

# Lady Cats down Ottawa to end regular season



Louisburg freshman Haley Cain splits a pair of Ottawa blockers for a kill Tuesday at Ottawa High School. Louisburg defeated Ottawa in three sets to win its regular season finale.

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OTTAWA – As far as records and standings go, Louisburg's match with Ottawa on Tuesday was essentially meaningless.

The Lady Cats already had the No. 2 seed in the substate tournament locked up and they didn't have much to gain in the Frontier League standings. However, this was more than just about seedings and records.

Coming off a 2-4 performance at the Emporia Invitational last Saturday, the Lady Cats needed to hit the reset button on their season. So far, so good.

Louisburg began its fresh start with something positive with a 25-21, 26-24 and 25-13 win over the Cyclones at Ottawa High School.

"We played pretty well," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "They really came out focused and ready to play. After the Emporia tournament, we talked a lot about how we have to approach every match with a level of intensity, focus and determination and we didn't have that Saturday. We just were going through the motions and this was different. They set

their tempo during warmups and that carried them into the game. They were determined to play well as a team.”

They did that as the Lady Cats (22-16) jumped out to a 7-3 lead in the first set behind four kills from sophomore Anna Dixon and an ace from sophomore Carson Buffington. Louisburg held a 20-13 before Ottawa went on a 7-1 run to get to within one point.

Junior Sophie McMullen helped Louisburg pull away as she recorded three kills and freshman Riley Kallevig added an ace to score the final four points and grab the first set.



**Junior Sophie McMullen sets up a teammate at the net for a kill Tuesday in Ottawa. McMullen led the Lady Cats with 20 kills on the night.**

In the second set, Louisburg once again jumped out to a big

16-8 advantage thanks to kills from senior Olivia Bradley, McMullen, Dixon and freshman Haley Cain. A tip from McMullen and an ace from Kallevig gave Louisburg a 22-15 lead, but the Cyclones came roaring back.

Ottawa went on a 7-0 run to tie the set at 22-all before Cain notched a kill to give the Lady Cats a one point lead. The Cyclones tied it up two more times before Dixon had back-to-back kills for the close 26-24 win.

"We definitely had to battle to win that one, so I was glad to see that determination to finish a match and not give up," Compliment said. "There were a couple times where we were playing a little tight and a little nervous and they just need to work on loosening up.

"We have been in a lot of close matches all season long. We fell short at the beginning of the season, but we have had some close ones lately that we have been able to pull out so that was good to see."

There wasn't as much drama in the third set as the Lady Cats jumped out to a 9-3 lead behind three kills and an ace each from McMullen and Dixon. McMullen then recorded two more kills and a block to put Louisburg on top 15-7 during a span in which senior Ellie Katzer served five straight points.

McMullen led the Louisburg offense with a team-high 20 kills, and also had 12 assists and two aces. Dixon added 18 kills and a team-high 20 digs. Kallevig had three aces to lead the Lady Cats along with 12 digs and Katzer recorded 13 digs.

Buffington also had a good night setting the ball with 23 assists and was also in double figures with 11 digs.

"Sophie had a good night," Compliment said. "All the girls defensively really played well too. I think that Ellie, being a senior, she has helped keep people calm back there. Carson and Sophie did a better job of moving the ball around more and

giving our hitters a chance. We were just more focused.”

Louisburg will see the same Ottawa team again Saturday when it hosts the Class 4A-Division I substate tournament. The Lady Cats, the No. 2 seed, will play No. 3 Ottawa (13-22) following the first match between No. 1 Paola (23-12) and No. 4 Fort Scott (12-22), which begins at 2 p.m.

The Lady Cats are vying for their fifth consecutive regional crown and another trip to the state tournament.

“They are excited,” Compliment said of her players. “There are still a lot of nerves but they are starting to get that mindset that they are ready to see what they can do.”