73; Austin Moore, 17th, 12.20

200 dash: Ewalt, 10th, 24.56; Moore, 14th, 25.09

400 dash: Will Ridley, 21st, 1:00

800 run: Jarod Rose, 10th, 2:15

1,600 run: Jacob Benne, 15th, 5:21

3,200 run: Wyatt Reece, 12th, 11:21; Rose, 17th, 11:56; Benne, 18th, 12:08

110 hurdles: Scott Murphy, 17th, 19.25

300 hurdles: Murphy, 11th, 46.21

Pole vault: Blue Caplinger, 10th, 10-0

Long jump: Ridley, 18th, 16-10; Kyle Allen, 20th, 16-4; Frankie Hurst, 22nd, 14-8

Triple jump: Allen, 13th, 34-6

Shot put: Matt Holloway, 14th, 38-6; Kiefer Tucker, 22nd, 34-7

Discus: Tucker, 11th, 102-5; Holloway, 19th, 91-9

Javelin: Holloway, 15th, 110-0; Tucker, 16th, 107-11

Wildcat track teams finish in top 3 at Belton



Senior Chloe Renner lands in the long jump pit during the Show-Me Showdown Invitational on Friday at Belton High School. Renner finished with three medals on the day, including a first-place finish in the high jump.

BELTON, Mo. – It may have been just the second meet of the season, but the Louisburg High School boys and girls track and field teams took a big leap forward.

During the Show-Me Showdown Invitational on Friday at Belton High School, the Wildcat boys finished second in the team standings with 156 points behind champion St. James Academy, which had 209 points.

The Wildcats won six events and 13 individuals or relays finished in the top three to earn medals.

“I was very pleased with the way we competed,” Louisburg boys coach Gary Griffin said. “We had some good performances and some not so good, but the way we competed was great to see.”

On the girls’ side, the Lady Cats also put together a strong performance as they finished third overall with 102.5 points behind champion St. James Academy (207.5) and runner-up Holden, Mo. (182.5).

Louisburg took first in two events and the Lady Cats finished

in the top three six times.

"I was very pleased with our overall performance," Louisburg girls coach Greg Darrington said. "To finish third out of 10 teams was good for us. We have a lot to work with as a team and I am very excited for some nice weather to see how we compete throughout the season."

Senior Ben Hupp and sophomore Chris Williams each finished with three gold medals – one individual and two on relays.

Williams won the 400-meter dash in 52.45 seconds and was the anchor leg on the 4×400-meter relay that finished first in 3:42.62, just .01 seconds ahead of runner-up St. James. Hupp, Blue Caplinger and Tanner Belcher each got the relay off to a good start.

Wyatt Reece, Williams, Hupp and Belcher also teamed up to win the 4×800-meter relay in 8 minutes and 48 seconds. Later on, Hupp won the 300-meter hurdles for the first this season in 43.65 seconds.

"Ben is one of the hardest workers on the team in all sports and it is nice to see him reap the rewards of his hard work," Griffin said. "We stuck a lot of relays together and did not have a lot of time to work on exchanges, so overall I was happy with the way they all ran. We scored good points in all of the relays."



Senior Ben Hupp clears the final hurdle during the 300-meter hurdles Friday in Belton. Hupp won the event in 43 seconds.

"The 4×400 was really exciting. Chris kind of let up at the end, but we still pulled it out. He learned that you can't let up until the race is over."

The sprint medley relay team of Austin Moore, Jackson Ewalt, Quinn Rigney and Blue Caplinger also won first in 1:45.

The 4×200 relay of Will Ridley, Ewalt, Moore and Rigney finished in 1:38.92, while Caplinger, Ewalt, Rigney and Moore took third in the 4×100 relay in 46.65 seconds.

Following his run in the 4×800, Reece had a strong performance in the 1,600-meter run as he won in a time of 4:55 – his best of the season.

"We have been waiting for Wyatt to break out for a while and

hopefully this is a springboard for the rest of the year," Griffin said. "He ran really well in both of his races."

Also on the track, Rigney ran a time of 11.55 seconds to finish second in the 100-meter dash that featured cool, windy conditions.

In the field events, pole vaulters Frankie Hurst, Blue Caplinger and Trent Martin finished second, third and fourth, respectively. Hurst came up big after he cleared 11 feet, while Caplinger and Martin, recorded a height of 10-6, and 10-0, respectively.

