

Lady Cats fall to Spring Hill in sub-state semis



Louisburg senior Tayler Lancaster knocks down a 3-pointer with 51 seconds left in the game to cut into the Spring Hill lead, but the Lady Cats fell 58-50 Friday in the Class 4A-Division I sub-state semifinals at Spring Hill High School.

SPRING HILL – The Louisburg girls basketball team did everything that was asked of it during the Class 4A-Division I sub-state basketball semifinal with Spring Hill.

The Lady Cats dove on the floor for loose balls, they battled for rebounds, showed hustle and came up with some big defensive stops. Despite all that, they were missing one key ingredient for a win.

Louisburg struggled offensively as it came up just short in a 58-50 loss to the Broncos on Friday at Spring Hill High School.

The loss ended the Lady Cats' season with a 10-11 record and tears filled the locker room following the game.

"Just walking out of there, I couldn't be more proud of those kids and I love all of them," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "Everything I talked to them before the game about what they needed to give, how they needed to play and how they

wanted to remember walking off this floor – they did it. I couldn't ask for any more than what they gave."

The Lady Cats shot just 32 percent from the field, but despite the missed shots, they were able to stay in the game thanks to hustle plays and they forced 13 Spring Hill turnovers.



Senior Paige Buffington drives around a pair of Spring Hill defenders Friday.

Spring Hill jumped to a 16-7 lead late in the first quarter, but senior Madisen Simpson knocked down a 3-pointer in the final seconds to cut into the Bronco lead.

Down 18-10 early in the second quarter, Louisburg went on a quick 8-0 run to tie the game after a basket from senior Paige Buffington and then sophomore Kennia Hankinson came off the bench to hit back-to-back 3-pointers.

The Broncos countered that with a 12-4 run of its own to take a 30-23 halftime lead and seven of those points came thanks to Spring Hill's Lauren Delker.

Still, the Lady Cats had another run in them as they used an 8-2 spurt in the third quarter to cut the Spring Hill lead to one. Senior Chloe Renner drove the lane for basket, Simpson hit a 3-pointer and Hankinson converted an old-fashioned 3-point play

Again, Spring Hill built its lead to nine points with five minutes left in the game, which made it difficult for Louisburg to come back from. Still, the Lady Cats gave it their best shot as senior Tayler Lancaster knocked down a 3-pointer with 51 seconds left to trim the lead to three, but they could get no closer.

"I never felt like it was too big of a deficit for us to fight back from but it was tough," Lowry said. "This group has battled all year though and have fought. It was probably a great game to watch in the stands, but again I am so proud of them."

Louisburg had three players score in double figures as Buffington, Lancaster and Hankinson each finished with 10 points in the loss, while Simpson added nine. Buffington also had three steals to lead Louisburg defensively.

The Lady Cats also got a big performance on the glass from sophomore Carson Buffington as she had a team-high 17 rebounds.



Louisburg senior Chloe Renner drives to the basket for two points Friday against Spring Hill.

Following the loss, realization began to set in for Simpson, Paige Buffington, Lancaster, Renner and Emalee Overbay as the five Lady Cats seniors had played their final game.

“I am so proud of the seniors and what they have given to our program,” Lowry said. “The things they did out there, battling through adversity, diving for loose balls and all those intangible things that they did. It is what gets to be passed on in the program. The young kids that were here watching or the ones on the bench, they get to come back next year and get to give what these guys gave.

“These seniors aren’t upset that they lost the game, they are upset because they don’t get to wear that Louisburg uniform

and play basketball next year. It will be sad to see them go.”

This season marked a successful one for the Lady Cats as they improved by seven wins off of last year’s three-win season, but it isn’t about the record for Lowry.

“It is about the process. For us, it is never about the results, it is about the process from start to finish. It is about the character things and core values and this group embodies that. They have done everything that has been asked of them and they have done it with great attitudes, they have done it with great leadership and great unselfishness. There is nothing more that you can ask out of young people.”

LOU	10	13	14	13 –
50				
SH	16	14	12	16
– 58				

LOUISBURG (10-11): Paige Buffington 10, Tayler Lancaster 10, Kennia Hankinson 10, Madisen Simpson 9, Carson Buffington 4, Chloe Renner 3, Isabelle Holtzen 2, Emalee Overbay 2. Totals: 17 11-22 50. 3-point field goals: 5, (Simpson 2, Hankinson 2, Lancaster)