

# Zone defense keys Lady Cats win over De Soto



Louisburg's Emalee Overbay (left) and Paige Buffington battles for a rebound with a De Soto player Tuesday at De Soto High School. The Lady Cats rallied from behind for a 34-31 victory.

DE SOTO – For most of the first quarter, De Soto did whatever it wanted offensively against the Louisburg girls basketball team.

De Soto scored 13 points in the first five minutes, while the Lady Cats struggled to score. Louisburg decided to change to a 2-3 zone defense to help combat a De Soto lineup with three 6-foot players.

Not only did the zone work, it changed the entire game for the Lady Cats.

Louisburg overcome an early nine-point deficit to hold on for a 34-31 victory Tuesday at De Soto High School. The Lady Cats held De Soto to just eight points in the second and third quarters combined, which helped them get back into the game.

"It did slow them down," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said of the zone. "The girls really communicate in it and they don't let down when they play in a zone. They don't sit back in it and they are aggressive. It really helped a bunch there and

the kids did their jobs. When you are playing in a zone like that, each of those girls have to do their job and they have to do it with a lot of effort and heart. I thought they did that really well."

The win pushed the Lady Cats' record to 10-9 on the season and also cements their spot in the Frontier League. Louisburg will finish third place in league behind state-ranked Paola and Baldwin.

All this after coming off a year where they finished with just three wins.

"It was an ugly, scrappy, sloppy game on the road and it was an important league game for where we are going to finish out," Lowry said. "We were able to secure third place in the game, and the girls knew that going in and they wanted that. We knew it was going to be tough to come in here and play, especially with their size and some of the things they can do. Our kids just battled and they didn't quit, especially after De Soto got up on us early on. It was a good fight."



**Senior Chloe Renner puts up a runner in the lane Tuesday in De Soto.**

The Lady Cats put the effort on the defensive end when their shots weren't falling. Louisburg struggled to get into a rhythm offensively, with just 10 points in the first half, but were able to make several key baskets and free throws with the game on the line.

Down 15-10, Louisburg senior Paige Buffington opened the second half with a 3-pointer and then senior Madisen Simpson scored on a drive to the basket and was fouled. She converted the 3-point play with the free throw and gave Louisburg a 17-16 lead.

Freshman Haley Cain scored on a shot close to the basket after an assist from sophomore Kennia Hankinson to give Louisburg a

three-point advantage it wouldn't relinquish.

De Soto would tie the game late in the third, but Simpson knocked in a 3-pointer to give the Lady Cats a lead going into the fourth.

Louisburg did the job at the free-throw line in the fourth quarter as it knocked down 10 of 12 opportunities to help secure the win. However, that didn't mean there weren't some tense moments at the end of the game.

De Soto cut the lead to one with 20 seconds left off a steal, but Paige Buffington found her sister Carson on a fast break opportunity to for a score to push the lead back to three.

Louisburg gave De Soto one last opportunity as it turned the ball over on De Soto's end of the floor with two seconds left, but a De Soto 3-pointer fell short.

Despite the struggles offensively in which the Lady Cats didn't have a player score in double figures, they were able to rally together and get a key road win.

"If calls aren't going your way, or your shots aren't falling, it can get you down, but these girls move right on to the next play and it is something we have worked on since day one," Lowry said. "It is on to the next play and you can't let something shake or rattle you. They did that tonight. They are excited in that locker room right now because they did it together. There was no great standout performance, it was a team effort."

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with nine points and Paige Buffington added eight. Carson Buffington and senior Emalee Overbay each had six rebounds to lead Louisburg.

Louisburg will try to end its season on a strong note as the Lady Cats will host No. 6 Paola on senior night in their final regular season game. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>– 34</b>				
<b>DES</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>– 31</b>				

LOUISBURG (10-9): Madisen Simpson 9, Paige Buffington 8, Carson Buffington 6, Emalee Overbay 4, Tayler Lancaster 3, Haley Cain 2, Chloe Renner 2. Totals: 8 14-20 34. 3-point field goals: 4, (P. Buffington 2, Simpson, Lancaster)