

Wildcats let another close game get away



Louisburg junior Sam Guetterman passes off to a teammate during Tuesday's senior night contest against De Soto at Louisburg High School. The Wildcats nearly stopped their losing streak, but lost in overtime, 66-62.

For the second time in three games, the Louisburg High School boys basketball team had the ball in its hands in the final seconds with the chance to win.

And for the second time in three games, the Wildcats came up empty.

Louisburg had the opportunity to knock off De Soto at home Tuesday, but came up short in a 66-62 overtime loss in a contest in which the Wildcats rallied from seven points down in the fourth quarter to tie the game.

On a night that could have had a lot of celebration with the honoring of Alex Dunn, Jacob Welsh and Ben Brummel on senior night, or Grant Harding's 33-point effort, instead ended in disappointment.

"It really stuck to the script as what a lot of the other games have been," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "We outrebounded them, we broke the press fine and all these

little things that we are focusing on in practice, we are doing it. When we attacked the rim and run what we do, good things happened. It is what it is. It doesn't matter who is on the court, all five guys want to be the best they can be, we just aren't putting it altogether."

Harding had his best night of the season offensively as the De Soto defenders couldn't keep him out of the lane. He made eight field goals in the game, but Harding hurt De Soto at the free-throw line where he was 15-for-19.

Despite all that, the Wildcats needed one more of Harding's shots to go down at the end of regulation. With the game tied, and seconds remaining on the clock, Harding drove the lane but his shot bounced off the rim and the game then went into overtime.



Junior Grant Harding scores two of his 33 points on a dunk Tuesday against De Soto.

"Grant was superb," Nelson said. "He shot great from the free-throw line and really everyone is doing what we need them to do. But when we have breakdowns, they come at the worst time.

We have been in a lot of close games, but we just can't seem to get those."

Louisburg jumped out to 16-11 lead at the end of the first quarter when junior Jayce Geiman connected on a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

De Soto started to battle back and took one-point lead with under three minutes left in the first half. But the Wildcats got big baskets from Harding, Korbin Hankinson and a free throw from Dalton Ribordy to give them a 25-21 halftime lead.

Everything seemed to be going Louisburg's way in the third quarter as it took an eight point lead with three minutes left in the period. Then things started to unravel.

The Wildcats (6-13) started missing shots and De Soto took advantage as it went on a 12-1 run to end the quarter with a 38-35 lead as it got forward Isaac Albert involved. Albert scored a team-high 26 points and was tough for the Wildcats to stop inside.

Louisburg nearly tied it up at the buzzer as Welsh heaved a three-quarter court shot that hit off the back of the rim and went out to end the third.

"It is ultimately on us, but we had some advantageous foul calls that took us out of our rhythm a little bit," Nelson said. "But if we played inside-out like we are supposed to do, those things probably don't matter."

De Soto eventually built a seven point lead, but the Wildcats had another charge in them. Harding scored eight straight points in about a minute span get Louisburg back in it.

Harding converted a basket and was fouled for the traditional three-point play, hit two more free throws and then knocked down a 3-pointer to give the Wildcats the lead.

De Soto took the lead back, but a basket from Sam Guetterman,

along with free throws from Harding and Welsh gave Louisburg a 53-52 lead with under a minute left. De Soto hit a free throw to tie the game with 21 seconds left, which gave the Wildcats one last opportunity before overtime, but Harding's drive to the basket rolled off.

That missed opportunity by Louisburg seemed to fuel De Soto as it opened the extra period on a 9-3 run to give it a 62-56 lead with 45 seconds left.

Welsh converted a traditional three-point play of his own to cut the lead to three, and after a De Soto basket, Harding answered with a 3-pointer with 13 seconds remaining. After the made basket, the Wildcats stole the ball from De Soto in backcourt with a chance to at least tie the game, but turned the ball over themselves.

De Soto sank two free throws with eight seconds left to seal the win.



Louisburg seniors (from left) Alex Dunn, Ben Brummel and Jacob Welsh were honored before the game during a senior night ceremony.

It was the final regular season home game for Louisburg's three seniors as they were honored before the game during a

senior night ceremony. Nelson knows those three brought a lot to the team this year.

“Welsh and Corbin Wertz (2015 grad) are two of the most intense defenders that I have had the opportunity to coach and Jacob is a hard worker,” Nelson said. “Alex couldn’t play last year with his knee, but he gives us some of the best minutes and he makes things happen. Brummel works hard and has a lot of natural ability and I wish I had him for four years. They are super kids.”

Louisburg will try and stop its 10-game losing skid tonight when the Wildcats travel to Paola for their final game of the regular season. Tipoff is set for 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG		16	9
10	18	9 – 62	
DE SOTO		11	10
17	15	13 – 66	

LOUISBURG (6-13): Grant Harding 8-14 15-19 33; Jayce Geiman 2-7 0-0 6; T.J. Dover 2-4 2-4 6; Jacob Welsh 1-4 3-3 5; Sam Guetterman 2-4 0-0 4; Dalton Ribordy 1-4 2-3 4; Alex Dunn 1-3 0-0 2; Korbin Hankinson 1-2 0-0 2. Totals: 18-42 22-31 62. 3-point field goals: 4, (Geiman 2, Harding 2)