"The vaulters scored big points for us and they will keep getting better as the year goes on," Griffin said. "Frankie made a huge step up from the last meet and Blue no-heighted on the last meet so what he vaulted was great."



Junior Wyatt Reece leads a pack of runners in the 1,600-

meter run. Reece won the event with a time of 4:55.

In the throws, senior T.J. Dover finished runner-up in the discus with a throw of 138-8. Matt Holloway also finished second in the javelin with a throw of 112-1.

Chloe Renner had a big day on the girls side as she finished the day with three medals, including a gold in the high jump. The Louisburg senior cleared 4-10 to win the event and later finished third in the long jump (16-0) and triple jump (31-2).

Junior Isabelle Holtzen also came out on top in the pole vault. Holtzen made a big improvement off her last meet and finished first after she cleared 9-0.

"I thought Chloe had a great day and if she can keep working hard and take full advantage of her potential she could have a very good year and win some medals at state," Darrington said. "I was very happy with Isabelle and she showed how tough she is mentally by performing well in some adverse conditions."



Louisburg's Jordon Leach takes off during a relay Friday in Belton.

On the track, the Lady Cats also took second in a pair of events.

The 4×400 relay of Kaitlyn Gaza, Kaitlyn Urban, Mikayla Quinn and Holtzen finished runner-up to end the meet with a time of 4:35.

Freshman Sydni Keagle led Louisburg in the 100-meter hurdles as she took second in 17.69 seconds.

"I am very excited about Sydni and Haley Cain both in the 100 and 300 hurdles," Darrington said. "It has been a couple of years since we have had some girls competing at a high level in the hurdles. I like the fact that we have three young girls, including Kristen Bell, competing and practicing the hurdles."

Other results are:

BOYS

100 dash: Charlie Koontz, ninth, 12.06

800 run: Tanner Belcher, fourth, 2:15.31; Jarod Rose, sixth, 2:19.18

1,600 run: Rose, eighth, 5:21.95

3,200 run: Wyatt Reece, fourth, 10:55; Jacob Benne, seventh, 12:12

300 hurdles: Scott Murphy, fifth, 47.12

Medley relay: Thomas Arnett, Koontz, Murphy, Rose, fourth, 4:19

Shot put: T.J. Dover, fourth, 44-1; Matt Holloway, sixth, 39-4.5; Hunter Day, 15th, 32-10

Discus: Kiefer Tucker, fifth, 103-2; Day, 11th, 94-8

Javelin: Tucker, seventh, 84-7.

Pole vault: Trent Martin, fourth, 10-0

Long jump: Kyle Allen, 11th, 16-0; Frankie Hurst, 15th, 15-1.5; Martin, 15th, 15-1.5

GIRLS

100 dash: Jordon Leach, 11th, 14.07

200 dash: Kaitlyn Gaza, ninth, 29.69; Leach, 11th, 30.28

400 dash: Mikayla Quinn, fourth, 1:08.15; Isabelle Holtzen, seventh, 1:09.21; Gaza, 11th, 1:11.72

800 run: Shaylor Whitham, ninth, 3:01

1,600 run: Alex Miller, 12th, 7:11

3,200 run: Miller, eighth, 16:25

100 hurdles: Haley Cain, seventh, 19.68; Kristen Bell, eighth, 19.83

300 hurdles: Cain, fifth, 55.92; Sydni Keagle, seventh, 58.65; Kristen Bell, ninth, 1:07

4×100 relay: Leach, Keagle, Cain, Kaitlyn Urban, 55.99

4×200 relay: Gaza, Mikayla Quinn, Eileen Benne, Leach, fifth, 2:01

Sprint medley relay: Chloe Renner, Avery Graham, Tomi Frederes, Whitham, fifth, 2:13

Medley relay: Keagle, Frederes, Cain, Whitham, sixth, 5:22

Shot put: Ellie Katzer, fifth, 26-8; Lexie Reece, ninth, 25-3; Eden Strumillo, 18th, 22-0

Discus: Katzer, fourth, 89-3; Reece, fifth, 87-4; Strumillo, 15th, 57-7

Javelin: Melia Rice, 13th, 53-7

High jump: Benne, fourth, 4-6

Long jump: Urban, 12th, 13-2.5

Triple jump: Urban, fifth, 29-9; Benne, ninth, 26-9.5

Frontier League shakeup could happen soon



In a few months – or even weeks – the Frontier League as it currently stands could have a different look.

