

Louisburg rallies for fifth at home tournament



Louisburg senior Ellie Katzer sends the ball back over the net during a volley Saturday at the Louisburg Invitational. Katzer and the Lady Cats finished fifth overall with a 3-2 record on the day.

The Louisburg High School girls volleyball team is accustomed to playing in its home gym for the Louisburg Invitational, but Saturday felt a little foreign to the Lady Cat players.

After starting out at the LHS gym, Louisburg went 1-2 in pool play and was forced to move over to the middle school to play in the consolation bracket. It's not something the Lady Cats are used to.

They didn't let that bother them, however.

Instead of getting down, the Lady Cats rose up to win the final two matches in the consolation bracket to finish in fifth place. Louisburg defeated Fort Scott (25-20, 25-22) in the consolation semifinal match and then downed Basehor-Linwood (25-16, 25-16) in the fifth-place match.

"Our tournament is a tough tournament, especially when you bring in teams like the two Shawnee Mission and Olathe schools and those four schools are really good teams," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "Even though we came out in fifth

place, it was still good to see the girls respond and answer back.”



Sophomore Carson Buffington chases a ball from going out of bounds during the Louisburg Invitational on Saturday.

The Lady Cats (17-9) got off to a good start early in the morning Saturday as they faced Leavenworth in the first match of the day, and despite losing the first set, rallied for a 23-25, 25-18 and 25-19 win over the Pioneers.

A win in one of the next pool play matches would have put Louisburg in the championship bracket and the Lady Cats nearly got that win against Olathe North. Louisburg found itself in a back-and-forth first set, but Olathe North came away with a 32-30 win.

Louisburg held a 29-28 and 30-29 lead, but couldn't get the extra point that would have kept the momentum going. The Lady Cats went on to lose the second set 25-13.

“Had we found a way to win that first set against Olathe

North, I think we would have taken a lot of momentum into that second set," Compliment said. "I just think girls lost some of that energy after losing a tough first set and it was hard to carry it over.

"But I keep telling the girls that when you play teams like Olathe North, Shawnee Mission West and Lansing close, we need to take that as confidence and keep building on that. We are playing against very good teams and playing well at times, but the girls just need to have more confidence in themselves."

Next up was Shawnee Mission West and Louisburg couldn't get much going in a 25-20 and 25-15 loss to wrap up pool play.

The consolation bracket gave the Lady Cats a nice jump start as they controlled both matches against Fort Scott and Basehor-Linwood to end the day on a good note.

Sophomore Anna Dixon had big day offensively as she registered a team-high 55 kills and tied for a team-high with eight aces. Dixon's biggest performance came at the start of the day when she registered 16 kills, five aces and five blocks against Leavenworth.

Senior Olivia Bradley also stepped up offensively with 21 kills and freshman Haley Cain added 18 in the five matches. Senior Ellie Katzer joined Dixon to lead the Lady Cats with eight aces, while junior Mikayla Quinn and freshman Riley Kallevig each had six aces.

Carson Buffington also ran the offense well as the Louisburg sophomore recorded 91 assists.

"It was good to see some different girls step up," Compliment said. "I thought Olivia did a nice job hitting the ball at times with Haley and that is what we need is to have a couple other girls step up. Riley did a great job in the back row for us defensively so there were a lot of positives."