Opinion: Lady Cats want to make community proud



Louisburg head coach Kyle Conley speaks with the team shortly before the start of the varsity matchup with Harmon on Tuesday at Harmon High School. The Lady Cats won their opener 2-0.

One by one they made their way onto the field as their names were called. It was really happening.

Bailey Belcher…Camdyn Clark…Maddie McDaniel…Rylee Bergh…Bryn O'Meara…Savannah Reinhart…Lily Cook…Lilly Scott…Madisen Simpson…Georgia Wilde…Shay Whiting.

The Louisburg girls soccer team ventured onto the field for the first time Tuesday at Harmon High School and those girls in the starting lineup have the distinction to say they were the ones to start it all.

Yes, they were the ones to kick off the era of girls soccer at Louisburg High School and it will be something they remember for the rest of their lives. How cool is that?



(From left) Georgia Wilde, Shay Whiting, Madisen Simpson, Lilly Scott, Lily Cook, Savannah Reinhart, Bryn O'Meara, Rylee Bergh, Maddie McDaniel, Camdyn Clark and Bailey Belcher started the first game for Louisburg.

As many of you know, and I have written about it quite a bit, it couldn't have been done without the work and fundraising efforts of numerous parents throughout the community. Led by efforts from the Louisburg Soccer Club, they were able to raise $39,000 in a year to be able to fund the Lady Cat program for the next three seasons.

Fundraising leaders Diana Moore and Karin Olson were in attendance for the special day, as were several other parents who put in a lot of time to make this possible for the girls in Louisburg.

Let's face it – they were tired of playing on the boys team. It was hard for them to compete at such a physical level and the opportunity wasn't there to show what they could do.

On Tuesday, those girls wanted to return the favor to those parents and community members and prove that it wasn't a waste of their time. They did that by getting a hard-fought 2-0 victory over Harmon to get the program's first win.

"To me it shows that we are just not throwing the community's

money in the trash," Belcher said. "We are committing ourselves to do what it was meant for – to make us better and make sure that we have a soccer team in the future."

It is hard to imagine the emotion Diana and Karin were feeling watching those girls take the field for the first time wearing the Louisburg purple. I can't begin to fathom what the players' parents were thinking when their daughters officially became a part of history.

I have been in this business for 13 years and I have never had the opportunity to cover a program's first game or season. It was an awesome experience to be on the sideline Tuesday and watch the girls – and coaches – go through this wide range of emotions.

First there was nerves. Then overwhelming joy when the first goal was scored, then back to being nervous when Harmon threatened late in the match.

Heck, even I was a little nervous as I was taking pictures before the junior varsity game. I wanted to capture as many moments as I could, only to be told I was on the field of play and had to back up. And believe me, I was WAY on the field.

However, all those emotions were so pure and heartfelt. None of what they experienced Tuesday was fake. These girls wanted to win this game, not for themselves, but for the community.

It couldn't have been more fitting to watch senior Maddie McDaniel, who was one of the many to help raise money in hopes of being able to play just one year for her high school team, score the first goal in program history – on a header no less.



Maddie McDaniel (right) slaps hands with Savannah Reinhart after McDaniel scored the first goal in program history.

Bailey Belcher got the first-ever assist and goalie Shay Whiting recorded the first shutout. Camdyn Clark scored the first junior varsity goal and became the first junior varsity player to get a hat trick.

They all now have the distinction of becoming the answer to a cool trivia question down the road.

As it was pointed out on Twitter by LHS grad David Embers, head coach Kyle Conley is now the winningest coach in Louisburg High School girls soccer history.

Can’t really argue with that.

The emotion will no doubt be just as strong today when the Lady Cats play Tonganoxie in their home opener. These girls want to show what they can do in front of their home fans and make their town proud.

Whether they like it or not, these girls are already role models to young girls all over town who want to have the opportunity to play soccer when they get older. They are paving the way for a growing sport to become even bigger in a small town.

It doesn’t matter if they go on to lose their remaining 15 games – these Lady Cats still win because they took the field and worked hard for something that no one can take away from them.

This is their time to shine and they are enjoying every minute of it.