

Offensive outburst not enough for Lady Cats



Louisburg freshman Kennia Hankinson drives to the basket during Friday's road contest in Ottawa. Hankinson led the Lady Cats with 16 points, but Louisburg fell to the Cyclones despite a season-high 54 points.

OTTAWA — It was the highest scoring output the Louisburg girls basketball team had posted all year.

The Lady Cats connected on 18 field goals Friday against Ottawa, including 12 3-pointers, which was 10 more points than it had scored all season. As impressive as those numbers were, Ottawa had the stat of the night.

The Cyclones converted on 26 of 35 free-throw attempts, which was good enough to get past Louisburg in a 64-54 victory as the Lady Cats nearly pulled off the road upset at Ottawa High School.

"It was a really good free-throw shooting night for them," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I can't say anything about the officiating, but it is what it is. A lot of credit to Ottawa to step up and hit those free throws like that. We put them on the line, but they made them. It made it really tough for us to get back in the game."

Ottawa hit a bulk of its free throws in the fourth quarter as Louisburg tried to make a run to get back in it. The Cyclones made 16 of 21 free throws in the final period, which all but sealed the win.

It was the Lady Cats' long range game that kept them in it. The 12 3-pointers were a season-high for Louisburg and it helped them take a lead in the second quarter.

Freshman Kennia Hankinson opened the second with back-to-back 3-pointers, and after a pair of free throws from senior Megan Lemke and a 3-pointer from Paige Buffington, the Lady Cats had a 22-16 lead with five minutes left in the first half.

However, Ottawa would go on a 9-2 run to end the quarter and take a 25-24 advantage into halftime. Five of those nine points came from the free-throw line.

The Cyclones kept the momentum to start the third quarter as it built a double-digit lead. Junior Madisen Simpson kept the Lady Cats close as she scored all seven of the team's point in the frame, but Ottawa took a 40-31 lead into the fourth.



Isabelle Holtzen rises up for a shot Friday during the Lady Cats'

league game in Ottawa.

The Lady Cats (3-13) made one final run at it as Hankinson and Simpson hit back-to-back 3-pointers to start the quarter and cut the Cyclone lead the lead to five. However, Ottawa went on an 8-0 run and Louisburg could get no closer.

"Scoring wise, I thought it was pretty good," Lowry said. "They have some nice players and we had some breakdowns defensively. We also have some kids that aren't 100 percent right now, and everyone is dealing with this, not just our team. I liked a lot of stuff that the girls did, though."

Hankinson, who had missed several games with an illness, quickly regained her shooting form in her first game back. She connected on five 3-pointers and tied a team-high with 16 points to go along with six rebounds.

Simpson made four 3-pointers and also finished with 16 points for the Lady Cats. Lemke added nine points and seven rebounds, while freshman Carson Buffington had seven points and a team-high 10 rebounds.

"We had four days to prepare for this one and we got a lot of shooting in this week," Lowry said. "I was glad to see the girls step up and hit those shots."

Louisburg will have another tough test Tuesday when it hosts Baldwin, the No. 5 team in Class 4A, Division II, for its first of three consecutive home games. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOUISBURG	11	13
7	23 - 54	
OTTAWA	14	11
15	24 - 64	

LOUISBURG (3-13): Madisen Simpson 6-21 0-2 16; Kennia Hankinson 5-11 1-2 16; Megan Lemke 2-7 4-4 9; Carson Buffington 3-4 1-1 7; Paige Buffington 2-11 0-0 6. Totals: 18-59 6-9 54. 3-point field goals: 12, (Hankinson 5, Simpson 4, P. Buffington 2, Lemke)