

Wildcats bounce back for fifth at Baldwin



Louisburg senior T.J. Dover goes up for a blocked shot against Bishop Ward during the consolation semifinals of the Baldwin Invitational on Friday at Baldwin High School. The Wildcats defeated Baldwin on Saturday for fifth-place.

BALDWIN CITY – Last year at this time, the Louisburg High School boys basketball team was entering the Baldwin Invitational Tournament on a high note with a 6-3 record and the Wildcats were feeling confident.

After it was over, the Wildcats walked away with three straight losses, which led to a long string of defeats to end the 2016 season. It was a pivotal point in their season.

“I think the boys remember that,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson. “As we entered the tourney last year, we had a decent record, but hadn’t played the same competition as this year going in. I feel like an improved early schedule really helped us mentally and also didn’t provide us with a ‘false sense’ of where we really were as a program.”

That improved schedule and better mentality left Louisburg with a better feeling after leaving Baldwin.

Despite losing the first game of the tournament, the Wildcats bounced back with two straight wins, including a 56-47 victory

over Baldwin in the fifth-place game Saturday at Baldwin High School.

Louisburg (5-6) used a big second half to overcome a halftime deficit and possibly played its best two quarters of the season according its coach.



Louisburg senior Jake Hill (right) battles for a rebound Friday at Baldwin High School.

"In my opinion, the second half of the game was some of the best basketball in my time here," Nelson said. "We were patient with the ball, picked the opportune moments to attack and did so with confidence and authority. Plus, we didn't settle for low percentage shots which further allowed us to pull away. Lastly, our defense was aggressive the entire game and we didn't allow many uncontested shots which prevented them from shooting a high percentage from deep."

The Wildcats have defeated the Bulldogs in two previous meetings this season, but each time Baldwin stayed in the game with its 3-point shooting. This time around, Louisburg held Baldwin to just 4 for 16 from 3-point range.

Senior Grant Harding also provided a bulk of the scoring punch for Louisburg as he finished with a game-high 24 points and gave the Wildcats a lift when they needed him. For his performance in the three games, Harding was also named to the all-tournament team.

Still, the Wildcats got production from up and down their lineup and fellow senior Sam Guetterman nearly had a double-double with 11 points and eight rebounds, while junior Dalton Ribordy had a team-high nine rebounds and senior T.J. Dover finished with eight points.

"As a group, we had a great tournament," Nelson said. "Offensively, we didn't force anything, moved the ball and didn't settle for contested, low percentage shots. When Grant was open, he shot, when a lane was available, he drove. Same thing with Jayce, Sammy, T.J., Dalton and others.

"Everybody knows Grant is our biggest offensive threat given his inside and outside ability and it was nice to see him take control when the chance presented itself, but just as important was how the others played to their strengths. If we can keep playing to our individual strengths in a team oriented manner, we can fulfill the potential our staff sees

in them.”

After an even first quarter, Baldwin took a 23-21 halftime lead, but the Wildcats came out strong in the second half as they outscored the Bulldogs 18-11 in the third quarter to pull away.

Louisburg has another busy week as it hosts De Soto in a makeup game Tuesday and will then host Spring Hill on Friday for homecoming. Both games will tipoff at 7:30 p.m.

LOU	11	10	18	17 –
56				
BAL	11	12	11	13 –
47				

LOUISBURG (5-6): Grant Harding 24, Sam Guetterman 11, T.J. Dover 7, Jayce Geiman 5, Dalton Ribordy 4, Desmond Doles 4. Totals: 20-43 13-24 56. 3-point field goals: 3, (Harding 3)

LOUISBURG ROLLS BISHOP WARD

Coming off a rough overtime loss earlier in the week to Wellsville, Louisburg had a chance to redeem itself Friday in the consolation finals against Bishop Ward.

The Wildcats took advantage of that opportunity as it rolled to a 45-24 win to advance to the fifth-place game.

Jayce Geiman and Grant Harding each led the Wildcats in scoring with 12 points each, while T.J. Dover finished with eight. Harding also had a team-high seven rebounds in the contest.

LOU	11	11	10	13 –
45				
BW	5	7	6	6
– 24				

LOUISBURG: Jayce Geiman 12, Grant Harding 12, T.J. Dover 8, Dalton Ribordy 6, Dalton Stone 3, Sam Guetterman 2, Alex Seuferling 2. Totals: 18-41 6-15 45. 3-point field goals: 3, (Geiman 2, Stone)