

Wildcats beat the heat, get better at camp



The Louisburg girls soccer team ended its team camp last Friday with an intrasquad scrimmage. The Wildcats not only competed against themselves, but against the heat as well as temperatures reached close to 100 degrees later in the week.

Coming off a 14-win season that ended in a regional championship in the program's first year, the Louisburg girls soccer team took to the field less than one month following the end of its season.

With temperatures and the heat index soaring close to 100 degrees, the Wildcats battled through the tough elements during their week-long team camp that ended last Friday. The Wildcat players gathered every morning for two hours working to refine their game.

Of course, the success they had last season made the heat a little more bearable.

"The heat was a problem for us, but we have tough kids that work hard and are focused on getting better," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We have twice as many water breaks as usual, but we were able to overcome it. Our program will never makes excuses. It was just another obstacle that we need to overcome and I feel we did fine with that."

Approximately 24 players attended camp each day and close to 30 have reported for summer workouts. The Wildcats also added eight freshman players to the mix, which could give them more depth next season.



Louisburg coach Kyle Conley looks on as the team started its scrimmage last Friday.

Although he wanted to stress fundamentals and conditioning, Conley also wanted to develop chemistry among the team. Louisburg lost three seniors off of last season's squad and he hopes to see different players step up as leaders.

"I felt camp went pretty well," Conley said. "With eight incoming freshmen, we needed to expand on our team chemistry. The girls had some issues with filling the void of (seniors Maddie) McDaniel, (Lilly) Scott and (Rylee) Bergh in regards to leadership. We worked that out and allowed the girls to discover how practice was going to be and expectations for our program.

"I was very pleased with the dedication that the freshmen had in attending their first high school soccer summer. They consistently showed up ready to work. I was very pleased with

the upperclassman and their focus to get better. Leadership isn't always the one who does all the talking. I was very pleased with how my leaders led by example and supported and helped the freshmen within drills and training sessions."

This camp was much different than the last one the Wildcats took part in a year ago. Back then, they were trying to get to know one another and prepare for their inaugural season.

Fast forward to this summer, the Wildcats are coming off a spot in the state quarterfinals and thoughts on the program have changed dramatically.



Bria Jensen makes a pass during the team's scrimmage Friday.

"Last year we focused on the building blocks of playing soccer, but this year the bar has been set and we are expanding more on our tactical and technical aspects of the game," Conley said. "We are expecting to keep improving our style of play. This camp and summer has been vastly different because of the expectations that our team has created for ourselves. It is a very exciting time for Louisburg girls soccer."

It has been a busy time for the entire team as it hasn't had much time to relax. Louisburg will continue its team workouts

over the summer, along with weight sessions.

Several Wildcats won't take much of a break at all as they will continue playing with their respective club teams. Still, Conley believes he was able to accomplish a lot during the team camp.

"We were looking to improve technically, formations, movement off the ball and communication," Conley said. "Those are four of the aspects that I feel we needed to improve on and they were our focus. I am very pleased with how we are developing, but we will have our work cut out for us. We need to increase our speed of play as well. I am excited to watch this team to continue to grow."