Wildcat girls win four events at Paola Invite, take third overall



Louisburg junior Addi Mallett gets out to a good start in the 100-meter dash on April 10 at the Paola Invitational. Mallett won the 100 dash and helped the 4×100 and 4×400 relays to golds as well.

PAOLA – Louisburg juniors Addi Mallett and Kendall Crossley left the Paola Invitational with their fair share of hardware.

During the April 10 meet, the two Wildcats dominated the sprints as Mallett won the 100-meter dash and Crossley took the 200 dash. Both runners also helped the 4×100 and 4×400 relays to gold medal finishes.

They guided the Wildcats to a third place team finish with 93 points. Spring Hill won the team title with 189 points and

Paola was second with 124.5.

“The girls’ overall performance was great,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “We are still trying some different things so it is great to see them find success in events that might not have done last year.

“Addi and Kendall ran very well at Paola. It was awesome to see Addi run a strong 100 as she did not run it last year. They ran solid relay legs, as did their teammates, to bring home gold and continue to improve their times in each.”

Mallett edged out teammate Suzanna Dansel for the title in the 100 dash with a time of 12.79 seconds to take the gold, while Dansel was second at 12.88.

Crosseybreezed to the title in the 200 dash wi

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In the relays, the 4×100 team of Mallett, Crossley, Dansel and Mackenzie Rooney improved their season best time to win the event in 50.42 seconds. The Wildcat quartet dominated the field as they won by a second-and-a-half.

It was much of the same in the 4×400 as Mallett, Crossley, Rooney and Ellie Vohs cruised to a victory in 4:15.69 and won by almost three seconds.

“The 4×1 and 4×4 are very solid at this point in the year,” Reece said. “We still need to get those handoffs perfect in the 4×1, and make a run at the school record. The 4×4 continues to improve and there is definitely more to give, which I know the girls will do each meet.”



Louisburg freshman Ellie Vohs races around the track in the 4×800-meter relay on April 10 in Paola.

Louisburg's 4×800 relay of Marissa Vallejo, Adelyn Moore, Annie Hornberger and Vohs also had a strong performance as they took runner-up in 10:58. Vohs also scored points in the 1,600-meter run as she finished fourth in 5:43.

Sophomore Caroline Apple fared well on the track as she was seventh in the 100 hurdles in 18.21 seconds. However, Apple's best event came in the field at the high jump.

Apple, along with teammate Breck Nielsen, both set personal best marks in the event. Apple took second after she cleared 5 feet and Nielsen was third at 4-10.

"Caroline and Breck are really jumping well," Reece said. "Finding early success will drive them to do even better as we continue to see our regional competition and see how we match

up with them.”

In the throws, junior McKenna Lohse finished third in the shot put with a toss of 34-10 and teammate Kinley Scott was fifth at 32-1. Lohse also scored points in the discus as she took eighth with a mark of 91-7.



Louisburg freshman Khloe Holland took eighth in the javelin on April 10 in Paola.

Sophomore Adelyn Moore and freshman Khloe Holland had top 8 finishes in the javelin. Moore took fifth with a throw of 108-11 and Holland was eighth at 96-7.

Louisburg is back in action on April 17 when it travels to the Anderson County Invitational. However, a select number of girls will travel to Lawrence on April 18 to compete in the KU Relays.

The 4×100 and 4×400 relays, along with Adelyn Moore (javelin), qualified to compete in Lawrence.

“The 4×1 and 4×4 will get a chance to run against great competition on Friday at the Kansas Relays,” Reece said. “Adelyn will be throwing the javelin as well. We look to perform well and continue a solid start to our season.”

Wingfield wins pole vault, Wildcat boys take fourth at Ottawa



Louisburg senior Cooper Wingfield clears a height during a meet last season. Wingfield, the returning state champion in

the pole vault, won the event on April 3 at the Ottawa Invitational.

OTTAWA – The Louisburg boys track and field team have a handful of returning state qualifiers and medalists and many of them picked up right where they left Thursday during their season opener.

Louisburg finished fourth at the Ottawa Invitational with 86 points at the 10-team meet. Olathe East won with 185 points and St. James Academy was second with 139.5.

In all, the Wildcats won one event, had three runner-up finishes and scored points in 12 events.

“It was nice to get out and compete against other teams,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. “Overall, we saw some positive performances, as well as areas that need improvement. The experience of competing against larger schools will only help our athletes grow and develop as the season goes along.

“The enthusiasm and determination shown by the team are encouraging, and I believe we have a promising season ahead of us. With continued hard work and focus, I am excited to see how our athletes progress.”

Louisburg senior Cooper Wingfield leads the Wildcat jumpers as he is the returning state champion in the pole vault. He wasted no time getting back into form.

Wingfield won the pole vault as he cleared 15 feet to take gold. Senior teammate Jacob Brown, who is also a returning state medalist, took second after he cleared 13-0.

In the long jump, senior Myles Vohs got out to a good start as he took his third with a



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“Our vaulters have been working hard and are eager to push each other this season,” Wright said. “Myles had a strong start, especially considering he only used a short approach for his jumps. I am confident that as the season continues, he will improve further and reach new heights.”

Evan McKitrick went on to score points in the high jump as he took fourth at 5-8 and was eighth in the triple jump at 38-1.5.

On the track, senior Gavin Lohse, who is a returning state medalist in the long jump, had a strong showing in the 100-

meter dash as he was second in 11.39 seconds. Caleb Feldkamp was fourth in 11.48.



Louisburg senior Gavin Lohse leans at the finish line during the 100-meter dash last season. Lohse is a returning state medalist in the long jump, and took second in the 100 dash on April 3 at Ottawa.

Another senior and returning state medalist, Jerynce Brings Plenty, found success in the distance races. Brings Plenty was runner-up in the 1,600-meter run in 4:44. He was also ninth in a talented field in the 3,200 run with a time of 10:42.

“Jerynce had two solid races, finishing with impressive times for the beginning of the year,” Wright said. “I’m looking forward to seeing how he continues to develop and what he will achieve this season.”

Also on the track, Aidan Meyer, Emmett White, Colton Blue and Vohs ended the night with a third place finish in the 4×400 relay in 3:29. Meyer also went on to take fourth in the 400

dash in 52.57 and White was seventh at 53.74.

In the 800-meter run, Blue earned a fourth-place finish in 2:07, while Gavin Manson was seventh in the 100 hurdles in 22.05.

The Wildcats also scored points in the throws and it started in the javelin. Senior Brayden Yoder edged junior teammate Tasen Ellison for fifth at 136-3, and Ellison was sixth at 136-0.

Johnny Hendrickson took fifth in the discus with a throw of 120-1 and Michael Foote finished eighth at 107-2.

Louisburg is back in action on April 10 as the Wildcats travel to the Paola Invitational. Events begin at 3:30 p.m.

Throws, sprints lead Lady Cat track to fourth place finish at Ottawa



Louisburg junior McKenna Lohse throws the shot put during a meet last season. Lohse won the shot put last Thursday in Ottawa and was second in the discus.

OTTAWA – In just its first meet of the season, the Louisburg girls track and field team had a strong showing at the Ottawa Invitational.

Louisburg won three events, scored in 11 and ended with a fourth place team finish with 101 points. St. James Academy was first in the 10-team meet with 166 points and Olathe East was second with 128.

“The girls did a great job at a tough meet,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “We faced a lot of big schools and got fourth, which was fantastic. We have 27 girls out this season. Practices have been going well and the girls are working hard.”

