

Lady Cats come in second at League tourney



Sophomore Carson Buffington (left) sets up teammate Olivia Bradley for a kill during the Frontier League Tournament on Saturday at Baldwin High School. The Lady Cats finished second overall and went 4-1 on the day.

BALDWIN CITY – It may have ended one win short of its actual goal, but for the Louisburg High School volleyball team, the Frontier League Tournament provided the Lady Cats a lot of what they needed to see.

Head coach Jessica Compliment watched her team battle back from adversity, dominate matches and saw an inexperienced team grow together. The Lady Cats had just one loss on the day as they finished second Saturday in the 8-team tournament at Baldwin High School, and even that provided a good learning tool.

Louisburg finished undefeated in pool play as it beat Basehor-Linwood (25-21, 18-25, 26-24), Spring Hill (25-10, 25-17) and Eudora (25-15, 25-13). The Lady Cats rallied to defeat Paola in the semifinals (25-22, 22-25, 25-15) before falling to De Soto in two sets (25-23, 25-13).

“I thought the team played well on Saturday,” Compliment said. “We had our moments when we were playing really well, and then moments when you could tell it was the first time out and our

nerves showed. Overall I was pleased with how the players competed and fought throughout the day.

“We had to fight back twice to beat Basehor-Linwood and Paola. Seeing the team’s determination to bounce back and fight for the win is a positive take from the tournament. De Soto is a good team and we knew they were going to be tough to beat.”

The Lady Cats (4-1) faced adversity in the first match of the day as they had to play a deciding third set against Basehor-Linwood and squeaked out a win over the Bobcats with a 26-24 victory in a back-and-forth final set.



Junior Mikayla Quinn (left) and freshman Haley Cain go up for a block during the Lady Cats’ semifinal match against Paola.

Veterans Anna Dixon and Sophie McMullen carried Louisburg through the match as Dixon, a sophomore, finished with a team-high 13 kills and nine blocks. McMullen, a junior, had a strong serving match with six aces and eight kills.

Freshman libero Riley Kallevig also provided some good defense with a team-high 15 digs and also had three aces. Sophomore Carson Buffington had 14 assists and McMullen added nine.

Louisburg really picked up its game the rest of the day, especially from behind the service line.

In the win over Spring Hill, Dixon served 13 straight points in the first set and finished with 11 aces for the match. Then in the victory against Paola, senior Olivia Bradley and junior Mikayla Quinn provided a big boost as well.

Bradley had five aces as she reeled off several points in a row to help Louisburg rally from behind and win the first set, while Quinn finished with a team-high seven aces against the Panthers that helped spur the three-set win.

“Anna, Olivia and Mikayla all stepped up big with their serves throughout the day as well and helped sway the momentum in our direction,” Compliment said. “The team’s ability to fight back and win against Paola showed me that they are willing to work hard and can mentally recharge themselves during a match. We have a few with a lot of experience, and I think that helped team on Saturday.”

Against De Soto, Louisburg stayed within one or two points for much of the championship match before losing the first set. However, De Soto went on a big run midway through the second set and the Lady Cats weren’t able to recover.

“I knew going in to the season that De Soto would have a good team this year,” Compliment said. “They returned a large portion of their team from last season. During the last set, we started to slowly fall apart because we started trying too hard to make the right play rather than sticking to what works for us as a team. It was a learning experience and we can take away a lot from that loss.”

Saturday was also the first time the Lady Cats used their new 6-2 offense in game action and it seemed to work well at times.

Dixon and McMullen did a lot of work at the net. Dixon led the

Lady Cats with 46 kills on the day and McMullen was right behind her with 43.

The Louisburg duo also had team-highs in aces with 13 and 12, respectively. Quinn was in double figures in aces with 11 and Bradley added eight.

The difference for Louisburg was its setting combination as McMullen and Buffington shared duties throughout the day. Buffington led the team with 72 assists and McMullen finished with 48.

“Overall I think the new offense went okay,” Compliment said. “We have a few kinks to work out and it needs some work to help smooth a few things out. Having two setters means the players all need to communicate a lot more so we’ll need to focus on continuing to increase communication on the court before, during and after rallies.”

The Lady Cats also played well defensively and it was led by one of the younger players on the team. Kallevig, a freshman libero, led Louisburg with 47 digs out of the back row and handled 65 serves out of the 12 sets played by the team.

Seniors Ellie Katzer and Tayler Lancaster, along with McMullen, Buffington and Dixon, provided the Lady Cats strong defense in the back row and up front. Dixon also had a team-high 27 blocks at the net, and another freshman, Haley Cain, was next on the team with 17.

“Riley did a great job of controlling the back row and was very steady throughout the day,” Compliment said. “That can be tough for a freshman, but she did a great job. Ellie and Tayler also added some great defensive plays during the tournament.”

Louisburg returns to action tonight when it travels to Blue Valley Southwest and then will play at 6 p.m. Thursday at Olathe South.

For a photo gallery of Saturday's action, make sure to click [here](#).