

Lady Cats bring program together at team camp



Isabelle Holtzen drives to the basket and tries to get up a shot while being defended by Paige Buffington on Friday during the team's scrimmage on the final day of camp.

Walking onto the floor with so many young players last season, the Louisburg girls basketball team sometimes had its back against the wall before the game even started most nights.

The Lady Cats had a lot of inexperience, low numbers and were forced to play a lot of underclassmen. That resulted in a three win season, but they found a lot of positives in the process.

Whether it was watching underclassmen grow, playing state-ranked teams close or coming together as a team, Louisburg has plenty of things to build off of and it started last week.

Coach Shawn Lowry held his week-long team camp as 29 high school players took part in sessions from 8 to 9:30 every morning. Lowry also held a middle school session all week, along with a fourth through sixth grade portion for three days and a first through third grade mini-camp last Thursday.



Carson Buffington (4) goes up for a shot while being defended by teammate Julianne Finley on Friday during the team's scrimmage.

In all, Lowry had 110 campers fill the Louisburg High School gymnasium in what was a busy week of basketball.

"It was a really good week of camp at all levels," Lowry said. "From the first minute of camp, our upperclassmen set the tone with great attitudes, great effort and great leadership. With the number of girls returning to play from last season's team, we were able to get right into a lot of our offensive and defensive team work."

Lowry also tried something different this season as he invited all the campers from fourth grade on up to participate in a scrimmage-like atmosphere in front of their parents Friday on the final day of camp.

The camp ended with a feast of pizza and cookies, but more importantly, Lowry wanted to bring everyone together to experience what life as Lady Cat basketball players is all about.

“It is important that we create excitement and pride for those that have been Lady Cats, those that are currently Lady Cats and those that will someday be a Lady Cat,” Lowry said. “It was great to see the older girls cheering and high-fiving the younger girls. It was nice to see all the parents that came to watch and afterwards seeing the high school girls hanging out with many of the younger girls.”

Even though the camp is over, the Lady Cat players still have a lot of work in front of them. They will have open gym workouts twice a week through mid-July and the players also have weight sessions twice a week.

Louisburg will also compete in a summer league in Shawnee Mission for the next month.

Still, Lowry believes the team camp was a great way to kickoff the summer for his players and he likes what he has seen thus far.

“For us team camp is primarily about establishing our program’s culture and shaping our team’s identity,” Lowry said. “We find out who are leaders will be because they are pushed to the forefront as the week progresses. We also find out what younger players will compete.

“We have several girls returning that gained some very good experience last season. As part of that experience they know what kind of effort they have to give, what kind of teammate they have to be and they have more confidence and trust in each other.”