

Lady Cats fall to Paola on senior night



It wasn't the senior night the Louisburg girls basketball team had hoped for when it hosted rival Paola.

The Lady Cats took the Panthers to the wire in their first match up, but Friday was a different story. Paola shot well from the field and took control early as it downed Louisburg 62-38.

Paola, the No. 2 team in Class 4A-Division I, also ended its regular season with a 20-0 record – an unbeaten streak the Lady Cats had hoped to break.

“Paola is just a really good team,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “They have really good players. They are athletic, they have size and they can shoot the ball really well. We just didn't play well enough to stay with them.”

Following the game, the Lady Cats (10-10) and their fans honored their three seniors and their families. Natalie Moore, Kallie O'Keefe and Kirstin Lowry all said their final goodbyes to their home crowd.



Kallie O'Keefe skips into her senior night ceremony Friday with her parents Angie and Mike O'Keefe.



Louisburg senior Kirstin Lowry holds hands with her parents Kristine and Shawn Lowry as she was honored Friday during senior night.



Natalie Moore walks onto the floor for the senior night ceremony Friday with her brother Nathan and her parents Lynne and Doug Moore.

The three Louisburg seniors have led the team throughout the season and provided a lot of highs in a season that brought 10 wins.

“They have been in the program for four years and have given a lot to this team,” coach Lowry said. “For me personally, I have been around them for most of their lives and I have watched them grow. I have probably coached them since the third grade and my relationship with them is pretty special, and not just because Kirstin is my daughter.

“All three have provided good leadership for the younger kids playing and they have been a big part of the team. They will definitely be missed.”

After the last meeting went down to the final minutes, the

Lady Cats couldn't keep up with Paola this time as the Panthers connected on eight 3-pointers and controlled the glass. Paola took a 17-6 lead into second quarter after scoring the first nine points of the game.

Kirstin Lowry ended the scoring drought with a 3-pointer and O'Keefe followed with a basket to make it a 9-5 deficit, but the Lady Cats would get no closer.

Paola scored 22 more points in the third quarter to grow its lead to 56-28 and all but sealed the win for the Panthers.

O'Keefe led the Lady Cats scoring wise with a team-high 10 points, while Kirstin Lowry and Moore each finished with eight points. Sophomores Madisen Simpson and Paige Buffington each added five.

Paola's Tiana Moala was one of four Panthers to score in double figures as she scored a team-high 16 points and Lyndsee Johnson added 13.

The two teams could see each other again this weekend as Paola hosts the four-team substate tournament. Louisburg, the No. 2 seed, will play No. 3 Fort Scott (4-16) at 6 p.m. on Friday

If the Lady Cats advance, they will play in the championship game at 6 p.m. Saturday against the winner of No. 1 Paola and No. 4 Spring Hill.

"I guess we just need to try different things," coach Lowry said. "I hope to play Paola again because that means we will be in the championship game. I think the girls are ready for substate and they know what it means. If you lose, it is over and the girls aren't ready to be done."

LOUISBURG

13

6

10 - 38

9

PAOLA

17

17

22

6 - 62

LOUISBURG (10-10): Kallie O'Keefe 10; Kirstin Lowry 8; Natalie Moore 8; Madisen Simpson 5; Paige Buffington 5; Emalee Overbay 2. Totals 11 12-22 38. 3-point field goals: 4, (Lowry 2, Simpson, Buffington)