

Lady Cats fall to back-to-back state-ranked teams



Louisburg junior Haley Cain puts up a shot in the lane Tuesday against Baldwin in the second round of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic at Baldwin High School. The Lady Cats fell 62-31 to the Bulldogs, who are ranked No. 5 in the state.

BALDWIN CITY – Not even a full week into the season, the Louisburg High School girls basketball team wrapped up what might be its toughest two games of the year.

After getting a season opening victory Friday against Pittsburg, the Lady Cats opened the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic with back-to-back games against a pair of state-ranked opponents.

On Monday, Louisburg faced off with Burlington, which is the No. 4 team in Class 4A-DII and then had to meet Baldwin, the No. 5 squad in 4A-DII, the following day.

For a team with just one returning starter from a year ago, it was a tall task for the Lady Cats as they fell to Burlington, 76-46, and then lost to Baldwin, 62-31, on Tuesday. Despite the setbacks, Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry believes his team can learn from this experience.

“I think it’s very beneficial for our young team to play some of these top caliber teams early in the season as we are

learning and growing,” Lowry said “It provides a great platform to develop the type of toughness we want to play with. I am confident this group of girls will continue to improve throughout the season as they gain experience and confidence.”

Against Burlington, the Lady Cats got a big game from their two team captains. Junior Carson Buffington recorded her second straight double-double with 16 points and 10 rebounds, to go along with four steals.

Senior Isabelle Holtzen also scored in double figures with 10 points to go along with seven assists and six rebounds. Freshman Madilyn Melton scored nine points and had five rebounds, while senior Bailey Belcher pulled down six boards.

Despite that, the Lady Cats just couldn't slow down Burlington as it scored 45 first half points on its way to a 45-21 halftime advantage.

It was the same type of start Tuesday against Baldwin. The Bulldogs used pressure defense and 3-point shooting to take a 36-17 lead at halftime. Baldwin hit 10 3-pointers on the night to pull away from the Lady Cats.

“Burlington and Baldwin are very good teams that are well deserving of their current state rankings,” Lowry said. “Both teams returned some very talented players from last year and are well coached. We expected these to be very competitive games and I was proud of how our girls responded.”

Holtzen and Buffington once again led the Lady Cats on both ends of the floor. Holtzen responded with a team-high 11 points, while Buffington added nine points and a team-high 18 rebounds.

Sophomore Haley Cain was also a factor on the glass for Louisburg as she was second on the team with 10 rebounds.

“Through these first few games, Carson and Isabelle have been great leaders and unselfish in their play,” Lowry said. “Haley, Bailey and Carlee (Gassman) have and continue to gain valuable experience and are getting more confident with each outing. We have some younger players that are beginning to see they can compete at this level and how they can contribute to the team’s success”

Louisburg will try and end the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic with a win Friday when it travels back to Baldwin for a matchup with Anderson County. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.

LOU	7	14	15	10 –
46				
BUR	22	23	15	16 –
76				

LOUISBURG (1-2): Carson Buffington 16, Isabelle Holtzen 10, Madilyn Melton 9, Carlee Gassman 5, Haley Cain 3, Bailey Belcher 2, Alyse Moore 1. Totals: 15-52 7-16 46. 3-point field goals: 3, (Buffington 2, Gassman)

LOU	8	9	8	6
– 31				
BAL	22	14	14	12 –
62				

LOUISBURG: Isabelle Holtzen 11, Carson Buffington 9, Bailey Belcher 5, Haley Cain 4. Totals: 10-45 7-18 31. 3-point field goals: 4, (Holtzen 2, Buffington, Belcher)