Since March, meetings have gone on within member schools of the Frontier League and Kaw Valley League to discuss possible realignment of both leagues.

The Frontier League currently has seven members – Louisburg, Paola, Spring Hill, De Soto, Ottawa, Baldwin and Eudora – and a meeting between the schools took place on March 28 to discuss where each school stood as far as their happiness in the league.

Brian Biermann, superintendent of USD 416, and Louisburg High School athletic director Darin Gagnebin attended the meeting on Louisburg's behalf and both relayed the fact that every school stated they were happy with the way the league is currently set up, but a couple schools came to the realization the Frontier League might not be able to offer what they are looking for.

De Soto and Spring Hill currently have growing enrollment numbers are interested in playing Class 5A competition. De Soto moved up to 5A this school year and Spring Hill will look to make the jump in the coming years with its larger enrollment. The rest of the schools all compete in Class 4A.

Both schools stated they would like more competition at the

sub-varsity level that schools like Louisburg, Baldwin and Eudora cannot provide. Competing in a mainly 5A league would relieve some of those problems.

“De Soto said they will probably open next year with 950 kids and they would grow by 100 the year after that,” Biermann said. “They are happy in the Frontier, but they feel like they need 5A competition and they feel like it could hurt them in football with seedings and tie-breakers. They could potentially get penalized by competing in a mainly 4A league.

“Spring Hill wants to be proactive. Their growth is coming. Their classes in the middle school are pretty good size. They won’t grow a lot next year, but they will in the next few years.”

What started the meetings is due to the fact that the Kaw Valley League is looking to rework their situation or create a brand new look altogether. The Kaw Valley currently has seven schools in Lansing, Turner, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bishop Ward and Basehor-Linwood, but one member – Bishop Ward – is leaving for a new league beginning next school year.

According to report in March from the *Tonganoxie Mirror*, Lansing wants to create a larger league that would contain all or some combinations of Lansing, Blue Valley Southwest, De Soto, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs, Basehor-Linwood, Tonganoxie, Ottawa, Piper, Spring Hill, Turner and Topeka schools Seaman, Shawnee Heights and Topeka West.

Many of those schools are either in Class 5A already or are close based on enrollment numbers. The idea of competing against bigger competition is intriguing to De Soto, Spring Hill – and possibly Ottawa – the three largest schools in the Frontier League.

An idea was thrown around of creating a league of two divisions between the Kaw Valley and Frontier. One division would be 5A schools and the other would be 4A.

"We visited with our board of education and we are not in favor of a mega-league," Biermann said. "That has been talked about – having a league of 5A and 4A schools. We don't want to invite new 5A schools. We are ok with Spring Hill and De Soto staying in the league, even though they are growing, but we don't want to invite other 5A schools or have a mega league so they can have better competition.

"Our stance is if De Soto and Spring Hill feel like they need 5A competition and leave, then they can work towards that and we can work on filling those spots with 4A schools."

Both Biermann and Gagnebin feel like the Frontier League needs to be proactive as changes could be made sooner rather than later.

"We aren't panicking as a league as much as the Kaw Valley schools are because they know they are headed for a break up," Gagnebin said. "We could easily stay with the seven schools we have. Pretty soon, De Soto will have close to 1,000 kids. It is more on them if they want to be in our league, and if they are happy, by all means stay. We are not saying they have to leave, but they have to do best what is for their school, and if this league isn't the best option for you, then you have to look elsewhere."

Due to the fact De Soto and Spring Hill could be moving on, the Frontier is being proactive and inviting some members of the Kaw Valley League to come make presentations at a meeting Wednesday to see if they would be a fit in the Frontier.

According to Biermann, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bonner Springs and Basehor-Linwood High Schools will all make presentations at the meeting and then schools from both the Kaw Valley and the Frontier will meet to discuss options at a later date.

"I led the (March 28) meeting and I wanted to make sure everyone was as honest and open as possible," Biermann said. "There were no hurt feelings. Collectively we don't want a

mega-league, no additional 5A schools and that is firm from us, Paola, Baldwin and Eudora. Spring Hill and De Soto left the meeting, I think, that they need to start looking for potential 5A competition.

“The easy fix would be for De Soto and Spring Hill to join the bigger league and we take someone like Tonganoxie and Piper to replace them. Every school said they loved the Frontier League and competition, but it is time there has to be some conversations. The biggest thing is we don’t have three baseball, softball or soccer teams to schedule, but De Soto and Spring Hill want that. We can’t field C teams in some cases.”

