

Lady Cats salvage Top Gun tourney with blowout win



Louisburg sophomore Haley Cain gets on the floor for a loose ball during the Lady Cats seventh-place game against Anderson County Saturday in the Top Gun Tournament at Wellsville High School.

WELLSVILLE – It would have been easy for the Louisburg girls basketball team to just push its seventh-place game aside Saturday in what was an already tough Top Gun Tournament.

Earlier in the week, the Lady Cats had double-digit losses to state-ranked Piper and Frontier League foe Spring Hill, and they have a game with rival Paola looming on the horizon.

The Lady Cats placed all of that behind them and put together a strong performance Saturday to close out the Wellsville tournament. Louisburg took control of the game from the start against Anderson County and never looked back in a 51-22 victory to finish in seventh place.

“It was an awesome midseason tournament to play in,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “We talked before it started about the caliber of teams that we were going to go up against. It was great to watch some of them and it was great to play some of them.

“The girls could have come out flat in our last game, and have

not enough emotion, but they didn't. They played with a lot of toughness, effort, togetherness, unselfishness – just like they did the first two games. I was really proud of that.”

Louisburg came to life offensively in the second and third quarters as it scored a combined 35 points in the two frames to help pull away thanks to its defense.

The Lady Cats turned Anderson County over many different times during the contest, which led to easy transition points on the other end.

“If we can use some of our athleticism, we would like to,” Lowry said. “It worked for us this time. We have some things that we still need to work on.”

Senior guard Isabelle Holtzen led the Lady Cats in scoring with 12 points and fellow senior Bailey Belcher added 11 in the win. Buffington finished with nine points, including three 3-pointers, and ended the tournament with 27 rebounds in the three games.

Louisburg (5-8) already had control of the game with a 29-10 lead at halftime, but the Lady Cats all but sealed the win with a monstrous start to the second half. They opened the third quarter with a 14-0 run and ended their tournament on a solid note.

“We talked about those first couple minutes of the third quarter, and how important they are,” Lowry said. “Regardless of what is going on in the game score-wise, it seems like those first two or three minutes of the third quarter and so big in determining what is going to happen in that second half. They always respond well with that.”



Freshman Brooklyn Diederich passes off to a teammate Saturday. Diederich finished second in the tournament's free throw competition.

Following the tournament, two Lady Cat players also earned honors.

Freshman Brooklyn Diederich placed second in the tournament's free throw competition as she made 22 of 30 over three days, finishing just one behind Wellsville's Ally Newhouse.

Senior Mikayla Quinn was also named to the tournament's all-academic team.

For the first time in more than three weeks, the Lady Cats will return home tonight when it hosts Paola in a 6 p.m. tipoff. They will follow that up with another home game against Eudora on Friday for homecoming.

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LOUISBURG FALLS TO SPRING HILL, NO. 3 PIPER

In what could be called one of the tougher tournaments in the state, that features four state-ranked teams, Louisburg had its hands full from the opening game of the Top Gun Tournament.

The Lady Cats opened play against No. 3 Piper on Jan. 23 and couldn't keep up with the Pirates in a 72-41 loss.

Louisburg then had to square off with Spring Hill in the consolation semifinals Thursday, and despite keeping it close in the first half, came up short in a 65-40 defeat.

Against Spring Hill, the Lady Cats played the Broncos tough as they trailed just 27-17 at halftime before the Broncos opened the game up in the second half.

"It has been a process from the start and I think the first quarter or first half of the Spring Hill game really showed our development and the continued work that we are getting in with our kids," Lowry said. "They are learning, growing and getting better. Our younger players are stepping up and I

think that first half shows we aren't that far away come March, but we have a lot of work to do between now and then, but we are getting there.

"The first time we played them (a 30-point loss), it wasn't much as what they did to us as what we did to ourselves. I think that is part of a young, inexperienced team. The more experience we get, the better we are going to be and I think that showed in that first half."

Carson Buffington led the Lady Cats with 11 points, while freshman Madilyn Melton finished with seven and sophomore Haley Cain added six.

Piper also proved to be worthy of its ranking as it used a 26-point third quarter to help seal its win over Louisburg. Senior Isabelle Holtzen scored a team-high 13 points in the loss and Cain finished with nine.

LOU	13	4	12	11 –
40				
SH				
	65			

LOUISBURG: Carson Buffington 11, Madilyn Melton 7, Haley Cain 6, Alyse Moore 5, Brooklyn Diederich 3, Isabelle Holtzen 3, Sydni Keagle 3, Bailey Belcher 2. Totals: 14 9-16 40. 3-point field goals: 3, (Buffington 2, Diederich)

LOU	9	12	12	8 –
41				
PIP	19	16	26	11
– 72				

LOUISBURG: Isabelle Holtzen 13, Haley Cain 9, Carson Buffington 8, Bailey Belcher 5, Madilyn Melton 5, Alyse Moore. Totals: 10 17-22 41. 3-point field goals: 4, (Belcher, Buffington, Cain, Holtzen)