

Lady Cats breeze past Baldwin in home opener



Louisburg seniors Olivia Bradley (left) and Ellie Katzer team up for a block Tuesday during the Lady Cats' home opener against Baldwin. Louisburg made quick work of Baldwin in the 3-0 win and picked up its first Frontier League victory in the process.

Three weeks into the season and the Louisburg High School volleyball team was finally able to compete on its home floor.

The Lady Cats felt right at home Tuesday when they hosted Baldwin for a Frontier League dual. Louisburg picked up its first league win of the season as it ousted the Bulldogs 25-10, 25-18 and 25-19.

"We were looking forward to this match for a while just because this was our home opener and we like to play here and have an advantage," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "But too the girls were excited to play on the new setup. The girls were excited to play on the new court and new net. Just added a little different element to the game

The setup was quite a bit different for the Lady Cats and their fans. Instead of being sectioned off into one part of the gym, they were able to play on the entire floor with the net coming down at halfcourt and fans were able to watch from the side to see all of the action.

"I really like it," Compliment said. "It was nice having the fans on both sides of the court instead of just compacted to one side. I think it was great having that student section in the middle and them getting loud during the game always helps us out."



Senior Tayler Lancaster digs up a ball during Tuesday's match against Baldwin.

Louisburg's players seemed to like the setup too as they were quick to put Baldwin in a hole as the Lady Cats went on an 11-1 run to end the first set. Junior Mikayla Quinn served seven points in a row and had two aces during that stretch.

Sophomore Anna Dixon added a pair of blocks and a kill to keep the momentum going and later recorded an ace for the set's final point.

Midway through the second set, senior Olivia Bradley had a kill and a tip to give Louisburg (14-7, 1-1) a 13-9 lead and the Lady Cats added on from there. Senior Ellie Katzer, Dixon and freshman Haley Cain all had kills to increase Louisburg's lead.

It appeared the third set was going to go the same way as the others. Louisburg jumped out to a 9-3 advantage, but Baldwin didn't back down and eventually took a two-point lead after a

9-1 run.

Bradley had back-to-back kills to give the Lady Cats the lead, but Baldwin rallied to take the lead again. With the match tied at 18-all, Dixon recorded a kill and an ace in back-to-back plays and Cain added a kill to help the Lady Cats pull away

"The third set we started pulling back and playing too loose," Compliment said. "Instead of playing to win, we just played comfortable and didn't push. Baldwin was playing to win and they were playing scrappy and digging everything up."

Louisburg was still trying to get used to playing with a new rotation after the injury to starter Sophie McMullen, who played an all-around spot. Katzer moved into McMullen's spot and the team moved back to a 5-1 offense that features sophomore Carson Buffington as the main setter.

"Ellie has been solid and reliable out there," Compliment said. "It is going to take some time because they are still kind of second guessing on whose ball it is instead of just going for it and knowing their roles. Hopefully we will catch on soon."

Dixon had a big outing for the Lady Cats as she finished with team-highs in kills (15), blocks (5) and aces (3). Buffington led the Louisburg offense with 30 assists, while freshman libero Riley Kallevig had five digs. Cain, another freshman, had nine kills in the win and Bradley finished with six.

The Lady Cats will get to play at home once again Saturday when they host the Louisburg Invitational. They will meet Leavenworth, Olathe North and Shawnee Mission West in pool play, which begins at 8 a.m.

Other teams in the tournament are Shawnee Mission East, Olathe South, Fort Scott and Basehor-Linwood.

"The girls are looking forward to it," Compliment said. "Our home tournament, and I like it, but it is always a tough tournament with the teams we bring in. We always want to defend our home court and the goal is to stay here when they bracket out for the championship instead of going over to the middle school. We are going to have to start strong at 8 a.m. and continue that throughout the day."