The Wildcats scored a bulk of their points in the throws and sprints as they put together several solid performances.

Junior McKenna Lohse took first in the shot put with a toss 35 feet, 10 inches, which won the competition by more than four feet. Sophomore Kinley Scott also scored points as she took fourth at 30-8.

Lohse later went on to finish runner-up in the discus with a throw of 96-10, while senior Cora Wulfkuhle was seventh at 82-3.

In the javelin, sophomore Adelyn Moore picked up where she left off last season after qualifying for state as a freshman. Moore won the event with a throw of 98-7.

Louisburg had three score in the javelin as freshman Khloe Holland took third at 84-8 and Scott was seventh with a mark of 75-1.

“Kenna and Adelyn are picking up where they left off last season, which is awesome,” Reece said. “For a not so great weather day, they both threw well. They had some teammates throw well, which definitely helped the team points.

“We definitely have returning talent in the throws. Adelyn and Kenna have state experience and are leading our other throwers by their great work ethic. Hopefully they can return to state this year and bring along some teammates.”

The Wildcats 4×100-meter relay also looked in good form after medaling at state a



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Mackenzie Rooney, Kendall Crossley, Addi Mallett and Suzanna Dansel edged out Olathe East as they ran a time of 51.40 and won by .19 seconds.

The success continued in the 100 dash as Crossley took runner-up in 12.86 seconds. Dansel finished fourth in 13.05 and Rooney was fifth at 13.34, while Mallett was fourth in the 200 dash in 27.09.

Louisburg’s 4×400 relay team of Rooney, Ellie Vohs, Mallett and Crossley ended the night with a third place finish in 4:19.



Louisburg junior Kendall Crossley gets off to a good start in a race during a meet last season. Crossley helped the 4×100 relay to a first place finish Thursday at Ottawa and took second in the 100 dash.

“Our sprinters did a great job,” Reece said. “We had some running different events than last year’s usual races, which was a positive as they performed very well. Suzanna, Kendall, Addi, and Mac are going to do some great things this season.

“The 4×1 posted a solid time for our first race and not so great handoffs. We will take a 51.4 any meet, but the first meet shows our potential.”

Vohs also found success in the 1,600-meter run. The Louisburg freshman finished second in her first ever varsity race as she ran a time of 5:47.

Senior Marissa Vallejo was sixth in 6:06 and later took sixth

in the 3,200 run in 13:34.

Sophomore Caroline Apple, a returning state qualifier in the hurdles, finished fifth in the 300 hurdles in 52.65 seconds. She was also seventh in the high jump at 4-8.

Apple, who is dual-sporting this season with soccer, will be looked to score points in three different events for the Wildcats.

“Caroline is dual sporting again this year so it might be a little before she is in her stride,” Reece said. “We see her returning even stronger this year in the hurdles and hope to qualify in both 100 and 300.”

Louisburg is back in action on April 10 at the Paola Invitational. Events begin at 3:30 p.m.

Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2024



It was a successful, and eventful, year 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 a few programs made their way to state competition.

Below are the top stories from 2024, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the writeup is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site.

This year was a blast to cover and I am looking forward to seeing what 2025 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can’t wait for it all to begin again.



Jordan Roquemore was hired as the new head coach of the Louisburg girls soccer program after serving four years as an assistant.

10. Coaching Changes: Willer steps down from LHS volleyball, Roquemore takes over girls soccer

Louisburg volleyball and girls soccer saw some big changes in their respective programs.

Over the summer, Jordan Roquemore was hired as the head coach for the Wildcat girls soccer program after spending several years as an assistant.

He became the third head coach in the history of Louisburg

girls soccer. He replaced former coach Ben York, who coached the Wildcats the last two seasons.

“I feel tremendously honored to take over as head coach,” Roquemore said. “It’s an amazing opportunity to take over an exceptional program with a great group of athletes, supportive parents and invested community members. I don’t take the responsibility lightly, but I am also really excited.”



Louisburg volleyball coach Leanna Willer is stepping down from her post after serving as head coach for the last four seasons.

On the volleyball side, head coach Leanna Willer submitted her resignation in early December.

Willer has spent eight seasons with the Wildcat program, including the last four as head coach. She accepted a new position as head coach at Olathe East.

“This decision is bittersweet, but deep down I know that this

is the best decision for me and my life," Willer said in an email to parents. "The team will move on, and I feel lucky that I could play a small part in the long-standing traditions of the program. To the alumni and class of 2024, I thank you for your commitment to this team and to this program, and for making my time at Louisburg unforgettable. To our younger players, I am sorry for not seeing your journeys all the way through, but please know that you have my unwavering support and I cannot wait to see what you all can accomplish with the time you have left as Louisburg Wildcats."



Louisburg junior Sabra Brueggen swims the backstroke during the prelims of the Class 5-1A state meet in Lenexa.

9. Brueggen wins state swim medal

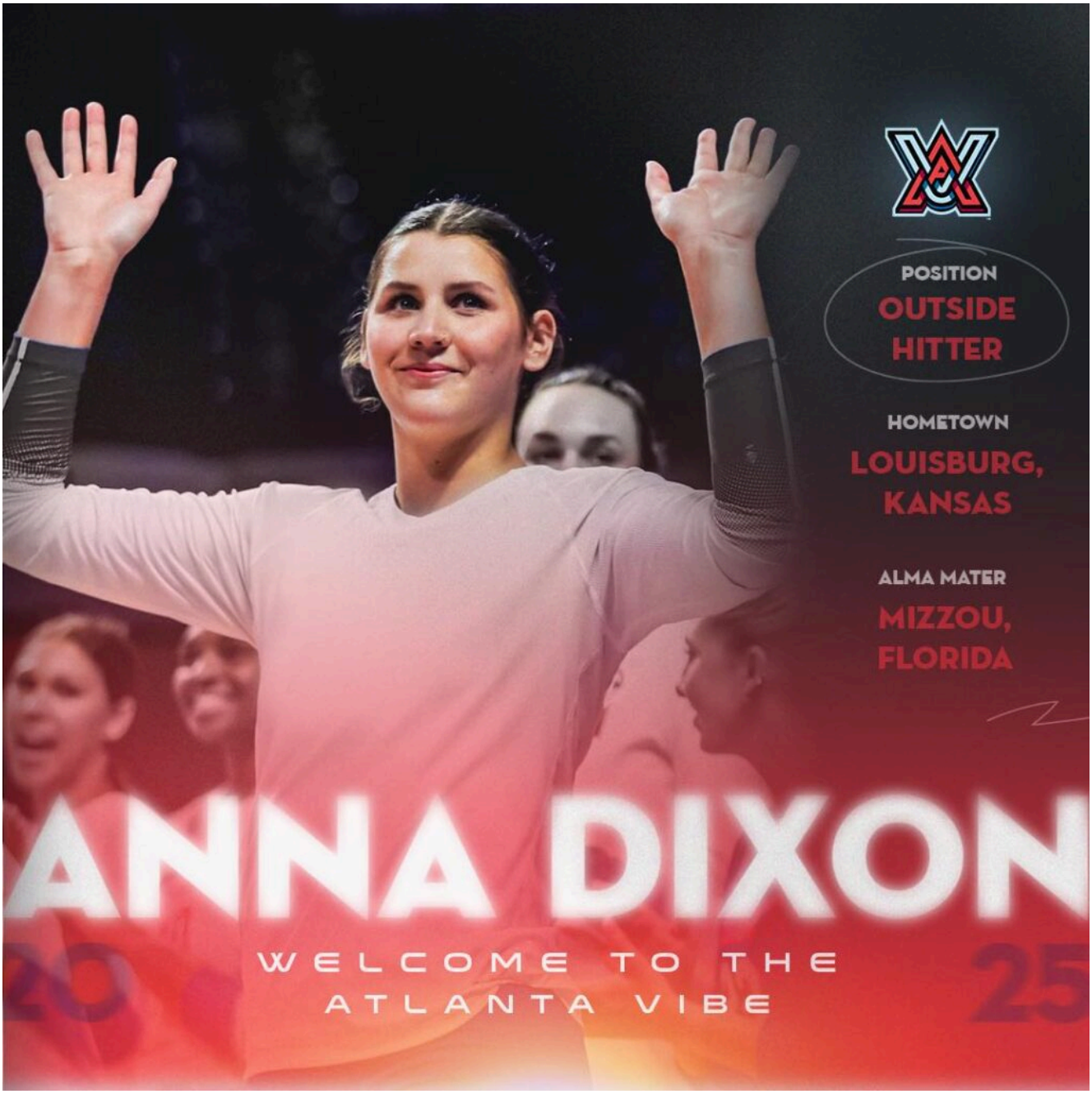
For the third straight season, Sabra Brueggen left the Class 5-1A state swim meet with some hardware.

