

Wildcats suffer OT loss in tourney opener



Louisburg senior Grant Harding drives to the basket Tuesday during the first round of the Baldwin Invitational Tournament at Baldwin High School. Harding scored a team-high 16 points in the 57-50 overtime loss.

BALDWIN CITY – All signs were pointing to a Louisburg victory in its first round contest Tuesday in the Baldwin Invitational.

The foreshadowing appeared in the form of a shot from Jayce Geiman. The Louisburg senior hit a game-tying 3-pointer at the buzzer to send the game with Wellsville into overtime and all the momentum swung over to the Wildcat bench.

That momentum quickly raced back to the other side of the floor.

Wellsville opened the extra period with a basket and the Wildcats were on the wrong end of two charging calls that took away possessions and they couldn't recover in a 57-50 loss.

"The guys couldn't have been more disappointed," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "Did they know that they didn't play their best game? Absolutely. Our on-ball defense was subpar, our help defense was abnormally weak and we missed a lot of

bunnies. They battled as best they could through it and for that, I'm proud. But that is a game we should have won."

Louisburg (3-6) had to battle back from a fourth quarter deficit to send the game to an extra period. The Wildcats were down five points with under five minutes remaining, but senior Sam Guetterman hit a jumper and a 3-pointer to cut the Eagle lead to one.

Fellow senior T.J. Dover responded to give the Wildcats a one-point lead with three minutes left in regulation and senior Grant Harding followed that up with a steal and a breakaway dunk to put Louisburg up three.

Wellsville answered back with a quick 6-0 run to take a 48-45 lead with 12 seconds left. The Wildcats got the ball back with one last chance and Geiman answered with a 3-pointer from several feet behind the 3-point line at the buzzer to tie it.



Senior Jayce Geiman connects on a 3-pointer at the buzzer Tuesday to send the Wildcats' game with Wellsville to overtime.

"Coach (Drew) Harding drew up a double screen for Grant curling off of it with Jayce as a secondary option," Nelson said. "Wellsville's defensive rotation was fantastic, and credit to Jayce for sliding until he found an opening. I felt

like that was great momentum going in to overtime, and was confident, but we picked up a few early fouls in overtime and it switched the momentum.”

That it did.

Wellsville scored a quick basket to take the lead in overtime, and as the Wildcats tried to answer on their next possession, were called for a charge – one of six for the game – and two in the overtime.

The charges gave the Eagles extra possessions and they took advantage either at the free throw line or at the basket.

“I’ve never seen a game where charges were so numerous,” Nelson said. “To their credit, the boys were never discouraged by the calls, and never voiced displeasure and I’m proud of them for that. I don’t necessarily think it took away from our aggression, but it did alter our play to where we were trying to avoid contact at all and consequently some of our shots were altered a bit.”

Both teams traded leads in the first half and the Wildcats had to rally from five points down in the second quarter and eventually took a one-point lead at halftime. Down 20-15 with three minutes left in the first half, junior Dalton Ribordy scored a basket and Geiman followed it up with five straight points, including a 3-pointer to tie the game with a minute remaining.



Junior Dalton Ribordy (right) gets on the floor for a loose ball Tuesday against Wellsville.

Guetterman added a free throw with one second left and the Wildcats had a 23-22 lead in the locker room at halftime.

Harding was one of two Wildcats in double figures as he led the way with 16 points and Geiman finished with 12. Ribordy and Dover each had five rebounds to lead Louisburg.

The Wildcats return to action Friday when they face off with Bishop Ward in the consolation semifinals. Bishop Ward fell to Bonner Springs in their contest, 63-20. Tipoff is set for 4 p.m.

Louisburg will either play Baldwin or Anderson County for fifth or seventh place Saturday.

"These next two games are most definitely important, but more important is what did we learn from Tuesday's game?" Nelson

said. "We are focused on improving and peaking for substate, and to that end, these upcoming games are quite important."

LOU		11	12	11
14	2	- 50		
WEL		9	13	13
13	9	- 57		

LOUISBURG (3-6): Grant Harding 16, Jayce Geiman 12, Sam Guetterman 8, T.J. Dover 6, Dalton Ribordy 6, Desmond Doles 2. Totals: 18-45 11-18 50. 3-point field goals: 4, (Geiman 2, Harding, Guetterman).