

# Lady Cats battle for first victory



Freshman Carson Buffington battles for a rebound with two Eudora players Tuesday in Eudora. Buffington and the Lady Cats won their first game of the season 37-34, and in the process, Buffington grabbed a team-high 17 rebounds.

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The Louisburg girls basketball team gave itself an early Christmas present of sorts Tuesday in Eudora.

It was one the Lady Cats had at the top of the list for a while now – their first win.

Thanks to a big fourth quarter rally, the Lady Cats defeated Eudora 37-34 to ensure their first victory of the season and it gives them a little life heading into the Christmas break after going winless in their first four games.

“Look at us compared to last year and there are a lot of similarities between the two teams,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “Now, maybe not with wins and losses, but we have kids that are growing and that is what I have said from the start. What I am really proud about is the way so many different kids stepped up at different times. It wasn’t one person doing something unbelievable, it was all of them doing their jobs.”

The Lady Cats (1-4) did have several players come through at key moments of the contest, but maybe none bigger than Madisen Simpson. The Louisburg junior, who started the first four games of the season, came off the bench this time around and gave the Lady Cats a big spark – especially in the fourth quarter.

Down 27-22 with four minutes left in the contest, Simpson hit a pair of 3-pointers and a jumper to give Louisburg a one-point lead with just under three minutes left.



**Senior Megan Lemke looks to go up for a shot Tuesday in Eudora.**

Sophomore Isabelle Holtzen then stole a Eudora pass and took it down the court herself for the layup and put Louisburg up 32-29.

“I just do it for the team because they mean a lot to me,” Simpson said. “It motivated me to come off the bench, but anything I can do for my team I will definitely do it.”

Louisburg also came through at the free-throw line in the final seconds. Freshman Kennia Hankinson, senior Megan Lemke and Simpson all made free throws to close the game out.

The Lady Cats also got several second chance opportunities thanks to their work on the boards. Louisburg pulled down 30 rebounds for the game and freshman Carson Buffington had 17 of those by herself.

“I can’t remember anything like that,” Lowry said of Buffington’s performance. “Some of the ones I really don’t know how she got to them, but really it was all about effort and wanting the ball more than the other team.”

It was a struggle defensively early for the Lady Cats as Eudora got several open looks on its way to a 15-8 lead after the first quarter. Louisburg would tighten down and allow just 19 points in the final three quarters combined to stay in the game.

Louisburg fought its way back in the game when Simpson hit a 3-pointer, her first of three for the night, with under a minute remaining in the first half and the Lady Cats took 20-all tie into halftime.

After a slow start offensively to the second half, which saw Louisburg manage only two points, the Lady Cats heated up in the second half and scored 15 points in the final four minutes to pull away.

“What I told them at halftime is how they play in the second half is the taste you have in your mouth the next two weeks,” Lowry said. “They took that to heart. We get to build off this now and when we get to practice, the girls are going to do things they haven’t done before. It was big for us.”

Simpson finished the game with a team-high 15 points, while Holtzen and junior Paige Buffington were next with six points each.

Now the Lady Cats will focus their efforts on to getting better over the break. Louisburg will host Ottawa on Jan. 5.

“Our effort was absolutely amazing tonight,” Simpson said. “We never gave up, even when we were down, we never gave up as a team.”

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>15 - 37</b>		

<b>EUDORA</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>8 - 34</b>		

LOUISBURG (1-4): Madisen Simpson 5-13 1-2 15; Isabelle Holtzen 3-7 0-0 6; Paige Buffington 2-7 0-0 6; Megan Lemke 1-7 3-4 5; Carson Buffington 1-5 1-2 3; Kennia Hankinson 0-1 2-4 2. Totals: 12-43 7-12 37. 3-point field goals: 5, (Simpson 3, P. Buffington 2)