

Louisburg softball ready for fresh start



Louisburg junior Allyssa Griggs is the Lady Cats' top returning pitcher from a year ago and will be the team's No. 1 starter again this year. Griggs and the Lady Cats open their season Thursday at home against Paola.

The Louisburg softball team doesn't want to spend too much time looking back on last season – in fact it was one the Lady Cats just want to put past them.

Louisburg finished the 2015 season without a win and went through some tough times in the process. Now, the Lady Cats are looking for a fresh start and their new coach hopes to give that to them.

Head coach John Ozier is in his first season with the program and is ready to guide a young group of Lady Cats through a tough Frontier League schedule.

"I have had the opportunity to coach many of these girls in middle school basketball," Ozier said. "I must admit, this is one of the reasons I decided to apply for the position this year. This is a hard-working, highly-committed group of young ladies that will play hard, and work to improve.

"Our team goals are very simple. Each player needs to

constantly ask the question of what they can do to make the team better – always putting the team above self, work hard each day at practice and work to improve weaknesses. Above all else, I want them to walk away from the season having enjoyed their experience.”

The Lady Cats return five players with varsity experience, including several key positions.

Senior Miranda White, who led the team at the plate with a pair of home runs a season ago, will take over her spot in centerfield. White was named to the all-Frontier League second team a season ago and was the lone Louisburg player to earn postseason honors.



Senior Miranda White is one of five returning starters for the Lady Cats this season.

Fellow senior Christina Dalrymple, a returning starter, will play in the infield. Another senior, Paige Shaffer, is in her first year with the program and Ozier expects her to contribute at either the infield or outfield spots.

After starting in the outfield a season ago, junior Hailey

Crowder also comes back as one of the five returning starters.

"Obviously, I am looking for leadership from my returning varsity players and upperclassmen both on and off the field," Ozier said. "If this program is to have any level of success this season, we will need each and every player focused on what they can do to help the team as a whole, and not worry about any individual stats or positions they may be asked to play. I think we have some young talent moving up the ranks that just lack high school experience at this point."

Junior Allyssa Griggs comes back as the team's starting pitcher and was the team's No. 1 starter a year ago. Griggs also pitched some as a freshman.

Griggs also returns her battery mate in catcher Emalee Overbay. The Louisburg junior was the starting catcher a season ago, but had to miss several games last year due to an injury.

"We have some freshmen with potential that appear committed to improving this season, but I look for Allyssa to provide leadership for this group," Ozier said. "Once we zero in on how to maximize our players' strengths, I think we should have a solid defense. We will continue to evaluate and work on defensive alignments throughout the season.

"The girls have worked very hard so far in practices with their hitting. We have spent a good portion of time working on the basic foundation of a good swing. As the season progresses, we will work more on quality at-bats in certain situations we will face."

Although the Lady Cats return five starters from a season ago, they will still be faced with a tough Frontier League schedule and it gets started Thursday when they host rival Paola in a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

"Being a first year coach, I really don't know much about the

rest of the league so far," Ozier said. "I do know that the Frontier League is one of the more talented leagues in the state. So, we realize that we have our work cut out for us."

2016 LOUISBURG HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

Mar. 31		
Paola	4:30 p.m.	
Apr. 5		Fort
Scott	4:30 p.m.	
Apr. 7		at Prairie
View	4:30 p.m.	
Apr. 12		at
Eudora	4:30 p.m.	
Apr. 19		
Baldwin	4:30 p.m.	
Apr. 21		
Osawatomie	4:30 p.m.	
Apr. 26		at De
Soto	4:30 p.m.	
Apr. 28		at
Chanute	4:30 p.m.	
May 3		at
Ottawa	4:30 p.m.	
May 9		Spring
Hill	4:30 p.m.	