

# Opinion: Lady Cats need your support



Louisburg seniors (from left) Makenzie Kallevig, Cate Stambaugh, Madison Turner, Lauren Dunn and Megan Lemke were honored Tuesday during senior night against Ottawa. The Lady Cats won the league title with a 3-0 win over the Cyclones.

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Tuesday was already going to be an emotional evening for Cate Stambaugh.

The pageantry of senior night was enough to get her choked up just thinking about it. It was there where she, along her senior compadres, Madison Turner, Lauren Dunn, Makenzie Kallevig and Megan Lemke all said their goodbyes during the final home match of the season.

They all knew this day would come.

It didn't make it any easier.

There wasn't a dry eye between them. Their parents and younger teammates were crying as one-by-one they were recognized in front of their fans.

It was a gut-wrenching, yet happy experience. Following the ceremony, the Lady Cats made quick work of Ottawa to win their third consecutive league crown and each year they finished

with an undefeated league record.

The run these five seniors have been on together has been one to remember. Several of the seniors have made trips to multiple state tournaments and have played on the biggest stage.

Having five seniors is a rarity for a lot of volleyball programs, and Louisburg is no exception. These Lady Cats have played big roles in some, or all, of the three consecutive state tournament berths.

Each of the last three seasons, Louisburg has left with a medal and came within a few points of winning the school's first state championship two years ago. The five Lady Cat seniors were prepared to make this season four in a row and ride off into the sunset

"It is very special to finish it with these four because we have been playing together since we knew how to play volleyball," Cate said. "I have never had a season where I didn't spend it with them."

Cate just didn't think it would end this way for her.

Instead of linking arm-in-arm with her parents during the senior night ceremony, Cate made her way onto the Lady Cats' home floor for the final time with the help of crutches. You see, just a few days earlier, she broke her ankle during a practice – ending her season.

The dreams of playing in one more state tournament with her four friends wasn't going to happen. The thought of not being out there with her teammates for that final home match was difficult to handle.

It had been a great year for Cate as she was among the team leaders in blocks from her middle hitter spot and had recorded big kills all season. Her improvement from last year to this

year was great to see and you could tell she was playing with a lot of confidence.

Now, the Lady Cats will venture into their most important part of the season without her on the floor. Players will be asked to raise their game and move to different positions to fill her void.

It is a difficult situation, but one the Lady Cats can overcome. That doesn't mean they don't need any help.

Volleyball is not the most popular sport in these parts – at least when it comes to spectators. Crowds at several of the Lady Cats' home matches have been limited to parents, relatives and a few students.

In recent weeks, the student section has gotten bigger in support of their team, but they could always use more – a lot more.

There is a saying that goes "You don't miss it until it is gone." It is a phrase we have all heard at one point in our lives.

Louisburg has been fortunate that it has a volleyball program that has been ranked among the best in the state the last five or six years. They are on a run a lot of schools only dream about.

I will also tell you that this streak of success will not last forever and I think a lot of us will forget just how good the Lady Cats actually are. Sometimes we just take it for granted.

Time is precious with everyone and a lot of us have a lot going on in our lives, but if you have a few hours to give to these girls it would mean the world to them. Come out, cheer them on and lift them up because they are a little down right now.

I implore you all to make your way to Spring Hill High School

at 2 p.m. Saturday and make some noise. Whether you are a student at LHS, a graduate, teacher, parent or just a casual fan, come out and see what these girls are all about.

Come and watch them before they are gone.