

Wildcats show heart in close victory



Louisburg junior T.J. Dover drives to the basket for two points during the Wildcats' game with Baldwin on Friday at Baldwin High School. Dover scored 13 points and pulled down seven rebounds in Louisburg's 54-52 victory.

BALDWIN CITY – Just looking at the stats, the Louisburg boys basketball team probably should have lost Friday's game with Baldwin.

The Wildcats committed 18 turnovers and converted just 8 of 30 free throws. Instead, they pulled out a 54-52 victory on the road at Baldwin High School because of something that didn't show up in the stat sheet.

"It was heart, all heart," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "This is what I am proud about. This is the first time in three years that we didn't have our best game, but we somehow had the wherewithal to win. It is what it is.

"We had 11 turnovers in the first half, which is not like us. We weren't very good from the free-throw line, we are missing bunnies and it just wasn't us. You saw glimpses of us pushing the ball and getting our secondary movements, but the kids battled. We have always had heart, but the heart is what won

the game.”

The victory was big for the Wildcats as they moved their record (4-3) back above the .500 mark and they got contributions from everyone who saw the floor. Ten different players scored for Louisburg and it got some big free throws down the stretch.

Baldwin cut the Louisburg lead to two with a minute left in the game, but junior guard Sam Guetterman hit two free throws to keep the Bulldogs at bay.

Louisburg also had to overcome the shooting of Baldwin's Jackson Barth who scored nine of his 17 points in the final quarter. Baldwin had one last shot to win or tie the game with four seconds left after a Guetterman free throw, but couldn't get a good enough look.



Sophomore Ben Minster goes up for two points during the Wildcats' game with Baldwin on Friday at Baldwin High School.

“We didn't have our best game, but really everyone contributed

to the win," Nelson said. "When you look up and down the bench, that was as much of a team game as we can have."

The Wildcats held the lead from the opening tip and actually got out to a fast start. Louisburg took a 15-5 lead in the first quarter thanks to several different players.

T.J. Dover, Grant Harding, Mitchell McLellan and Korbin Hankinson each scored baskets during the run and Guetterman converted a 3-point play.

Baldwin started to creep back into the game in the second quarter as it trimmed the Wildcat lead to 21-20 with two minutes left in the first half. Dover helped Louisburg expand its lead with a pair of baskets, along with scores from McLellan and Ben Minster to take a 29-20 halftime lead.

In the fourth quarter, Barth hit a basket for Baldwin to cut the Wildcat lead to one with five minutes left in the game, but Harding responded with a pair of free throws and Dover added a basket to push the lead back to five.

It was the second time the Wildcats defeated Baldwin this season, with the first time coming in the championship game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic in December. Louisburg won by 17 on that day, but Nelson is just happy to get a road win.

"This shows how far our team has come in the last few years," Nelson said. "We didn't play our best game by far, but we were able to win a league game on the road and that is big for us. We showed a lot of heart and I was proud we were able to pull out the win."

Harding led the Wildcats in scoring with 14 points, four rebounds, three assists and two steals. Dover also finished in double figures with 13 points and had a team-high seven rebounds and three steals from the forward spot.

Louisburg will try for its second win a row tonight when it

travels to Frontenac. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG		17	12
15	10 – 54		
BALDWIN		10	10
17	15 – 52		

LOUISBURG (4-3): Grant Harding 5-11 4-7 14; T.J. Dover 6-8 1-5 13; Mitchell McLellan 3-5 0-2 6; Sam Guetterman 1-3 3-5 5; Jayce Geiman 2-3 0-2 4; Jacob Welsh 2-3 0-0 4; Alex Dunn 1-1 0-2 2; Ben Minster 1-1 0-1 2; Korbin Hankinson 1-2 0-2 2; Dalton Ribordy 1-1 0-4 2. Totals: 23-38 8-30 54. 3-point field goals: none