

# Wildcats come up short in battle of ranked teams



Senior midfielder Madisen Simpson clears the ball away from the De Soto end of the field Tuesday at Louisburg High School. Louisburg, the No. 5 ranked team in Class 4-1A, fell 3-1 to De Soto, which is ranked No. 5 in Class 5A.

It may have been only the second game of the season for the Louisburg High School girls soccer team, but the Wildcats' matchup with De Soto was big in several ways.

Both squads came to Tuesday's game ranked No. 5 in the state in their respective divisions and are considered two of the top teams to contend for a Frontier League title. Throw in the fact it was Louisburg's home opener and the Wildcats had a lot on the line.

Instead, it was De Soto that came out on top with a 3-1 win over the Wildcats in what was a close match throughout. De Soto scored two second half goals that broke open a tie game – a game in which Louisburg took an early lead.

"I thought the game played out as expected," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We are coming off of spring break with limited practice and numbers. They had a week of practice and two games prior. Their fitness was better, but I felt we

played extremely competitive, especially for the first 25 minutes or so. I think we played extremely hard and with a lot of heart. It is frustrating playing the best team on our schedule coming out of spring break, but we will learn from it and get better.”

Louisburg (0-1-1) struggled offensively in its first game of the season, which in ended in a scoreless tie with Tonganoxie. It took the Wildcats less than a minute to find the back of the net against De Soto.

Freshman Mackenzie Scholtz played the ball to fellow freshman Trinity Moore, who dribbled down the right side and sent a shot over the head of the De Soto goalie that gave the Wildcats their first goal of the season 43 seconds into the game. In turn, it was also Moore’s first varsity goal.

“Scoring that early on them was fantastic, especially how frustrating the Tonganoxie game was,” Conley said. “I think they were shell shocked and it took them a while to regroup. It was very nice to have Trinity get her first goal against such a good side.”

With six minutes left in the first half, De Soto evened the score as Mackenzie Mohl sent a pass in the box and Tanith Beal knocked it past Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting.

A few minutes later, Louisburg had a good look that nearly gave it the lead back as a shot from freshman Avery O’Meara from 20 yards out sailed just above the crossbar.



**Wildcat freshman Hannah Straub heads the ball away from the De Soto attack Tuesday in Louisburg.**

De Soto took the ball right back down the field and with five seconds left before halftime, took a hard shot on goal but Whiting got the save and kept the match tied.

In the second half, De Soto was able to control possession and had several shots on goal. With 17 minutes remaining in the game, Jasmine Diaz got past the Wildcat defense and hit a soft

shot that got under the hands of Whiting and into the back of the net.

Then with two seconds left in the game, De Soto's Macey Harrington added another score to complete the two-goal win.

"De Soto is the best team on our schedule," Conley said. "Also knowing that fitness was going to also be an issue, we tried to conserve some energy. The game was very similar to the games last year though. We didn't mind allowing them to make touches side to side, but we did not want them to go to the middle of the field. I think we lived up to our motto 'Bend but don't break.' They are an incredibly talented team and I look for them to have a very, very successful season.

"The last two goals were not good goals at all. If the second one doesn't happen then the third doesn't happen. It was extremely surprising to see that type of shot go in on the second goal, but it is what it is. We had several opportunities to get some ourselves."

Louisburg will try for its first win of the season Thursday, but it will have to do it on the road when it travels to Sumner Academy. The varsity game is set for approximately 6 p.m.

Although Tuesday ended in a loss for the Wildcats, Conley liked what he saw from his team and their potential moving forward.

"I was extremely pleased with how our girls didn't quit or put their heads down," Conley said. "We kept fighting to the very end. I loved the amount of intensity that we played with and kept competing.

"This a great learning opportunity and we will get better. The goal I have for these ladies is we get better each and every day. Each game should be better than the prior game. We will rebound and be ready to play another 5A school Thursday."