

Five seniors to lead Louisburg volleyball



Lauren Dunn goes up for a kill during the Louisburg team camp in July. Dunn is one of five seniors on the Lady Cat team this year as they prepare to qualify for their fourth consecutive state tournament.

Lauren Dunn has walked onto the state tournament floor in Salina the last three seasons.

Madison Turner, Makenzie Kallevig and Megan Lemke have graced the hardwood at state the last two years. Cate Stambaugh made her first appearance a year ago.

For the five Louisburg High School volleyball seniors, experience is definitely not an issue. The Lady Cats have made the Class 4A or 4A-DI state tournament the last three seasons and four of the last five.

With all that success comes one of the bigger senior classes in recent history for Louisburg. It certainly isn't a bad problem to have as the Lady Cats aim for their fourth consecutive state appearance.

"There is a lot of experience with this group of seniors," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "Four of the seniors have made the trip to state (at least) twice already and have

their sights set on making it again this year. From their previous years on varsity, they also understand that nothing will be handed to them. They will need to work harder than everyone else and will need to maintain their level of focus.”

The Lady Cats, who are the preseason No. 5 team in Class 4A-Division I, have a lot of fire power returning on the front row this season as Dunn (outside hitter) and Turner (middle hitter) were among the team leaders in kills and blocks a season ago. Turner, who stands at 6 feet, 4 inches, will provide a presence in the middle, while Dunn will continue as an all-around player this season.

Louisburg brings back two of the best players in the league from a year ago. Dunn returns as a first-team all-Frontier League selection and Turner was named honorable mention.

Dunn and Turner, along with Kallevig, will enter their third season as starters for the Lady Cats. Kallevig returns as the team’s libero and was among the team leaders a year ago. She will anchor the back row defense along with Lemke.



Sophomore Sophie McMullen sets up teammate Cate Stambaugh during the Lady Cats’ team camp in July.

“Their experience will be key this year, and I look to those

three to help lead the team,” Compliment said. “Makenzie has worked very hard in the off season, and I have been impressed with her improved mobility on the court and ability to read and react defensively. Lauren and Madison will be two that the team looks to get kills and side outs. They both can be offensive powerhouses.”

Along with all those pieces, the Lady Cats also return one of the most – if not the most – important position on the court in their setter. Sophomore Sophie McMullen will lead the Louisburg attack this year as she took over the position halfway through last season.

Now that McMullen has that varsity experience, including setting at last year’s state tournament as a freshman, Compliment believes she will have a strong second campaign.

“Last year, Sophie was thrown in to the mix halfway through the season, and it took a while for the players to build chemistry with her,” Compliment said. “The chemistry between a setter and her hitters is key to having a successful team. By the end of last season, that trust was in place.

“This season we are starting out with the chemistry and trust already well established. The level of confidence for all the players is also a lot higher this season.”

The biggest question for Louisburg coming into the year was how it would replace its two strong seniors from a year ago in Sydney Dixon and Bailey Dvorak, who both went on to sign at Division II programs. One of the answers was an easy one – just replace one of them with another Dixon.

Freshman Anna Dixon will have the task at replacing her older sister Sydney’s spot at outside hitter, and despite being a first year varsity player, has a lot of experience under her belt. Anna will be the third Dixon player in the last four years as her sisters Sydney and Katie were both on previous state tournament teams.

“Anna has been around a lot of volleyball, whether it has been watching her two older sisters compete or playing volleyball herself and that has helped her become a strong player at such a young age,” Compliment said.

Stambaugh will rotate with Turner in the middle of the Lady Cats front line and Olivia Bradley will also see some time at outside hitter as well to round out the varsity lineup.

It won't be an easy road for the Lady Cats as they will play in a few challenging tournaments in September, along with duals against Class 5A's Blue Valley Southwest and Blue Valley West.

Louisburg will travel to Lansing early in September and then to Topeka Hayden two weeks later for a tournament that features several ranked teams from different classifications.

“We do have another tough schedule,” Compliment said. “The Topeka-Hayden and Lansing tournaments are loaded with quality teams. Those tournaments and other matches throughout the season will hopefully prepare us for post-season play.

“In the end, it comes down to which team wants it the most and which team is willing to leave it all out there on the court. We have a lot of players that want another trip to state, but it will take hard work and a lot of focus to reach that goal.”

Louisburg opens its season Saturday when it travels to Eudora for the preseason Frontier League Tournament. Play begins at 8 a.m.

2015 LOUISBURG VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

Aug. 29
Eudora

Frontier League Tourn. @
8 a.m.

Sept. 1 Southwest 4:30 p.m.		Blue Valley
Sept. 8 Trail		Burlington/Santa Fe 5 p.m.
Sept. 10 West p.m.		@ Blue Valley 5
Sept. 12 Invitational 9 a.m.		@ Lansing
Sept. 15 Soto		De
	4:30 p.m.	
Sept. 17 Scott		@ Prairie View/Osawatomie/Ft. 5 p.m.
Sept. 19 Invitational		@ Topeka Hayden 8 a.m.
Sept. 22 Baldwin		@
	4:30 p.m.	
Sept. 26 Invitational 8 a.m.		Louisburg
Sept. 29 Paola		@
	4:30 p.m.	
Oct. 1 Northwest 5 p.m.		Olathe

Oct. 6 Hill	4:30 p.m.	Spring
Oct. 13 Eudora	4:30 p.m.	@
Oct. 15 North	5 p.m.	Olathe
Oct. 20 Night) p.m.		Ottawa (Senior 4:30