

ALL THE WAY TO STATE: Lady Cats win sub-state title



The Louisburg High School volleyball team hoists the Class 4A-Division I sub-state volleyball championship plaque following the Lady Cats' 25-19 and 25-17 win over Spring Hill in the championship match.

PAOLA – The Louisburg volleyball team had been waiting for this moment for a year – a moment that couldn't come fast enough.

Following a home loss to Paola in the sub-state championship a year ago, the Lady Cats have used that defeat as fuel to come back this season even stronger and more poised to try and earn a berth in the Class 4A-Division I state tournament.

The wait is over.

Louisburg punched its ticket to the state tournament for second time in three years Saturday as the Lady Cats avenged their loss to Paola with a 2-0 win in the sub-state semifinals, and followed that up with a 2-0 win over Spring Hill in the championship match at Paola High School.

After it was complete, the Lady Cats stormed the floor and celebrated what they had been working all year for – a chance to compete for a state title.

“Wow, it feels pretty good,” senior Sophie McMullen said. “I

think the loss from last year really impacted this team a lot. We came to win and we were not going to take a loss.

“We were really focused on making sure we touched every single ball and stayed focused throughout the whole tournament and I think we did that. We came out ready to go. Our morning practice that we had went really well and we came here and got it done.”

Louisburg showed why it is considered the No. 3 team in Class 4A-Division I, as it put away both Spring Hill and Paola without much problem. All the motivation to get back to state, however, didn't hurt its cause.

“We all remember the feeling of losing to Paola last year,” junior Anna Dixon said. “After losing that match, we wanted to come out and play again, so it was good to be able to beat them this time and it is a great feeling to be able to go back to Salina. We have worked really hard to get here.”



Members of the Louisburg volleyball team are (front row,

from left) Riley Kallevig, Mikayla Quinn, Sophie McMullen, Ainsley Vance, Sarah Wilson, Riley Vohs; (back row) assistant coach Leanna Willer, head coach Jessica Compliment, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Haley Cain, Anna Dixon, Makenna Allen, Carson Buffington, Erin Lemke and assistant coach Mary Quinn.

To start their season, some of the Lady Cat players decided to create a slogan to help, not only build confidence, but set a standard for Lousiburg volleyball. 'Believe the Hype' has seemed to have done the job as the Lady Cats are currently 30-9 on the year and are playing some of their best volleyball at the right time.

"We were just lacking some confidence last year and we wanted to show the girls that this was Louisburg volleyball and that there is a tradition here," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "There is something to be said for wearing a Louisburg jersey, and that you are Louisburg volleyball and you need to wear it with pride. I think they just started believing it more."

The Lady Cats, who were the tournament's No. 1 seed, had a chance at the Panthers in the first round of action Saturday and were ready from the opening serve. Louisburg took down Paola 25-16 and 25-9.

McMullen opened the match with an ace and started a 7-1 run in the first set. Louisburg got contributions from all over the floor as it go kills from Dixon, McMullen and sophomore Haley Cain. Dixon led the way with 14 kills, McMullen had eight and Cain finished with four.

Louisburg also served up six aces, with three of those coming from McMullen, and the others coming from sophomores Riley Kallevig and Reilly Ratliff-Becher and junior Carson Buffington. It was Buffington who helped get the offense going with 25 assists.



Setter Carson Buffington passes it up to a teammate for a kill Saturday in Paola.

Defensively, McMullen had a team-high 10 digs and Kallevig, the team's libero, finished with nine. Cain led Louisburg with three blocks.

In the championship match, the Lady Cats made sure to finish their quest for a sub-state title as they downed Spring Hill 25-19 and 25-17 and it was their defense that helped them pull away.

Not only did Buffington lead the Louisburg offense with 21 assists, but she also led the Lady Cats with 11 digs as she found herself all over the floor.

"We played really well," Dixon said. "Our defense was awesome and I think Carson did great running the court. It was one of

the best games I have seen her play.

“She has gotten so much better as a setter. She has improved every single day at practice and she is always open for constructive criticism, whether it is from the coaches or the team. She has grown a lot as a player.”

This is Buffington’s first full year as a setter after sharing the duties with McMullen last season. Louisburg moved back to a 5-1 offense this year and it has paid dividends for Buffington.