The Louisburg junior showed why she is among the state's best as she earned a fourth place medal in the 200-yard individual medley – her first ever state medal in that event – Saturday at the Shawnee Mission Aquatic Center.

The 2-day meet provided a lot of ups, and some downs, for the Louisburg swim program, but for Brueggen it was nice to return to the medal stand.

"I was very happy and content with my 200 IM swims last weekend," Brueggen said. "Not only did I set a new personal best time, but I also walked away with fourth place in an event that is not one of my primaries."

Janie Harth, Ella Bockelman and Cadence Weichert also joined Brueggen at the state meet as they qualified for the consolation finals in the 200 medley relay 400 freestyle relay.



8. Dixon achieves pro volleyball dream

It was setting up to be an epic finish to Anna Dixon’s collegiate volleyball career.

Dixon, as a graduate transfer, made the move to the University of Florida for her final season and quickly made an impact on the Gators’ roster.

Despite have to learn a new position due to an injury on the team, Dixon seemed to flourish. She helped the Gators out to a quick start and everything was going according to plan.

Then, the unthinkable happened.

Dixon suffered a season-ending elbow injury that put a premature end to her collegiate career. It was a devastating blow.

However, instead of sulking, Dixon worked that much harder to get back to the court and achieve her ultimate goal – playing professional volleyball.

All that hard work finally came to fruition back in July when Dixon, a 2019 Louisburg High School graduate, signed with the Atlanta Vibe, which is a part of the Pro Volleyball Federation.

“I am super excited to compete at the highest level, but also to be able to do that here in the US,” Dixon said. “It has been a dream of mine to be able to play professionally, in front of club girls who are in the same shoes that I was in many years ago. I am excited to give them the opportunity to have something to look forward to and work toward. Blessed for the opportunity and ready to get to work.”



Members of the Louisburg cheer team are: (Front row) Anna Brizendine, Addison Vargo, Reece Jones; (middle row) Leia Ward, Lilly Burnett, Taryn Osborn, Elle Keating, Brooklyn Roney, Harper Boyle, Kelsey Shelton, Kim Powls, Gretchen Reitz, Kinsley Rayne; (back row) Will Leach, Kayleigh Ramsey (Laney Stohs, Reece Younggren, Reese Anderson, Greta Gatzka, Addison Bishop, Maggie Wanjigi

7. Cheer takes third at state

TOPEKA – The Louisburg High School cheerleading squad is no stranger to the finals of the Class 4A Game Day competition.

Heading into the Nov. 23 showcase in Topeka, the Wildcats have made the final round in each of the last five seasons. Louisburg had no problem making it a sixth straight, and for the fifth time in six years, they came home with a state plaque.

Louisburg finished third in the state competition as it edged out Baldwin for the top three spot in Class 4A.

“Bringing home another trophy from the Game Day Cheer competition was a testament to our team’s hard work, dedication, and growth throughout the season,” Louisburg cheer coach Breanna Kostroske said. “It means so much to us because it reflects their skill, their heart, and spirit—three things we emphasize daily. For our athletes, it symbolizes their resilience and the countless hours they’ve spent perfecting their routines.

“As coaches, we are incredibly proud of their overall performance. They left it all on the floor, and while there is always room for improvement, they gave a performance that showcased their teamwork, precision, and energy.”



Louisburg junior Ashton Moore took fourth overall at 190

pounds at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament in February.

6. Moore medals at state wrestling

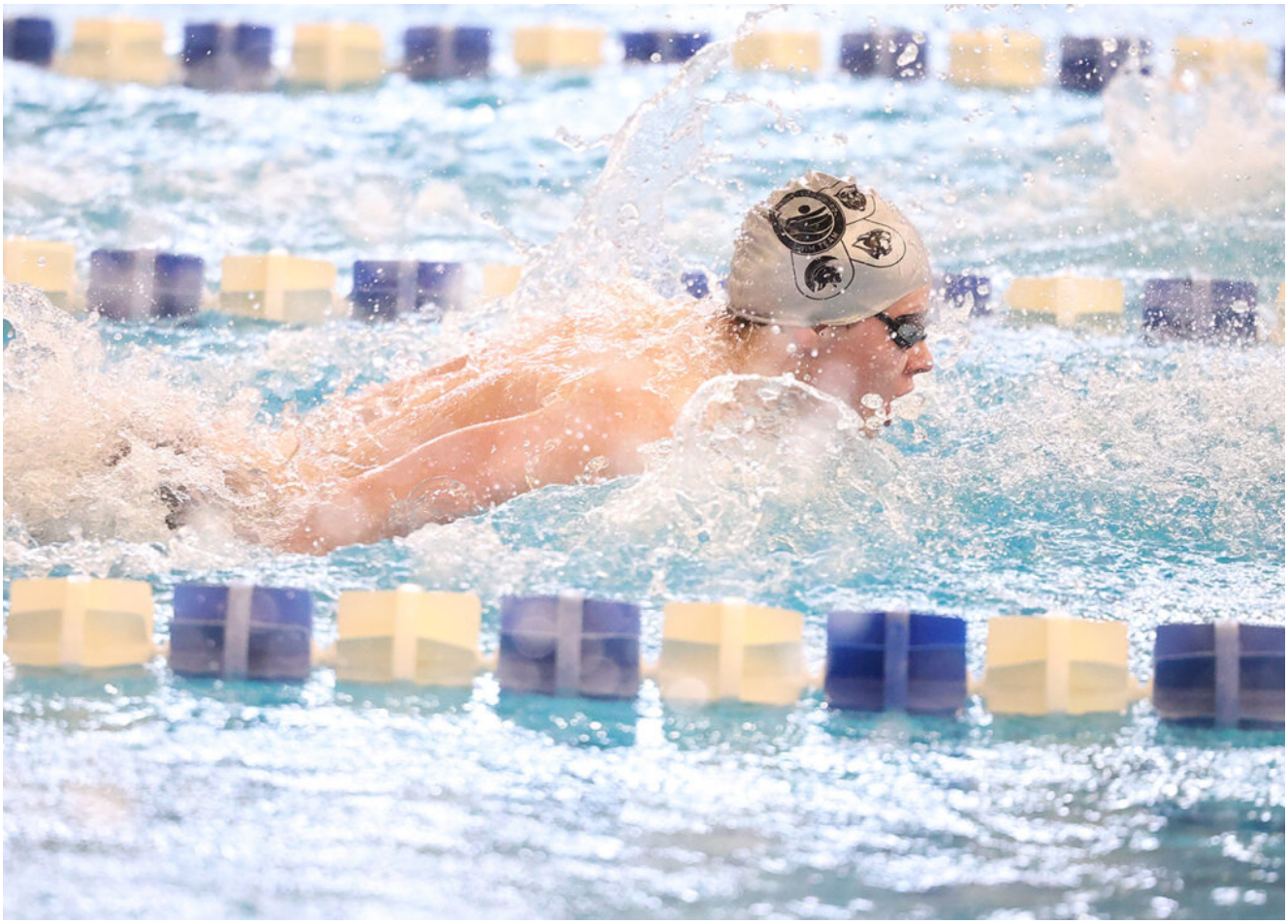
SALINA – Louisburg has been no stranger to the medal stand at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament and it was the case again back in February in Salina.

