

Defense ignites Louisburg to win over Frontenac



Senior Isabelle Holtzen goes up for two of her 13 points during Tuesday's road contest at Frontenac High School. Holtzen and the Lady Cats forced 22 Frontenac turnovers en route to a 64-56 win.

FRONTENAC – The Louisburg girls basketball team picked the right time to have its best offensive game of the season when it hit the road Tuesday in Frontenac.

As good as the Lady Cats' offense was, their defense might have been even better.

Louisburg forced 22 turnovers on its way to a 64-56 victory over Frontenac and evened their record to 4-4 on the season. The Lady Cats used a lot of those turnovers and turned them into offense as they simply outran the Raiders to a win.

"We practice that way," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "After getting back off break and just getting back into the gym all together, the girls have practiced great. I expected that effort and toughness on the road against a really good team at their place and it is never easy to play down here."

The Lady Cats employed a frantic-style defense that allowed them to trap the Frontenac guards and it ended up forcing 19 steals. Those steals became points for Louisburg on the other

end as it held the lead for 29 of the game's 32 minutes.

Louisburg pushed the ball offensively for many of those 32 minutes and got easy transition baskets thanks to its frenetic pace.

"We did some different things defensively that we have been working on and that we have been putting in over break," Lowry said. "There is a lot of breakdown stuff that we have to clean up and fix, but overall I love the effort, the toughness and we have some athletic girls that can cover some ground. We have some freshmen that are still figuring some stuff out, but overall I was really happy with it.

"I thought we did a really good job of pushing the ball up the floor and we were the aggressor on defense for the most part. When we weren't, that is when they got back in the game a little bit and we have to stay the aggressor and use our speed and athleticism to our advantage."

It was a team effort as Louisburg had four players in double figures for the first time this season.

Junior Carson Buffington had a big night as she recorded a double-double with 12 points and 12 rebounds to go along with five steals. Senior guard Bailey Belcher led the Lady Cats in scoring with 14 points and also finished with six rebounds, four assists and three steals.

Isabelle Holtzen, another senior guard, was a catalyst on the defensive end for Louisburg as she joined Buffington with a team-high five steals. She also scored 13 points and added four rebounds and four assists.



Freshman Alyse Moore goes up for a layup Tuesday against Frontenac.

Sophomore Carlee Gassman gave the Lady Cats some big minutes as well with 12 points, seven rebounds and three steals. Sophomore Haley Cain added six points in the win, while freshman Alyse Moore finished with nine rebounds.

“(Frontenac) played a lot of zone against us, so our guards had to be solid,” Lowry said. “They were all good, and we do have some that are still learning, but they are learning from some great upperclassmen.”

The game didn’t get off to the start the Lady Cats had hoped as Frontenac scored the first five points of the game to take a quick lead, but the Louisburg defense quickly changed that around.

Louisburg went on a 15-3 run in which it didn’t allow a field

goal. Buffington hit two 3-pointers during the run and Melton got it started with a 3-pointer of her own. Gassman and Holtzen each added baskets to help give Louisburg a 19-13 lead going into the second quarter.

The Lady Cats built a 14-point lead midway through the second and eventually led 35-26 at halftime.

Frontenac made a mini-run to start the third quarter and trimmed the Lady Cat lead to five, but Louisburg went on a 9-2 run to end the frame and took back its 14-point advantage.

The Raiders were able to crawl back and get within four with two minutes left in the game, but the Lady Cats took advantage of their free-throw opportunities down the stretch to hold on.

“We weren’t very good that first three minutes of the third quarter, but with all that being said, they never got too low and they didn’t get too high either,” Lowry said. “They were level throughout and did the things that I was asked them to do.”

Louisburg will try for its second straight win Friday when it travels to De Soto. Varsity is set to tipoff at approximately 6 p.m.

LOU	19	16	15	14 –
64				
FRON	13	13	10	20 – 56

LOUISBURG (4-4): Bailey Belcher 14, Isabelle Holtzen 13, Carson Buffington 12, Carlee Gassman 12, Haley Cain 6, Alyse Moore 4, Madilyn Melton 3. Totals: 25-70 9-21 64. 3-point field goals: 5, (Buffington 2, Belcher, Gassman, Melton).