

# Louisburg girls basketball excited for upcoming season



Senior Isabelle Holtzen is one of three seniors for the Louisburg girls basketball team this season and one of just four returning varsity players from a season ago.

The Louisburg High School girls basketball team will have a little different look to it this season – and for good reason.

Louisburg had to say goodbye to five seniors, four of whom were starters, off a team that improved by seven wins last year and finished with a 10-11 record and a close defeat in the sub-state semifinals.

The loss of production will be a hurdle for the Lady Cats to overcome this season, but they are welcoming the challenge with open arms as head coach Shawn Lowry is excited about his group of players.

“With having new and young players that have limited experience in the program, and at this level, the players with experience will be asked to play different roles at different times and I expect there to be a learning curve,” Lowry said. “However, what’s great about this group is that they are making big improvements each day because of how hard they work, their passion for wanting to learn and their unselfishness to do what’s best for their team.”

Lack of varsity experience is something the Lady Cats will have to deal with from time to time during the season.

Junior forward Carson Buffington is the team's lone returning starter. Buffington is a two-time all-Frontier League player after earning honorable mention honors a season ago.

Buffington led the Frontier League with 11 rebounds a game to go along with six points and two steals a contest. Lowry is hoping Buffington can have an even bigger season this year, especially on the offensive end.



**Junior Carson Buffington is the lone returning starter for Louisburg, who led the Frontier League with 11 rebounds a game.**

Louisburg returns senior guards Isabelle Holtzen and Mikayla Quinn, who gave the Lady Cats minutes off the bench last season. Senior Bailey Belcher, who is in her first year with

the program, will also look to give the Lady Cats some help at the guard/forward spot.

“Isabelle and Mikayla have been in the program for all four years,” Lowry said. “They have both grown so much in that time and have really matured into good leaders. They embrace the process, they are great teammates and have a great deal of pride in their program.

“Bailey is a great fit and has already made an immediate impact to our team by her work ethic, toughness and athleticism. She is a great competitor and will continue to make big gains with each day.”

Buffington, Holtzen and Belcher will begin the season in the starting lineup and will provide the Lady Cats with a lot of quickness and athleticism.

Louisburg will also feature a new point guard in sophomore Carlee Gassman, who transferred in from Iowa this year. Gassman will be the floor general and will be joined by sophomore forward Haley Cain in the starting five. Cain saw some time off the bench last season as a freshman.

Quinn, along with sophomores Sydni Keagle, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and freshman Madilyn Melton, will also see time off the bench.

The new personnel will bring some changes to the Lady Cats’ offensive and defensive philosophy, but the attitude hasn’t changed.

“What’s been great about our program the last couple of years has been the growth and maturation in the leadership of our young players,” Lowry said. “We have several sophomores that came into this season much stronger, more confident and with much improved fundamentals because of their commitment.

“Although the mentality with how we want to play the game

doesn't change year to year, we will look to change up some things we do both offensively and defensively based on our personnel this year."

Like most seasons, Louisburg will be competing in a difficult Frontier League as it will face off with state-ranked teams such as Paola (Class 4A-DI, No. 5), Baldwin (4A-D2, No. 10) and De Soto (5A, No. 9). The Lady Cats will also see Burlington (4A-D2, No. 6) early in the year.

"The Frontier League will again have some of the very best teams in the state," Lowry said. "In addition to a very strong league, we will have the opportunity to play some very good and ranked teams in our non-conference and tournament schedule. With all this said, I trust in our players to compete with great effort and pride every time we take the floor."

Louisburg will open its season at home Friday when it hosts Pittsburg. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m., and the Lady Cats are ready to get the game started.

"The girls have worked hard in preparing for the upcoming season," Lowry said. "Our upperclassmen have helped foster an environment that is competitive and positive with their work ethic and attitudes.

"The girls are always anxious to start playing games after the preseason conditioning work and three weeks of practice."