Louisburg junior Ashton Moore reached the semifinals at 190 pounds on the first day to secure himself a medal, and then finished fourth overall on the tournament's final day.

Moore had several close matches throughout the 3-day tournament at the Tony's Pizza Events Center and was challenged each day.

"I thought I wrestled some of my best matches of the season and it felt great to have it pay off with a medal," Moore said. "It felt amazing to win those first two matches and know I was guaranteed my medal. Those wins really helped me gain a lot of confidence going forward in the tournament."

Five other Wildcats made the trip to state, but faced some tough matchups. Juniors Canaan Clayton (113 pounds), Will Showalter (120), Logan Henry (132), Jay McCaskill (157) and senior Traden Noll (150) each finished 0-2 on the first day.



Louisburg sophomore Colin Brown earned medals in the 100 butterfly and 100 backstroke during the Class 5-1A state meet in Topeka.

5. Wildcat boys swim makes history earning 5 medals at state

TOPEKA – The Louisburg boys swim program is still relatively new compared to other teams around the state, but the Wildcats made its presence felt back in February at the Class 5-1A state meet in Topeka.

Louisburg had its best postseason finish in its young history as the Wildcats finished eighth overall in the team standings with 104 points thanks in part to just four swimmers.

Two of those athletes – Colin Brown and Andrew Jamison – each brought home individual medals. Brown, Jamison, Colton Prettyman and Noah Sharp also medaled in the 200-yard medley

relay.

Brown hit the pool strong as the Wildcat sophomore medaled fourth in the 100-yard butterfly and later finished fifth in the 100 backstroke with personal best times.

Jamison, another sophomore, earned two medals of his own. He finished fifth in the 200 individual medley and later took sixth in the 100 breaststroke.

Prettyman reached the consolation finals in the 50 freestyle and took 13th overall with a personal best time.



Louisburg senior Myles Vohs makes a leaping catch in the fourth quarter of Friday's game against Bishop Miege.

4. Wildcat football nearly pulls upset of Miege as successful season comes to early close

The mountain of playing Bishop Miege is always a tough one for public schools to climb, especially when it comes to football.

Miege, which has won seven state titles in the last 10 years, has never lost to a non-private school in the playoffs during that decade long of dominance.

Louisburg wanted to be the first team to hand it that loss as the No. 2 seed Wildcats hosted the No. 15 Stags in the first round of the Class 4A state playoffs.

The Wildcats were so close to that mountaintop, but came up just short as they fell to Miege, 21-14, to end their season with a 7-2 record.

Louisburg was behind 14 points, only to rally and tie the game at halftime. The Wildcats had one final drive to try and tie it again late, but a Miege interception dashed the Wildcats' hopes of an upset.

"In this moment, the only word I can come up right now is proud," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "I am so proud of the team. Our biggest emphasis was we had to start fast and we didn't. They got out to a 14-0 lead, and most times when you play teams like Miege that can snowball and get out of hand quick. Those guys just battled and were able to tie it up at halftime. Then for us to continue to fight and have a chance to tie it at the end – proud is all I can say about them."

The Wildcats ended their season with back-to-back losses after they won their first seven games of the season. They were in line to win their third straight league title, but lost a close game the week before to Spring Hill that also bumped

them off their No. 1 seed line, forcing a matchup with Miege in the first round.

Miege's streak of state titles came to an end later in the season as the Stags fell to Andover Central in the state championship game.



(Photo courtesy of Minna Meyer)
The Louisburg girls soccer team hoists the regional championship plaque following their 2-0 win against Maranatha Academy.

3. Wildcat girls soccer wins regional championship

For the last two seasons, the Louisburg girls soccer team has seen heartbreak in the Class 4-1A regional championship.

Losses to Topeka-Hayden and Bishop Miege have prevented the Wildcats from that regional title, with their last coming in

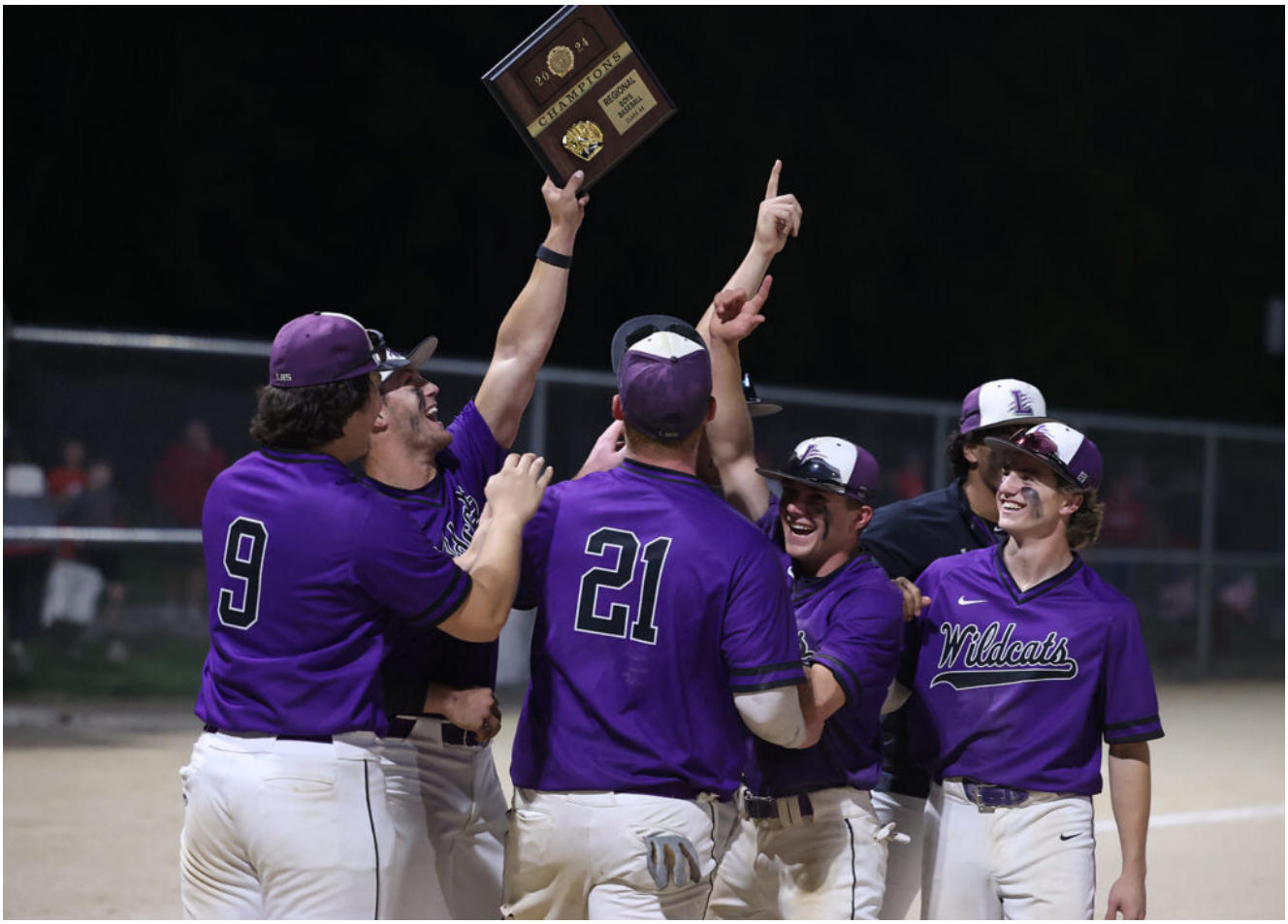
2021.

