

Louisburg volleyball excited for challenge of state tournament



The euphoria of winning a sub-state championship last Saturday hasn't diminished much for the Louisburg High School volleyball team.

The Lady Cats are still riding high off earning their second state tournament bid in the last three years. However, don't confuse that with being satisfied – far from it.

Louisburg achieved its first goal of the season during last week's sub-state tournament, but there is a bigger goal that lies ahead. It is a goal they set for themselves at the beginning of the season – capture a state title.

"Our expectations is just to go win," Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen said. "Our first step was to obviously qualify for state. This year's expectation is we are just looking for that first place trophy."

The Lady Cats face a tough task if they want to win that final match of the Class 4A-D1 state tournament at the Tony's Pizza Events Center in Salina.

When the brackets were released, Louisburg (30-9) earned the No. 4 seed and was put in the same pool with the last two state champions in No. 1 Rose Hill and No. 8 Bishop Miege. Also included is No. 5 Basehor-Linwood, who Louisburg has seen

four times already this season.

"When the brackets came out, we were a little nervous at first," junior Anna Dixon said. "We have watched film on all three teams and we all decided that if we keep the same energy and effort that we had against teams like Paola and Olathe North, then we will be fine."

Louisburg will square off with Basehor-Linwood (24-14) in the first match of pool play at 8:30 a.m., on Friday and the Lady Cats are very familiar with the Bobcats as the two teams are 2-2 with each other on the season.

The players realize getting off to a good start will make things easier for them as the tournament progresses.

"We are excited to play them again," Dixon said. "The two games we lost against them I think we had zero effort and communication. If we improve on those two things, then I think we should be fine."

"The first game means a lot because you have to set the tone for the rest of the day. If you start off bad, it is hard to dig yourself out of hole in those next two games, so hopefully we come out with a bang in that first game."

The Lady Cats will meet Bishop Miege (10-26) at 10:30 a.m. in their second pool play match of the day. Miege won the state championship in 2015.

At 1:30 p.m., Louisburg will end pool play with a match against Rose Hill (36-3), which is the defending state champion. The top two teams in each pool will advance to the state semifinals at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

"They learned their lesson at our home tournament of what happens when you drop at least one set," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "You can go 2-1 and still not make it out of pool. Setting the tone for the day is going to be

important. We need to come out strong against Basehor and be ready to play. We need to play to win and compete.

“It is a tough pool and a tough draw, but at the same time it is going to be good competition. We are going to see Basehor first and we have seen them four times this season and that is going to be tough. We know them, they are familiar with us. With Bishop Miege and Rose Hill, you have two good teams that have been down to state numerous years, but this is a different year and we are a different team. It is just exciting to see what is going to happen when we meet up with those teams.”

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.*

Louisburg will enter the state tournament with an arsenal that is set up to make a run at a spot in the semifinals. The Lady Cats will feature two of the top outside hitters in the tournament in both Dixon and McMullen.

Dixon, who has committed to Kansas State, leads the team with 508 kills on the year and McMullen, who will play at Northwest Missouri State next season, has 310. McMullen, on the other hand, leads the team with 105 aces and 362 digs and both players have played in the state tournament before.

Although they know what the state experience is like, the rest of the team has yet to play in a state tournament game as Louisburg features four sophomores in Riley Kallevig, Haley Cain, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Erin Lemke who will all see playing time.

Setter Carson Buffington, along with seniors Mikayla Quinn, Sarah Wilson and Ainsley Vance will also see their first state tournament action. Quinn and Buffington suited up with the team two years ago when the Wildcats qualified in 2015.

"They are a little nervous, but I think they are excited for the experience," McMullen said of the underclassmen. "We have hyped the experience so much. The feeling of playing at state is just the best feeling that you could ever feel. They have finally realized that and they are ready to just go out there and play."



The Louisburg volleyball team hopes to be filled with excitement following the state tournament this weekend in Salina.

There are many players that have seen the past Louisburg teams play in the state environment and they are looking forward to being a part of it themselves.

“I watched from the sidelines and these role models of mine playing at state, and this is just a fulfilling experience for me because now I get to be in their shoes,” Quinn said. “Anna and Sophie have told me it is just indescribable playing at state. I am really looking forward to it.”

Louisburg is also looking to become the first girls team to win a state championship in school history, but the Lady Cats realize that nothing is going to come easy.

“I think they are aware of it, but it isn’t something we have

touched on,” Compliment said. “You don’t want to apply too much pressure. Making it to state is goal No. 1. We can’t focus on Saturday until we take care of Friday first. Our goal is to come out of pool play and have the opportunity to play for a championship on Saturday. We just try to take it one step at a time.

“The girls want to do well and they are capable of it. They have to work harder than the other team and stay focused and not let one bad play get in their head. I am excited to see how they perform.”