

# Lady Cats wrap up league title on Senior Night



Louisburg volleyball manager Bailey Kern gets a hug from junior Erin Lemke, while senior Anna Dixon (back) shares a hug with teammate Reilly Ratliff-Becher during Senior Night ceremonies on Tuesday at Louisburg High School.

The reality started to sink in for Anna Dixon and Carson Buffington.

The Louisburg seniors walked onto the court for their final home regular season contest and memories started to rush back. Their time as Lady Cats are coming to a close.

Both players, along with manager Bailey Kern, were honored during their Senior Night ceremony prior to Tuesday's home dual with Piper.

"It was very emotional," Dixon said. "I started having flash backs of seeing both of my older sisters walking out on the court for their senior nights and it was crazy that it was my turn. It hasn't fully hit me yet that my last time playing in a Louisburg jersey is coming to an end."

The same could be said for Buffington.

"The emotions didn't hit me until Erin (Lemke) and Reilly (Ratliff-Becher) came out to give me the senior gifts," Buffington said. "That was when it hit me that I'll be leaving

my teammates and best friends next year. It was a special night because it was the last time playing a regular season game in high school for me.”

Emotions were all over the place Tuesday as there was a little bit of sadness, but there was also plenty to be excited about as Louisburg entered the dual undefeated in league play. The Lady Cats already clinched the Frontier League crown, and this match was only a formality.

Louisburg had no problem with Piper and rolled to a 25-9, 25-5 and 25-9 victory over the Pirates to finish with a perfect league record and moved its overall record to 30-8 on the season. It was the first league title for Louisburg since 2015.



**Senior Carson Buffington gets a hug from Reilly Ratliff-Becher, while Carson's mother, Amy, shares a hug with Erin Lemke.**

"It means so much to be able to win the league title," Buffington said. "We know that we have done everything we could have to earn it. It feels especially great beating every team in the league."

Winning a league crown was the perfect way to honor both Dixon and Buffington, according to Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment.

"With Anna playing four years of varsity, Carson playing three and then Bailey being a manager for a while, they have just been a lot of fun to coach and be around," Compliment said. "They are great seniors, who provide great leadership, work well with their teammates and have put it in a lot of time in the offseason, whether it be with club or playing multiple sports. It has been a lot of fun to be with Anna and Carson and I just wanted them to go out and have fun and just play."

The dual itself provided little drama and gave the Lady Cats opportunity to play loose. Louisburg got contributions from up and down its lineup, and it even allowed bench players Sydni Keagle, Alyse Moore and Chase Kallevig to see action in the final set.

Dixon led the Lady Cats offensively with seven kills, while Buffington was right behind her with six. Juniors Haley Cain and Erin Lemke both had three kills as well.

Louisburg had 10 aces on the night, including four from freshman Davis Guetterman and a pair from Cain and Riley Kallevig. Sophomore Carleigh Pritchard, who normally doesn't serve during a match, got an opportunity to close out the second set and she did just that by serving the final six points to seal the win and recorded two aces in the process.

Freshman setter Rinny McMullen finished the night with 14 assists and Guetterman added six in the win. Defensively, Dixon led the way with six digs, while junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher finished with five.

"We still missed too many serves, but at least we were aggressive," Compliment said. "But if we would miss a serve, we would come right back and we were effective with the serve receive, then with the pass and then side out right away. I was happy with how they played and I was glad to see that their energy was high."



**(From left) Anna Dixon, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Rinny McMullen, Alyse Moore and Carson Buffington were all smiles following a point late in Tuesday's dual with Piper.**

Louisburg will have one final opportunity to play at home Saturday when it hosts a Class 4A sub-state tournament as the No. 4 seed. The Lady Cats will face No. 13 Iola (10-17) at 2 p.m., and if they advance, will meet the winner No. 5 Eudora (22-11) and No. 12 Fort Scott (11-23) at 4 p.m., in the championship match.

A win there would give the Lady Cats another trip to the state tournament, after they finished second a year ago.

"I'm so excited for sub-state and even more excited that we are hosting," Dixon said. "We are pretty pumped about it and staying humble. We want to focus on point after point and take one game at a time."

The two Louisburg seniors are also looking forward to one more opportunity to play on their home floor.

"I couldn't be more excited for Saturday with my team, who we are playing, and that it's on our home court," Buffington said. "We are all super pumped but we all know we have to come out and play our best and that absolutely nothing is handed to us. I am so ready to see what Saturday will bring us."