It is elusive no more.

The No. 1 seed Wildcats shutout No. 8 Maranatha Academy, 2-0, to win the Class 4-1A regional title at Wildcat Stadium. It was a dominating effort from start to finish as the Wildcats improved their record to 13-4-1 on the season.

“This was a preseason goal of ours,” Louisburg coach Ben York said. “We fell short last year and we wanted to do as much as we could in the regular season to control our own destiny. The girls put a lot of work in and were focused to get to this game and get a win. They definitely earned this one and it was good to see them enjoy it.”

Louisburg faced a tough matchup in the state quarterfinals as the Wildcats lost to Bishop Miege at home, 7-0.



Louisburg senior Declan Battle hoists the regional championship trophy following the Wildcats’ 10-3 win over

Wamego in Class 4A regional championship game.

2. Wildcat baseball earns first regional title in 15 years

The current members of the Louisburg baseball team couldn’t remember the last time the Wildcats made the state tournament even if they tried.

That’s because they were just wee toddlers the last time the Wildcats earned a spot a state – 2009 to be exact.

These players are going to have a hard time forgetting this one.

For the first time in 15 years, Louisburg is headed back to the state tournament after the Wildcats put together a convincing 10-3 victory over Wamego in the Class 4A regional championship back in May at Lewis-Young Park.

The Wildcats also defeated Parsons, 8-0, in the regional semifinal to put together what was a dominating performance from top to bottom.

“This is just amazing,” Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. “To see how much work these guys have put in, then to come out and get the job done, it is pretty surreal. We had a bunch of guys step up and do exactly what they needed to do. They played great defense, pitched great and everyone in the dug out was into the game. It was a great win.

“It has been awhile and it has been a long time coming. We have had some great teams and this team finally pushed through and got it done.”

In the state tournament, the Wildcats had to battle rival Paola in the first round, but lost in a pitcher’s dual to the Panthers, 3-0.



Louisburg senior Maddy Carpenter-Ross celebrates after clearing 12 feet at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita. That clearance gave Carpenter-Ross her second straight state championship in the event.

1. Wildcat sweep pole vault state titles, medal 8 at state

WICHITA – Cooper Wingfield and Maddy Carpenter-Ross found their way atop the medal stand last May at the Class 4A state track meet.

All season, Carpenter-Ross had her eyes set on a second straight state title in the pole vault and she dominated her competition.

Going into the Class 4A state meet at Wichita State, Carpenter-Ross won every competition going away and was ready to do the same against some of the state's best.

This time, however, it was much harder.

To get this state title, Carpenter-Ross was going to have to have to set a new personal best and break her own school record in the process.

She did it and accomplished that feat on her first try.

With two competitors left at 12 feet, Carpenter-Ross cleared it on her first try as did Holton's Piper Robinson. Both competitors missed at 12-6, and since they were tied, they decided the winner based on misses at 11-6, where the Louisburg senior got it on her first try.

"It is pretty awesome," Carpenter-Ross said. "I worked really hard for that and I am so relieved right now. It was a little stressful, but I was in that competitive mindset and I was so happy that I PR'd. Everyone was setting personal records, so I was just like 'My turn.'"



Louisburg junior Cooper Wingfield pumps his fist after

clearing 15 feet in the pole vault at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita. He captured his first state title in the event.

Wingfield, who was the state runner-up last season, entered the competition at 14 feet. He missed the first two attempts on his opening height, and another miss would not only prevent him from a state title, but a spot on the medal stand.

On the third attempt, the Louisburg junior cleared it with ease and eventually cleared 15 feet on his first attempt, which was the winning height.

“I was really nervous there on that last attempt (at 14 feet),” Wingfield said. “All I needed was a good jump to get in the zone and from there I knew I could jump pretty high. The competition was a lot harder this time around than it was last year. I knew I had to make everything on my first attempt and once I had one good jump, I knew I could do it.”

It had already been a special season in the pole vault for Wingfield, as he earned a league and regional title, and broke the school record.

Other state medalists were Gavin Lohse (third, long jump), Jaymes Melton (seventh, shot put), Ben O’Bryan (seventh, discus), Suzanna Dansel (seventh 100 dash) and Jacob Brown (eighth, pole vault). The girls 4×100 team of Dansel, Kendall Crossley, Emma Vohs and Addi Mallett medaled sixth.

Season-ending injury fuels Caplinger as he joins

Washburn track program



Louisburg senior Caden Caplinger recently signed with the Washburn University track and field program.

It was supposed to be a senior year to remember for Caden Caplinger.

Caplinger, who had won the state title in the pole vault his sophomore and junior years, was excited for a chance at a 3-peat. That chance, unfortunately, never came.

A torn meniscus ended Caplinger's senior track season before it really got going and he was forced to miss his final year with the Wildcats.

Even with that bad news, Caplinger's future in the pole vault is far from over. He saw his dream become a reality when he signed with Washburn University to join the track and field program.

“It means a lot to me that I was able to sign with such a good school like Washburn,” Caplinger said. “They have an amazing pole vault program and I feel very blessed to be apart of it. Ever since freshman year, I got to start pole vaulting with Luke Faulkner and being at practice with him really started my love for vaulting even more and I wanted to continue it through college.”

Caplinger will get that opportunity with the Ichabod program. Winning two state titles certainly provided him options for after high school, but Washburn gave him everything he was a looking for – both on the track and in the classroom.

He also gets to learn under pole vault coach Rick Attig, who has coached All-Americans and a national champion during a career, where he also coached at the University of Kansas and the University of Nebraska. Attig is also a member of the National Pole Vault Hall of Fame.

“In my process of picking Washburn, I was looking for a few things, the coaching, schooling, and things that would make the process smoother and more enjoyable,” Caplinger said. “They have one of the best pole vault programs, led by one of the best pole vault coaches ever. They also just got a new school of business and I know about bunch of the track athletes there already. Plus I’m rooming with (Louisburg grad) Declan (Battle), so all of that will make it easier to get settled in.”



Louisburg's Caden Caplinger signed his letter of intent to compete for the Washburn track and field program. Seated next to Caden are his parents Tracie and Lane Caplinger, and his sister Carli. Standing is Louisburg head coach Andy Wright.

