

# Lady Cats advance to substate title game



Louisburg senior Kirstin Lowry drives the lane on a Fort Scott defender during Friday's substate Class 4A Division I semifinal game at Paola High School. Lowry and the Lady Cats rolled to a 71-42 victory.

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PAOLA – The first step to a state tournament berth was an easy one for the Louisburg girls basketball team.

The No. 2 seed Lady Cats faced off with No. 3 Fort Scott in the semifinals of the Class 4A Division I substate tournament and ran away with a 71-42 victory Friday at Paola High School. Louisburg opened the game on a 24-5 run and never looked back.

"It was probably the most fun game we have played all year," Louisburg senior Natalie Moore said. "It is definitely exciting to get this win because we all played well. It was a good win."

Moore definitely had a lot of fun as she made the Fort Scott defense pay on countless occasions as the Tigers couldn't keep her out of the lane and she eventually finished with a game-high 24 points. Most of those points came from the free-throw line as she connected on 16 of 20 attempts.

When she wasn't putting up runners or going to the free-throw line, Moore had no problems finding her open teammates,

including Kallie O'Keefe. Her drives left O'Keefe open several time as she finished with 17 points to go along with several rebounds and second-chance points.

"When teams don't play us often or don't know what we like to run, our style of play can make it pretty difficult on them and that is what happened," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I thought we played well. We had different kids step up and not just one or two girls. All the girls made some big contributions."

The Lady Cats (11-10) also got a big boost from the outside as senior Kirstin Lowry and sophomore Paige Buffington all hit big shots. Buffington finished with 13 points and Lowry added 11 as each connected on three 3-pointers.

Louisburg and Fort Scott went back and forth through the first part of the opening quarter, but the Lady Cats pulled away as they went on a 19-0 run that went into the second quarter. Louisburg went into halftime with a 42-15 lead.

"Getting off to a good start was very important to us," O'Keefe said. "We aren't exactly the best third quarter team so to get out to a big lead was nice and really got some confidence going."

That next step to a possible state tournament berth is going to be a little tougher. The Lady Cats will go up against undefeated Paola on the Panthers' home court at 6 p.m. tonight. Paola defeated Spring Hill 50-23 on Friday.

"They are excited for the opportunity, there is no doubt," coach Lowry said. "We are going to have our hands full but the girls have worked hard all week in practice and all season for this. This team, especially these seniors, are not ready to see this come to an end."

O'Keefe couldn't agree more.

"This game is why we have been going to summer weights since the sixth-grade for," she said. "All the work we have put in over the years is to prepare us for this game. We want to go to state and we are excited for the opportunity."

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|------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>LOUISBURG</b> |               | <b>24</b> | <b>18</b> |
| <b>22</b>        | <b>7 - 71</b> |           |           |

|                   |               |          |           |
|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>FORT SCOTT</b> |               | <b>5</b> | <b>10</b> |
| <b>18</b>         | <b>9 - 42</b> |          |           |

**LOUISBURG (11-10): Natalie Moore 24, Kallie O'Keefe 17, Paige Buffington 13, Kirstin Lowry 11, Isabelle Holtzen 4, Megan Lemke 2. Totals: 22 21-27 42. 3-point field goals: 6, (Lowry 3, Buffington 3)**