

Summer starts reloading process for Lady Cats



Louisburg sophomore Anna Dixon works on her serve-receive during a drill in the final day of the Lady Cats' team camp July 13 at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats also took part in the University of Kansas volleyball team camp the next day.

Success had not eluded the Louisburg High School volleyball program and with that has come high expectations every season.

The Lady Cats have qualified for the state tournament the last four seasons and have won the Frontier League three years in a row. Louisburg has placed at state each of those four trips and the Lady Cats have written another impressive chapter in the program's history.

However, after last year's third-place finish at state, the Lady Cats had to say farewell to five seniors and are now forced to regroup as they return just three varsity players from a year ago. Louisburg started that rebuilding in early June when they began summer workouts and recently ended it when they had its team camp that ended on July 13.

Head coach Jessica Compliment had 39 girls out for the three-day team camp as she began sorting out where they different pieces were going to fit.



Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment talks to her players during the final day of the Lady Cat team camp July 13.

“It thought our camp went pretty well,” Compliment said. “We went over a few things during that time and really stressed our back row defense and passing, which is what we do every year. It also gave the girls chance to learn how to play together, especially since we have so many younger kids this year after losing a big senior class.”

Following their camp, several Lady Cats made the trip to the University of Kansas volleyball team camp for the first time to learn from players and coaches from the Jayhawk program that made it to the semifinals of the NCAA Division I Volleyball Tournament.

Louisburg sent 21 players to the 3-day Jayhawk team camp that ended on July 16. The Lady Cats learned from Big 12 Coach of the Year Ray Bechard and also had the opportunity scrimmage against other programs from around the area.

“I really think the girls had a good time at the KU camp,” Compliment said. “I had a couple tell me that they wanted to come by next year, so I think this was a good opportunity for our team. We had about eight hours of practice drills and eight hours of competition. This gave us a chance to play

teams that we usually won't see and it was a good experience."

Earlier in the summer, all three levels – freshmen, junior varsity and varsity – competed in summer leagues in the area and each program played a level up. The freshmen group played in a junior varsity league, while the junior varsity played against other varsity level programs. The varsity competed against several larger teams in a league in Blue Valley.

"We definitely took our lumps at times," Compliment said. "It gave us some time to figure out some things with our rotation and we went through some adversity. At the same time, I think we saw a lot of growth out of the girls, which will help this season."

Those league also gave chances for returning players like Olivia Bradley, Sophie McMullen and Anna Dixon to assert themselves as leaders of the team.

Bradley, a senior, returns as the team's middle hitter, while Dixon will join her on the outside as a sophomore. McMullen, a junior, comes back for her third season as the team's setter.



Ryann Kramer sends the ball over the net

during a hitting drill

“For us to be successful those three girls need to become leaders for us, especially for the younger players,” Compliment said. “As the setter I think it is important Sophie to be the leader on the floor and she has a lot of experience out there now. Anna and Olivia played big roles on our team last year so they need to do that as well. I think the summer has helped them in that regard.”