It has been a rough few months for Caplinger, who has been recovering from his knee injury. The loss of his senior season was a tough one to deal with as he was hoping to avoid losing the whole year.

After the first meet, however, Caplinger knew something wasn't right. He couldn't ignore the pain any longer and decided to get it checked out.

As tough as the news was to hear, Caplinger couldn't have been happier to see the pole vault title stay in Louisburg as teammate Cooper Wingfield won the gold medal at the state meet last May.

"From the beginning, I knew something was wrong cause I think it happened sometime in February, but I put it off because I

didn’t want to be out for the season,” Caplinger said. “Then it started getting really uncomfortable after the first meet and I ended up no heighting for the first time in my career. My dad told me we were going to get an MRI.

“When we figured out I tore my meniscus it was honestly really hard because I love every part of track and I knew I probably wouldn’t be able to come back. Even though I didn’t get to go to state, I was so happy that Cooper won it. I knew he could win it and he did exactly that.”

Even before high school, Caplinger knew pole vaulting was something he wanted to do. As he grew, so did the love of the sport and he is very appreciative of everything he has accomplished up to this point.

“I started pole vaulting in sixth grade because my dad did it when he was younger and asked if I wanted to try it,” Caplinger said. “I ended up winning league my seventh grade year and started really enjoying it. When I got into high school, the thing that separated it from other sports is that there isn’t anything like it. Once you go over the bar and are falling onto the mat, the feeling is just indescribable. Also the people I’ve met through the sport have been nothing but kind and supportive, and I’ve made some really good friends through it.”

Like in high school, Caplinger has high expectations for himself when he steps onto the Washburn campus.

“I’m going to absorb as much information as I can and figure out exactly what I have to do to become the best vaulter possible,” he said. “My goals are to break the inside and outside pole vaulting records and become the best vaulter at Washburn.”

Carpenter-Ross hopes high school success leads to new heights at Nebraska-Kearney



Louisburg's Maddy Carpenter-Ross signed to join the University of Nebraska-Kearney track and field team for the upcoming season.

Maddy Carpenter-Ross has been the best pole vaulter in Class 4A the last two years and built an historic high school career at Louisburg.

Carpenter-Ross won back-to-back state titles in the event and broke her own school record as she won the gold this past May.

It has been a memorable run and now she hopes to continue that success at the college level.

Carpenter-Ross recently signed with the University of Nebraska-Kearney as she is excited to join the Division II program.

“It was super exciting to sign for pole vault,” Carpenter-Ross said. “I am excited to continue my track and field career at the college level. It was something that I knew that I wanted to do for a while.”

It didn’t take long for Carpenter-Ross to decide on her new home, either. Although she had other options, it was apparent early on that Nebraska-Kearney was the right place for her.

“Kearney was my first college visit and I immediately liked the campus and the atmosphere,” Carpenter-Ross said. “I was very pleased with the layout of the campus and I liked that it was a smaller school compared to some of the other schools that I looked at. It was a very tough decision for me when narrowing down my options, but I have no doubt that I made the right decision for me.”



Louisburg's Maddy Carpenter-Ross signed her letter of intent to join the Nebraska-Kearney track program. Seated next to her is her mother Cassie Carpenter and her grandmother Nancy Carpenter. Standing (from left) is her father Andy Ross, Louisburg coach Andy Wright and her brother Casey Carpenter-Ross.

It was a special final season for Carpenter-Ross at Louisburg. She cleared 12 feet for the first time in her career at the state track meet and broke her own school record that she set earlier in the year.

She also dominated the competition up until that point as she won every meet during the regular season, including a Frontier League and regional title.

"Overall this year was my best season yet," Carpenter-Ross said. "I was very proud of myself that I was able to have a clean sweep of golds for a total of 96 out of 96 points possible for the season. I broke the school record and beat my own record twice. It definitely was amazing. Winning state

definitely helped my confidence for the first season coming up for Kearney.”

Pole vault was something she grew to love at the middle school level and that continued into high school. Still, it was that experience when she was younger that helped give her the confidence she needed.

“I started pole vault when I was in the seventh grade for LMS,” she said. “Coach (Drew) Harding was my first pole vault coach and he was very encouraging and enthusiastic about sports. I love the feeling of the fall after you clean clear the bar after you go over it. That’s the best part of pole vault in my opinion.”

Now she is looking for more of those same feelings at Kearney as she tries to reach new heights starting next season.

“My goal for my time at Kearney is to improve my form and get on some big poles,” Carpenter-Ross said. “I hope to get to the 13-foot mark.”

Melton ready to build on high school success with Fort Scott track



Louisburg's Jaymes Melton, who won a state medal in the shot put last season, is looking forward to joining the Fort Scott Community College track program this upcoming season.

For the last three years, Jaymes Melton has had a fondness for track and field – well the field part anyway.

Melton has been a thrower on the Wildcat track team all throughout high school and has seen gains every year. He's also not ready to walk away from the sport he loves.

Melton, who won a state medal in the shot put this past season, will join the Fort Scott Community College track and field program this upcoming season as he signed with the Greyhounds earlier this year.

"Signing with a college to continue my track career meant a lot to me," Melton said. "I felt like all my hard work in high school paid off. I have always enjoyed throwing, but my sophomore year I realized it was something I wanted to keep doing."

It ended up being a special senior season for Melton, especially in the shot put.

Melton set new personal bests on a weekly basis and saved his best throw for last. He set a new PR at the state meet back in May and left with his first state medal.

He also saw big gains in the discus as the season came to a close and he couldn’t have asked for a better end to his high school career.

“This was an amazing throwing season overall,” Melton said. “The coaches and team seemed to have a whole new level of determination. Maybe it was because it was my senior year, but we wanted to leave our mark at every meet. Each week we worked really hard to improve our distances. At the start of the season, I set some pretty big goals. I wasn’t sure if I could reach them, but I was going to give it my all. As the season went on, I began PR’ing each week. That was exciting and it pushed me to want to get further and further with my throws.

“Making it to state was already a huge deal for me, but medaling at state and setting my final PR, was beyond anything I expected. It definitely exceeded my goals and it made all those hours worth it. It felt incredible to see my hard work pay off in such a big way.”



Louisburg's Jaymes Melton signed his letter of intent to join the Fort Scott Community College track and field program. Seated next to Jaymes are his parents Meghan and Andy Melton. Standing (from left) is Louisburg head track coach Andy Wright, Jaymes' siblings Madilyn, Zyleigh and Adly Melton, along with Fort Scott head coach Philip Redrick.

Now Melton is ready to continue that hard work with Fort Scott and head coach Philip Redrick. The Greyhounds have experienced a lot of success in recent years and Melton is excited to be a part of an up and coming program.

Along with continuing in the shot put and discus, Melton will also take up the hammer throw.

"Fort Scott felt like the right fit for me because the moment I visited, everyone was so welcoming and friendly," Melton said. "Coach Redrick was really supportive and seemed genuinely interested in helping me improve. I can see myself training and getting better under his leadership. He is also a big pusher for academics, and I like the idea of a coach not

just pushing me to be better in my events but also to be successful in life."

As for what he hopes to achieve with the Greyhounds, he is about bettering himself, like he did in his final year in Louisburg.

"When I get on campus, the expectation is to work really hard and keep improving my throwing skills," Melton said. "I want to make a good impression on my coach and teammates by showing my dedication and effort. I have set a few goals for myself, I want to improve my skills and set some new personal records. Fort Scott has some school records that I am going to try and reach.