The leagues are on a sort of a time crunch. With football reclassifications and scheduling beginning this October for the next two years, it would be the best case scenario to get the reshuffling done before then so they can schedule for the 2018-19 season and beyond according to Gagnebin.

The Louisburg activities director also believes keeping the right number of teams is also imperative for a healthy league.

“We want to maintain the integrity of our league, whether that is with seven or even eight schools,” Gagnebin said. “We want to maintain that number. Nine is a scheduling nightmare, and if you only have six teams, you are opening up a can of worms where if you leave an open spot, then the state could come in and assign certain schools to us that aren’t a good fit.

“I don’t necessarily want them to leave the league, but we need to be told if they are. I am more afraid of them leaving our league than them staying in our league. I am not afraid of the competition we face with them. We can compete with them in all the sports, but I am more afraid of us dropping from a seven to a five-team league.”

However, one hiccup remains. The Frontier League bylaws state that a member school must give two years notice before leaving

the league.

“If the dominoes start falling fast, the league could pass a bylaw amendment to allow for movement for De Soto or whoever, which is something I think they will have to do,” Gagnebin said. “Not much is happening now, but when it does it is going to happen quick. You better be ready to move with it and have a plan in place or you could be stuck on the outside.”

Dover leads Wildcat track with discus title in opener



DE SOTO – It was a cold, wet and dreary start to the Louisburg track and field season, but the Wildcats were still able to find success despite the undesirable weather conditions.

Louisburg competed in the Leavenworth Invitational on Tuesday that was held at De Soto High School and the Wildcats left with seven top three finishes – five of which came on the boys side.

Senior T.J. Dover led the Wildcats as he won his first competition of the season. Dover finished first in the discus with a throw of 138 feet, 9 inches.

“Overall I was pleased with the effort,” Louisburg boys coach Gary Griffin said. “Competing one day after coming off of

spring break is not ideal, and it was cold, but I thought we competed well. T.J. had some good marks for early in the year, and he will keep getting better and better.”

Dover continued his success in the throws as he finished third in the shot put with a toss of 46-1.25.

Also in the field events, freshman Trent Martin had a strong performance in the pole vault in his first varsity meet as he finished second after he cleared 10-6.

On the track, sophomore Chris Williams ran a strong time in the 400-meter dash and finished second in 53.74 seconds. Williams also helped the 4×800-meter relay of Tanner Belcher, Ben Hupp and Owen Staver to a third-place finish in 8 minutes and 51 seconds.

“Chris ran the 4×800, the 400 and 4×400, which is a lot early in the year and I thought he ran well,” Griffin said. “Trent did a nice job in the pole vault and I did not think being in his first varsity meet bothered him at all.”

Junior Isabelle Holtzen led the Lady Cats as she finished second in the pole vault after she cleared 7-6. The 4×800 team of Reilly Alexander, Shaylor Whitham, Alex Miller and Payton Shaffer was third in 12:01.

In the team standings, the Louisburg boys finished sixth with 49.5 points and the girls took sixth with 26.5 points.

“I feel the meet went well for us,” girls coach Greg Darrington said. “I know the girls are a little disappointed with the results, but we had some girls that were really competitive. We have some time and I know we will get much better as we get into shape. It was tough on the girls with only one practice after spring break. I am looking forward to Friday and can’t wait to see how we compete with a full squad after only taking 13 girls for this meet.”

Louisburg returns to action Friday when it travels to Belton (Mo.) for the Show-Me Showdown.

Other results from the meet are:

BOYS

100 dash: Quinn Rigney, 13th, 12.10; Will Ridley, 14th, 12.10; Jackson Ewalt, 18th, 12.18; Austin Moore, 21st, 12.52

200 dash: Rigney, ninth, 24.61; Ewalt, 15th, 25.36; Moore, 18th, 25.65; Ridley, 22nd, 26.15

400 dash: Blue Caplinger, 13th, 57.19

800 run: Tanner Belcher, fourth, 2:12; Owen Staver, ninth, 2:19

1,600 run: Wyatt Reece, seventh, 5:03; Tim Smith, ninth, 5:05; Jacob Benne, 15th, 12:31

