

# Lady Cats continue to grow after tourney



Louisburg freshman Kennia Hankinson (middle) gets some help on a loose ball from teammate Carson Buffington during Friday's fifth-place game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic in Louisburg. The Lady Cats fell 50-43.

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Many teams that finished a tournament without a win would have left feeling defeated and frustrated.

For the Louisburg girls basketball team, the feeling was completely the opposite. Sure, the Lady Cats would have liked to win a game or two during last week's Wildcat-Bulldog Classic, but they are looking for more than just wins this early in the season – they want to see progress.

That was something they did accomplish as the young Lady Cat team nearly picked up two victories during the tournament and were tested in some tight situations, including a 50-43 loss to Anderson County on Friday in the fifth-place game.

“It is about getting them as much confidence as possible right now,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “We are getting game experience and more kids are understanding more parts of the game and it is slowing down for them. You see some freshmen that are starting to pick up parts, granted they still have a

ways to go, but they are picking up things and the effort is there.”

One of those freshmen, Kennia Hankinson, helped bring the Lady Cats back in the fourth quarter. Louisburg found itself down 10 points with 3 minutes and 20 seconds left in the game when Hankinson hit two 3-pointers in less than two minutes, and after a pair of Isabelle Holtzen free throws, cut Anderson County’s lead to two.

Anderson County would hit five free throws in the final minute to help secure the win, but Lowry liked what he saw from his freshman.

“She has no fear,” Lowry said of Hankinson. “The kid just wants to play. I would still like to see her do a little more things defensively, but I am happy she hit those shots. I push her a lot as a freshman, and getting the opportunity she is, I really challenge her and she is stepping up.

“It wasn’t just those shots, she tried to take two charges, an even though she didn’t get the calls, she put herself in position to be unselfish for her team and I am most proud of that.”

Junior Paige Buffington provided the Lady Cats (0-4) with a lot of big baskets as she scored a team-high 14 points and had five rebounds. Fellow junior Madisen Simpson had 11 points and also pulled down five rebounds.



**Junior Emalee Overbay goes up for a rebound against Anderson County on Friday.**

Junior Emalee Overbay led the Lady Cats on the glass as she had a team-high eight rebounds and freshman Carson Buffington added seven.

Coach Lowry was proud to see his team battle back when the Lady Cats found themselves in dire straits.

“Those are experiences that these group of players haven’t been through yet,” he said. “That is great for them to be in that spot. To see them during the timeout, see them battle back and they are starting to come together and trust each other. It is great to see.”

Louisburg got off to a good start in its second game of the tournament Thursday when it faced off with Burlington. The Lady Cats had a one point lead after the first quarter, but Burlington’s pressure got to them at times and they fell 46-32.

Holtzen, a sophomore, and Simpson led the Lady Cats with seven points each and senior Megan Lemke added six in the loss. Carson Buffington had a team-high seven rebounds.

"It was a great experience to play in a preseason tournament like this and to play against teams like Burlington, who likes to pressure," Lowry said. "It is good for us to work on that because we are going to get pressured a lot this year. I thought we handled it fairly well."

In the tournament opener on Dec. 8, Louisburg faced off with Iola and had the lead four different times in the final quarter before falling 42-37.

The Lady Cats led 26-21 to start the fourth quarter before Iola went on 7-0 run to take a two point lead. Simpson hit a 3-pointer and a pair of free throws to give the Lady Cats a 33-32 lead back.

Paige Buffington added another basket with 2 minutes remaining to give Louisburg another small lead, but Iola ended the quarter on an 8-2 run to pull away.

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 15 points, while Lemke and Paige Buffington each added six points. Carson Buffington pulled down a team-high nine rebounds.

Louisburg returns to action tonight for its first official Frontier League contest. The Lady Cats will travel to Eudora for a 6 p.m. tipoff in hopes to get their first win.

<b>AND. COUNTY</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>12 - 50</b>			
<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>12 - 43</b>		

LOUISBURG (0-4): Paige Buffington 4-10 4-7 14; Madisen Simpson 1-4 3-6 11; Kennia Hankinson 2-6 2-2 8; Isabelle Holtzen 0-3 4-10 4; Haven Turner 1-1 0-0 2; Emalee Overbay 0-4 2-4 2; Megan Lemke 0-8 1-2 1; Lexie Reece 0-2 1-2 1. Totals: 11-47 15-30 43. 3-point field goals: 6, (Simpson 3, Hankinson 2,

Buffington).

<b>BURLINGTON</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12 - 46</b>			

<b>LOUISBURG</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>9 - 32</b>	

LOUISBURG: Madisen Simpson 2-16 2-4 7; Isabelle Holtzen 3-7 1-5 7; Megan Lemke 3-5 0-1 6; Carson Buffington 2-7 0-0 4; Emalee Overbay 1-4 2-4 4; Kennia Hankinson 1-1 0-0 2; Ryan Caldwell 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 13-51 5-14 32. 3-point field goals: 1, (Simpson)

<b>IOLA</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>21 - 42</b>	

<b>LOUISBURG</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>11 - 37</b>	

LOUISBURG: Madisen Simpson 5-13 3-4 15; Megan Lemke 1-3 3-4 6; Paige Buffington 3-11 0-0 6; Emalee Overbay 1-5 3-5 5; Isabelle Holtzen 2-8 0-2 4; Ryan Caldwell 0-0 1-2 1. Totals: 12-43 10-17 37. 3-point field goals: 3, (Simpson 2, Lemke).