"Second, learning to balance my academics and athletics well. The top goal at Fort Scott is to earn my degree, the track team is a huge bonus for me to be a part of. Overall, I want to make the most of my time at Fort Scott and leave a positive mark on the track program and be proud of my accomplishments and effort while there."

KSHSAA approves several postseason changes

KANSAS STATE HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION PRESS RELEASE

TOPEKA – Changes to postseason formats and championship sites for basketball, football, wrestling and track and field highlight actions approved at the June 12-13 KSHSAA Executive Board Meeting. The postseason formats are set by the KSHSAA Executive Board each year.

Basketball – Beginning in March of 2026, the state basketball tournaments will be moving to four total sites. Four facilities will play host to the seven classifications, 14 championships. By honoring the KSHSAA membership voted in the fall of 2023 to qualify eight boys teams and eight girls teams involved at the final site, modifications to the daily schedule will be developed. The schedule and other event details, including classification designations for each site and venue selection will be determined and announced following the 2024-25 basketball season.

Another basketball postseason change effective with the 2024-25 season will come at the 3A, 2A, 1A DI and 1A DII classifications. Each class will be divided into four regions and then seeded into two sub-states within the region: Substate A: 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16; Substate B: 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15. The winner of each substate will advance to

the state basketball tournament. Further format details and dates will be sent to member schools.

Football – As announced in January, the state football championships will be moving to three sites with three games being played at each site. The executive board approved the following sites and schedule for 2024:

Emporia State University:

Class 6A = Friday, November 29 at 2:00pm

Class 4A = Saturday, November 30 at 1:00pm

Class 5A = Saturday, November 30 at 7:00pm

Hutchinson Community College:

Class 2A = Friday, November 29 at 6:00pm

Class 3A = Saturday, November 30 at 12:00pm

Class 1A = Saturday, November 30 at 5:00pm

Kiowa County High School, Greensburg:

Class 8-player DII = Saturday, November 30 at 11:00am

Class 6-Player = Saturday, November 30 at 3:00pm

Class 8-Player DI = Saturday, November 30 at 7:00pm

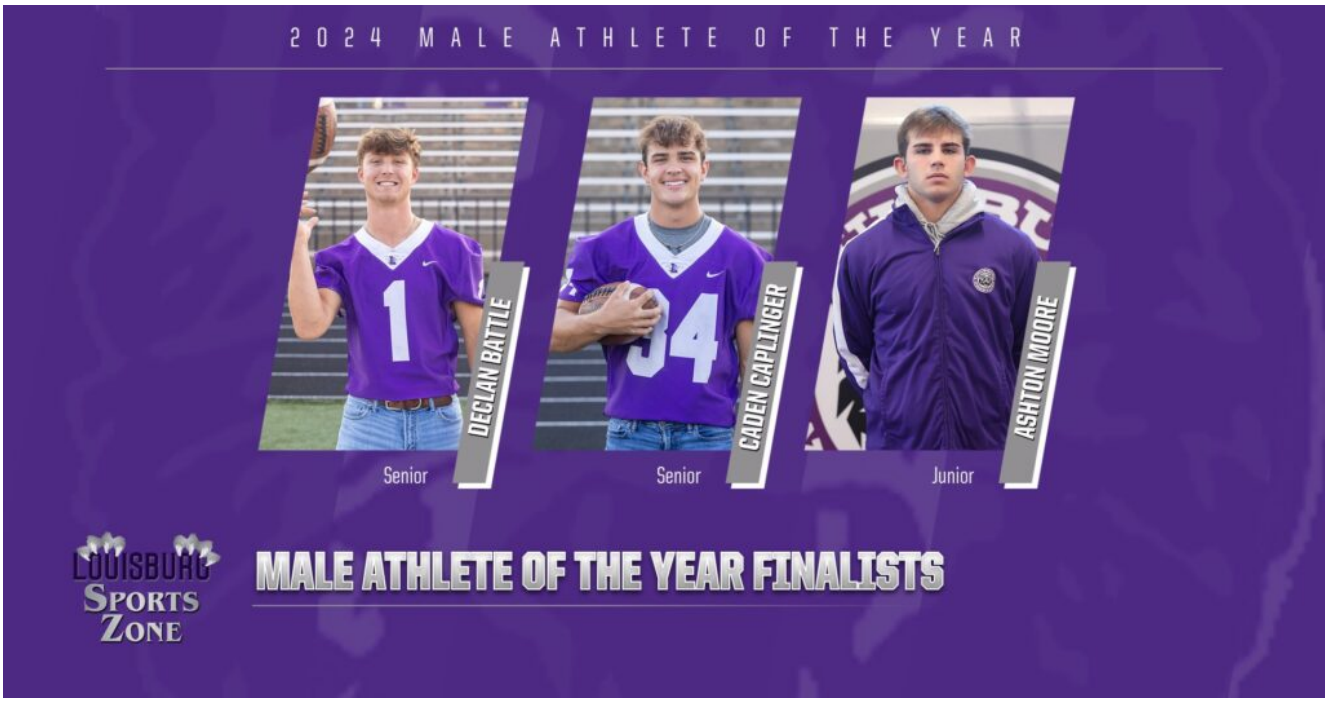
Wrestling – Girl's wrestling will now include four classes to mirror the boy's classification designations. The addition of another class for girl's wrestling necessitates the addition of another championship site. 6A, 5A, 4A and 3-1A will each have their own site to determine a champion. 3-1A state wrestling will be in Hays and 4A will be in Salina. Park City Arena and one other facility to be named later will house either 6A or 5A. State sites and regional dates will be determined at the September KSHSAA Executive Board meeting.

The state wrestling tournament will take place February 28 – March 1, 2025.

Track and Field – Qualification for the state meet was adjusted to now be the top 3 plus the next four best regional performance in each event.

Two committees will be formed to gather input from membership school leaders. One to discuss the details behind the implementation of Esports prior to the possible adoption as a KSHSAA sanctioned activity. The second committee will review the KSHSAA calendar to consider possible alternatives to dates of postseason activities.

2024 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year Finalists



Louisburg seniors Declan Battle and Caden Caplinger, along with junior Ashton Moore, are the three finalists for the 2024 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year award.

For the seventh consecutive 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. Then they voted for their top 3 male and female athletes and I tabulated the results and determined the winner. The winner will be announced in the coming days.

Below are the three finalists for the Male Athlete of the Year award in alphabetical order by last name.



DECLAN BATTLE – SENIOR – FOOTBALL, BASEBALL

Declan was a three year starting quarterback for the Wildcats and this year became the school's leading passer and fifth on the list for leading rusher as a team captain. Battle guided the Wildcats to their second straight Frontier League title and an undefeated league record.

Declan was a 1st team All-Frontier League quarterback and defensive back. He was an all-state pick from multiple media outlets and was a finalist for the Frank Fontana Award, which is given annually to the best all-around small school player in Class 1-4 on the Kansas and Missouri sides of the metro.

In 10 games for the Wildcats, Battle completed 105 passes for

1,364 yards and had 16 touchdowns to just two interceptions. He also did a lot of damage on the ground with 1,009 yards rushing and 16 more touchdowns. As a defensive back, Battle finished with 36 tackles and also had an interception for a touchdown. He will join the Washburn University football team next season.

On the baseball diamond, Battle helped the Wildcats to its first league title since 2002 and first regional championship since 2009. He led the team in triples, stolen bases and runs scored that earned him first team all league and first team all state outfield. He was also the team's best reliever earning multiple saves on the mound.