3,200 run: Smith, 12th, 11:13; Reece, 13th, 11:45; Benne, 15th, 12:31

300 hurdles: Hupp, fifth, 44.37

4×100 relay: Caplinger, Moore, Ewalt, Rigney, fifth, 46.33

4×400 relay: Belcher, Caplinger, Hupp, Chris Williams, fourth, 3:49

Pole vault: Frankie Hurst, fifth, 8-6

Long jump: Kyle Allen, 18th, 17-3; Hurst, 20th, 16-6; Trent Martin, 24th, 15-2

Triple jump: Allen, seventh, 36-7.5; Kristopher Light, eighth, 34-6

GIRLS

100 dash: Jordon Leach, 15th, 14.41; Tomi Frederes, 26th, 16.09

200 dash: Leach, 13th, 30.49; Frederes, 18th, 34.11

400 dash: Mikayla Quinn, fourth, 1:06.23; Reilly Alexander, 12th, 1:16

800 run: Payton Shaffer, 12th, 2:51; Shaylor Whitham, 15th, 2:59

3,200 run: Whitham, 12th, 14:44

4×400 relay: Quinn, Alexander, Kaitlyn Urban, Isabelle Holtzen, fourth, 4:43

Shot put: Ellie Katzer, 14th, 26-2.5; Lexie Reece, 15th, 26-0

Discus: Reece, fifth, 95-4; Katzer, eighth, 86-9

High jump: Chloe Renner, fifth, 4-8; Eileen Benne, seventh, 4-6

Long jump: Renner, seventh, 14-10; Benne, 17th, 13-2; Urban, 18th, 12-5.5

Triple jump: Urban, fifth, 29-8.5; Renner, eighth, 28-8.5; Benne, ninth, 28-6.5

Wildcat track hopes for big season



Louisburg High School sophomore Chris Williams is one of several returning state qualifiers for the Wildcat track and field team this season. Williams finished ninth at state in the 400-meter dash last season.

The Louisburg High School track teams return their fair share of experience in what the Wildcat coaches hope will be a successful 2017 season.

Between the boys and girls squads, Louisburg brings back three regional champions and several state qualifiers from last season. It is a good starting point for this year as the Wildcats look to try and bring home a state medal after coming up short a year ago.

On the boys side, the Wildcats have 35 athletes out this season, including a pair of individual state qualifiers and three relay teams that earned a spot at the state meet last May.

Like every season, the Wildcats have had to battle with spring break and inconsistent weather to try and get practices in, but they have made progress.

“Things have been going well,” Louisburg boys coach Gary Griffin said. “We have some quality kids coming back,

including several relay members from last year.”

One of those individuals is senior T.J. Dover, who won the regional title in the discus a year ago and will look to lead a young group of throwers this season. He finished 11th at state last season, just a few spots away from a medal.

“Because basketball went longer than normal and spring break, T.J. has not had a lot of practice time, but we are expecting him to have a good year,” Griffin said. “T.J. is the only senior thrower and hopefully some younger kids will come along as the year goes by.”

Sophomore Chris Williams will look to lead the Wildcats on the track. Williams, who did a lot of the sprints last season, qualified for state in the 400-meter dash and finished one spot from a state medal as he took ninth.

Williams’ role on the team will be a little different this time around as he will run the 400 dash and 800-meter run and Griffin is excited for what his season could hold.

“I think he has the potential to be a state champion,” Griffin said. “Chris came into practice with confidence and his conditioning is pretty good this early in the season. I expect big things from him.”

The Wildcats will also try and send all three of their relay teams to state after qualifying two last season. Williams will join the 4×800-meter relay of the combination of Wyatt Reece, Tanner Belcher, Owen Staver and Ben Hupp. Reece, Belcher and Hupp all ran on the team at state last year.

On the 4×400 team, Williams will join a combination of Blue Caplinger, Hupp, Belcher and Scott Murphy, while Quinn Rigney, Austin Moore, Jackson Ewalt and Caplinger will compete in the 4×100 relay.

Rigney, Moore, Ewalt, Caplinger, Murphy and Will Ridley will

compete in the sprints this season for Louisburg.

Juniors Wyatt Reece and Tim Smith, who both qualified for state in cross country earlier this year, will look to translate that success over to the track in the long distance races. Belcher, Staver and Hupp will run in the middle distance, while Hupp will also compete in the hurdles.

In the field events, juniors Kyle Allen and Kristopher Light also return to help lead the Wildcats in the jumps.