“I really like it a lot more because I feel I can contribute a lot more to the team as a setter than a hitter,” Buffington said. “It is just so much fun. Setting for people like Anna and Sophie is the best thing ever.”

The win over Spring Hill wasn’t as easy as the final scores indicated. Louisburg found itself down 16-13 in the second set before the Lady Cats got a kill and an ace from Dixon and a block from McMullen to give Louisburg a 17-16 advantage.



Anna Dixon and Haley Cain team up for a block against Paola during the Class 4A-D1 sub-state tournament.

“Spring Hill did make a run in that second set, but I was so proud to see the girls rebound from that and stay aggressive,” Compliment said. “We made some huge defensive plays, both at the net and back row and the girls just played really well.”

Louisburg didn’t waste the opportunity as McMullen took over at the net. Five of the final eight Lady Cat points were on kills from McMullen, some of which were perfectly set up thanks to some bad Spring Hill passes.

“I am not going to lie,” McMullen said, “that was a lot of fun.”

Dixon led the Louisburg attack at the net with 13 kills and McMullen finished with 11 as the Spring Hill defense didn’t have an answer for the Louisburg duo.

After match point, the Lady Cat bench emptied as players rushed the floor to celebrate with their teammates. It was a feeling some of the Lady Cat players hadn't experienced before.



Sophie McMullen leaps into the arms of teammate Anna Dixon, while senior Mikayla Quinn and junior Riley Vohs celebrate alongside them Saturday.

“It is so surreal,” Kallevig said. “When it happened everyone just started cheering and jumping up and down. It felt so good. I am just excited for what state is going to hold for us because I think we have a really good chance if we all work really well together.”

As good as it felt for the Lady Cats players to earn a bid to the state tournament, they know they aren't satisfied with just going. They want something more.

“We want to keep our season going as long as possible and hopefully we can bring home a state title,” Dixon said. “There are a lot of tough teams, but hopefully we can pull it out.”

Louisburg will get a chance at that state title as it will begin pool play Friday in Salina. The Lady Cats are the No. 4 seed and will match up with No. 5 Basehor-Linwood at 8:30 a.m. They will then have matches against No. 8 Bishop Miege and No. 1 Rose Hill later in the day as the top two in each pool will advance to the semifinals on Saturday.

KSHSAA
CLASS 4A DI STATE VOLLEYBALL PAIRINGS
OCTOBER 27 & OCTOBER 28, 2017
SALINA, TONY'S PIZZA EVENTS CENTER

Friday, October 27-- Pool I (Top Bracket)

Seed 1: Rose Hill, 36-3
Seed 8: Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege, 10-26
Seed 4: Louisburg, 30-9
Seed 5: Basehor-Linwood, 24-14



COURT A

8:30 AM Louisburg (4) vs. Basehor-Linwood (5)
9:30 AM Rose Hill (1) vs. Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege (8)
10:30 AM Louisburg (4) vs. Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege (8)
11:30 AM Rose Hill (1) vs. Basehor-Linwood (5)
12:30 PM Basehor-Linwood (5) vs. Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege (8)
1:30 PM Rose Hill (1) vs. Louisburg (4)

Friday, October 27-- Pool II (Bottom Bracket)

Seed 2: Independence, 35-4
Seed 7: El Dorado, 20-19
Seed 3: Ulysses, 29-8
Seed 6: Wellington, 19-16

COURT B

8:30 AM Ulysses (3) vs. Wellington (6)
9:30 AM Independence (2) vs. El Dorado (7)
10:30 AM Ulysses (3) vs. El Dorado (7)
11:30 AM Independence (2) vs. Wellington (6)
12:30 PM Wellington (6) vs. El Dorado (7)
1:30 PM Independence (2) vs. Ulysses (3)

**ALL MATCHES WILL START NO SOONER THAN THE TIME LISTED
ON THE PRINTED SCHEDULE**

Saturday, October 28

*Saturday Bracket posted on KSHSAA website at the conclusion of pool play on Friday.
Saturday Semi-final matches will begin @10:00 am.
Consolation & Championship Matches will begin 15 min. after last semi-final match has concluded.*

“They want to do well and their expectation is to take state,” Compliment said. “They want to take care of business on Friday in pool play and put ourselves in a good position for Saturday. The girls have said that this is their time.

“We have fallen short a few times taking second, third and fourth down there, but at the same time this is a new group

that has a lot of energy and focus. We just want to go down there and take care of business.”