Battle was atop the Wildcat lineup all season and set the tone in several games. He finished with a .378 average to go along with 34 hits, five doubles, three triples, a home run and had 23 RBIs.

He also led the team with 41 runs scored, which is a school record and also had a team-high 15 stolen bases. He also holds three individual career team records for runs scored (102), triples (8) and stolen bases (47).



CADEN CAPLINGER – SENIOR – FOOTBALL, TRACK

Caden was a team captain for the Wildcat football team this past season and was a big piece of back-to-back Frontier League championship teams. Caplinger was an all-league selection on both sides of the ball, as a wide receiver and defensive back. He also holds the most career receptions in Louisburg football history.

Caplinger was named to the All-Frontier League second team at wide receiver and defensive back. He led the Wildcats with 33 catches, 510 yards receiving and four touchdowns. On defense, he finished with 41 tackles, 1.5 sacks, six pass breakups and an interception.

On the track, Caplinger is a two-time pole vault champion and a state medalist in the 4×100 relay. He was set to try for a third straight, but suffered a knee injury that ended his season. Caplinger won the season opening meet at the Ottawa Invitational, before having to sit out with the injury. He will be joining the Washburn University track team next season.



ASHTON MOORE – JUNIOR – FOOTBALL, WRESTLING, TRACK

Ashton put together a memorable football season for the Wildcats. Moore was one of the leaders of the Wildcat defense this past season. As a first-team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball, he posted a team-high 125 tackles,

including eight for a loss. He also had four forced fumbles and two sacks. He was named a finalist for the Bobby Bell Award, which is given annually to the best Class 1-4 offensive lineman/defensive lineman or linebacker in the KC metro area.

Moore was also the team's starting running back and made things difficult on opposing defenses. He carried the load for the Wildcats as he carried the ball 151 times for 1,110 yards and had 15 touchdowns. He also finished with 292 yards receiving and three more scores to earn first team honors.

On the wrestling mat, Moore was a state medalist as he took fourth at 190 pounds after making it to the state semifinals with an injured knee. He finished the season with 38 wins. He leads the program in the following categories: Career takedowns (117), career nearfall-3 (34), career escapes (57), career team points (510), season takedowns (51), season team points (229), and season pins (27). He led the team this year with most wins (38), most nearfall-2 (8), and the fastest pin (7 seconds).

Moore was also a returning state qualifier for the Louisburg 4×100-meter relay, but saw his track season come to an early end due to an injury.

BACK-TO-BACK: Carpenter-Ross wins pole vault to lead Lady Cats at state



Louisburg senior Maddy Carpenter-Ross celebrates after clearing 12 feet Saturday at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita. That clearance gave Carpenter-Ross her second straight state championship in the event.

WICHITA – All season, Maddy Carpenter-Ross had her eyes set on a second straight state title in the pole vault and she dominated her competition.

Going into Saturday's Class 4A state meet at Wichita State, Carpenter-Ross won every competition going away and was ready to do the same against some of the state's best.

This time, however, it was much harder.

To get this state title, Carpenter-Ross was going to have to have to set a new personal best and break her own school record in the process.

She did it and accomplished that feat on her first try.

With two competitors left at 12 feet, Carpenter-Ross cleared

it on her first try as did Holton's Piper Robinson. Both competitors missed at 12-6, and since they were tied, they decided the winner based on misses at 11-6, where the Louisburg senior got it on her first try.

"It is pretty awesome," Carpenter-Ross said. "I worked really hard for that and I am so relieved right now. It was a little stressful, but I was in that competitive mindset and I was so happy that I PR'd. Everyone was setting personal records, so I was just like 'My turn.'"



Maddy Carpenter-Ross vaults into the air for a clearance Saturday in Wichita.

Carpenter-Ross didn't have a single miss after entering the competition at 10 feet, before she couldn't clear her three tries at 12-6. It turned out to be big as several competitors set personal records throughout the event as four vaulters

were still alive after clearing 11-6.

“I was not expecting it at all,” she said about the all vaulters left late in the event. “I knew the stats of my competitors, but there were a bunch of them that double PR’d, so I needed to do the same myself. They were putting pressure on me, but I thrive under pressure.”

It came down to Carpenter-Ross and Robinson. Robinson cleared 12 feet on her first try, which meant Carpenter-Ross was going to have to the same if she wanted to have a shot at another state title.

“I knew that I could clear it,” Carpenter-Ross said. “I knew I had the height, I just needed to get the depth. If I had enough adrenaline going, I knew I could get it. I am not going to say I had full confidence, but I had confidence that I could get it.”



Maddy Carpenter-Ross gets a hug from coach Andy Wright following her state title in the pole vault Saturday at Wichita State.

She did just that and all that needed to happen was Robinson not to make any of her attempts at 12-6, and she didn't. Carpenter-Ross is now a two-time state champion.

"It is absolutely incredible," she said. "When I was a freshman and watching all these girls out here, I remember how awesome they were and now here I am. To do it twice now is pretty surreal. I am so proud of myself, and so thankful for my family and all my coaches and all the people, including Piper Robinson, who pushed me to get that last one. She has been my competitor for a while and I am thankful that she pushed me."

The Lady Cats also made their way to the medal stand in two

other events and sophomore Suzanna Dansel was a part of both of them.



Louisburg sophomore Suzanna Dansel sprints down the straightaway in the 100-meter dash Saturday.

Dansel competed in the 100-meter dash Saturday, and after making the finals in the morning, ran a time of 12.60 seconds to medal seventh overall.

“It feels really good to medal it the 100,” Dansel said. “I’ve improved a lot since the first meet of the season. I felt accomplished, but i know i can improve a lot in my top speed.”

Dansel was the anchor leg of the Louisburg 4×100-meter relay, which also made the finals. Dansel, along with Kendall Crossley, Emma Vohs and Addi Mallett, had the sixth fastest time after competing in the prelims Friday.

The Louisburg quartet put together their best race of the season in the finals as they ran a personal best time of 50.28

seconds to medal sixth. It was the second straight season the Wildcat relay found their way to the medal stand, and Dansel and Crossley were a part of both of those teams.



Louisburg senior Emma Vohs takes the handoff from Kendall Crossley on Saturday during the finals of the 4×100-meter relay.

“We ran the best time we have this season and each of our legs had a good position for this race, and improved every single meet,” Dansel said. “I was really excited to medal in the 4×1 again and it was definitely a goal of mine. We had two new additions to the relay and all ran strong. We hope to do it again next year.”

The Wildcats nearly medaled in a fourth event, but experienced some heartbreak in the javelin Friday.

In what was a tough competition, senior Katie Elpers missed

out on the medal stand by one spot as she finished ninth overall with a throw of 123 feet, 9 inches. Freshman Adelyn Moore was 13th at 111-9.

Back on the track, freshman Caroline Apple also just missed out on a medal in the 300-meter hurdles as she finished 9th overall in 50.81 seconds.

Crossley competed in a pair of sprints, along with her performance in the 4×100. Crossley was 15th in the 400 dash in 1:06 and 16th in the 200 dash in 27.38.

The Lady Cat team of Emma Vohs, Erin Apple, Adelyn Moore and Maddy Rhamy ran in the 4×800-meter relay and took 15th in 10:54.

In the team standings, Louisburg took 19th out of 29 teams with 15 points. Eudora won the state team title with 68 points and Andale was second with 55.