As for the girls, the Lady Cats return a pair of regional champs from a season ago in senior Chloe Renner and junior Isabelle Holtzen. In all, they have 27 girls out for track this year.

“Even though the numbers are down I have girls out that want to be here and I think we could be okay,” Louisburg girls coach Greg Darrington said.



Louisburg junior Isabelle Holtzen hopes to make another state appearance in the pole vault for the Wildcats this season.

Renner comes back for one more season as she won a regional title in the triple jump last year and will lead the Lady Cats in the jumps.

Holtzen also won a regional title last season as she won the pole vault before coming up one spot short of a state medal

last season. She will also concentrate on running in some sprints as well to help her in the vault.

"Isabelle is working hard and I think her doing some sprinting events will help her speed and get her to some new personal records," Darrington said. "She is working hard and I know with her mindset this year she expects more out of herself. I really feel she will be a medal contender at the state meet."

The Lady Cats also return several others in the field events from last year's team. Throwers Ellie Katzer and Lexie Reece will compete in the discus, while Kaitlyn Urban also hopes to have a good year in the jumps.

"I think Kaitlyn Urban has worked hard in the off season and she looks to be more competitive and score points for the team," Darrington said. "Lexie and Ellie have a chance to earn points for the team this year as well."

On the track, the Lady Cats return most of the 4×400-meter relay team that qualified for state last season. Kaitlyn Gaza, Reilly Alexander, Jordon Leach and Mikayla Quinn will lead the Lady Cats.

As for the other two relays, those will be pieced together as the season goes along.

"The 4×100 will have to rely on some younger runners and I am sure Coach (Gary) Griffin will get them ready by mid-year," Darrington said. "Coach (John) Reece will have to rebuild the 4×800 team as a lot of those girls from last year's team made the choice of not coming back out. We will find someone to compete and make a competitive relay team with what we have out."

Both Louisburg teams will open their season Tuesday when they compete in the Leavenworth Invitational, which is hosted at De Soto High School. On Friday, the Wildcats will be in action again, this time at Belton (Mo.) High School for another

invitational.

Griffin receives honor from track coaches association



Louisburg High School track and field coach Gary Griffin was recently honored with the Longevity Award from the Kansas Cross Country and Track Coaches Association. The award honors a coach who has spent more than 30 years coaching one of the two sports.

Coaches and athletes have come and gone from the Louisburg High School track and field program over the last three decades, but one constant has remained.

Gary Griffin has spent the last 30 years coaching the Wildcat track and field team to numerous state meets, state medals and a team state championship. His dedication to the sport hasn't gone unnoticed and he was recognized for it earlier this month.

On Feb. 15, a representative with the Kansas Cross Country and Track Coaches Association traveled to Louisburg to present

Griffin with the 30 Years of Coaching Longevity Award, which is given to those who have coached one of the two sports for 30 years or longer.

“It means a lot to me that they took the time to drive down and get here by 8 a.m. to present me with this award,” Griffin said. “Really, though, it just means that I’ve coached for a long time.”

Although 30 years may seem like an eternity to some people, for Griffin time has flown by as he enters his 18th year as the head boys track coach. He also spent five years as the girls track coach before that and was an assistant under previous head coaches Aaron Webb and Kris Kehl for several seasons.



Louisburg coach Gary Griffin (left) receives his award from a member of the Kansas Cross Country and Track Coaches

Association on Feb. 15 at Louisburg H

"I love track because for the most part you get out of it, what you put into it," Griffin said. "Even the most talented athletes have to work hard to be a state champion. Also I have had the pleasure to coach with others that are very passionate about track like Aaron Webb and Tom Kuder and a lot of others that I have learned a great deal from."

Griffin guided Louisburg to the school's first state title in 2011 when the Wildcats tied Baldwin for first place. His son Garrett won the Class 4A state javelin title and also medaled in the 110-meter high hurdles.

Mark Sitek medaled at state in the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes that season as did Jake Albright (pole vault), Alex Gentges (javelin) and Alex Bell (discus).



Gary Griffin has spent the last 18 years as the Louisburg High School boys track and field coach.

That was one of many special seasons for Griffin as he has had the chance to coach a number of state champions and medalists.

“The state championship was a great memory but there are really too many to remember,” he said. “It was a lot of fun being a part of Garrett’s track career and watching him be

successful. I really don't know how many state champions or medalist we have had since I have been here, but we have had our share. We have had a ton of talented kids over the years, and many have gone on to have great college careers as well."