

State-ranked Paola tops Lady Cats



Louisburg junior Paige Buffington drives past three Paola defenders to go up for a shot during Tuesday's home contest against the Panthers. The Lady Cats fell 62-34 to the No. 5 ranked Panthers.

For the second time in a week, the Louisburg girls basketball team found itself against a top five team in the state.

The Lady Cats faced off with rival Paola, the No. 5 team in Class 4A-Division I, on Tuesday at Louisburg High School and decided to hang around for a while. Louisburg stayed within striking distance for the first three quarters, but the final one turned out to be too much to handle for the Lady Cats.

Paola held Louisburg to four points in the fourth quarter and the Lady Cats fell 62-34.

"We have been playing even-keeled or with no pressure for most of the season," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "We played a ranked team in Piper last week, and some other tough teams throughout the season, so we knew what to expect from Paola.

"I thought we rebounded the ball fairly well, but Paola hit some big shots in the fourth quarter and really widened that gap."

Louisburg (2-12) tried to keep pace with Paola and did so through three quarters. Paola built a 10-2 lead early, but Louisburg junior Madisen Simpson hit a 3-pointer and freshman Carson Buffington hit two free throws to make it 10-7.



Louisburg senior Megan Lemke (right) dives for a loose ball Tuesday against Paola.

Paola got those points right back as Panther senior Morgan Laudan scored five points on back-to-back possessions to put them up 15-7.

Louisburg again cut the lead to six early in the second quarter on a basket from junior Emalee Overbay and two free throws from senior Megan Lemke. Paola answered with a 14-5 run to end the first half and take a 31-16 lead.

The Lady Cats came out with a vengeance to start the second half as they went on an 8-0 run. Simpson hit two 3-pointers in a minute and a half and Buffington added a basket to make it 31-24.

“At halftime, we just told the girls to take their shots and believe in them,” Lowry said. “We put the work in for those to start falling. I think it is just a mentality thing for the most part. The first three minutes of the third quarter for us is the most important part of the game so we want to get out

and get after it.”

Like the two quarters before, however, Paola had an answer for every run with one of its own. The Panthers went on a 12-6 spurt to take a 13-point lead into the fourth quarter.

The run didn't stop there.

Paola saw its outside shots start to fall and outscored the Lady Cats 19-4 in the final period to shore up the win. The Panthers connected on nine 3-pointers for the game.

“There are some really good shooters in that group,” Lowry said. “We tried to extend the zone a little bit to at least contest them, but eventually they were going to hit some of those and they did.”

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 14 points, including four 3-pointers. Buffington added six points to go along with a team-high eight rebounds and junior Paige Buffington added five points in the loss.

Louisburg will try for a win today when it hosts Eudora for homecoming. The Lady Cats defeated Eudora earlier in the year for one of their two wins as they hope to sweep the series. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOUISBURG		7	9
14	4 – 34		
PAOLA		15	16
12	19 – 62		

LOUISBURG (2-12): Madisen Simpson 4-17 2-3 14; Carson Buffington 2-4 2-2 6; Paige Buffington 2-10 0-1 5; Megan Lemke 1-6 2-2 4; Emalee Overbay 2-3 0-0 4; Ryan Caldwell 0-1 1-2 1. Totals: 11-50 7-12 34. 3-point field goals: 5, (Simpson 4, P. Buffington 1)