

Louisburg girls fall to No. 1 team in state



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher drives around a Baldwin player to the basket during Thursday home game against Baldwin. The Lady Cats fell to Baldwin, 72-42. Baldwin is currently ranked No. 1 in Class 4A-Division II.

In its first game back from the holiday break, Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry figured his team would have a little rust.

It certainly didn't help that the Lady Cats had to go up against the No. 1 team in Class 4A-Division II.

Louisburg hosted Baldwin on Thursday and the Bulldogs put up a performance worthy of their ranking as they handed Louisburg 72-42 loss.

"They are obviously a very good basketball team, and well-deserving of their ranking," Lowry said of Baldwin. "At the same time, we have to do more. We can do more and we are capable of that. We talked to the girls about what a great opportunity and challenge this was going to be for us. We also talked about playing through adversity against the No. 1 team in Division II. We are on a journey, and this is part of a process, and we are going to get better from this."

The two teams were in a close game midway through the first

quarter before Baldwin went on an 11-1 run to take a 25-12 lead going into the second quarter. The Bulldogs employed a full-court press against Louisburg and didn't allow the Lady Cats to get in a rhythm.

Baldwin eventually took a 49-22 lead at halftime, but Louisburg didn't back down and made a little run in the second half. The Lady Cats opened the third quarter on an 8-0 run to cut the lead down to 19, but couldn't get any closer.

"The start of the third quarter is one of the most important parts of the game," Lowry said. "I think the girls took to heart about what I said at halftime. I love seeing that from the girls, but at the same time, as the game went on we just got wore down and it is what it is."

Although the Lady Cats fell short, Lowry liked the effort he saw from his players. Senior Isabelle Holtzen and Madilyn Melton each finished with a team-high 11 points and senior Bailey Belcher added seven points and five rebounds.

Junior forward Carson Buffington also recorded six points and a team-high seven rebounds in the loss.

"It was the first game after break, so that added a little more difficulty to it," Lowry said. "Some of the individual effort was really good and I was extremely proud of some individuals. Collectively, though, we have to do more. I thought Isabelle, Carson, Bailey and Haley (Cain) gave every ounce they had. They never quit. Even with a minute left in the game, you saw players like Isabelle dive on the floor for loose balls and I was really glad to see that."



Louisburg freshman Madilyn Melton battles Baldwin's Reilly Stewart for position Thursday in Louisburg. Melton tied for a team-high 11 points.

Junior Kayla Kurtz led Baldwin in scoring with 20 points and senior Abby Ogle added 16 points in the win. Ogle also scored her 1,000th career point against Louisburg.

"She has been a really nice player since she was a freshman and it is finally nice now that she is a senior," Lowry said. "They have a lot of good upperclassmen and (Baldwin coach) Bob (Martin) and his crew and have done a really nice job and have for many years."

Louisburg will try and get back on track Tuesday when it travels to Frontenac. The Lady Cats will also hit the road later in the week when they go to De Soto on Friday.

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| LOU | 12 | 10 | 17 | 3 - |
| 42 | | | | |
| BAL | 25 | 24 | 18 | 5 - |
| 72 | | | | |

LOUISBURG (3-4): Isabelle Holtzen 11, Madilyn Melton 11, Bailey Belcher 7, Carson Buffington 6, Megan Foote 4, Haley Cain 2, Alyse Moore 1. Totals: 13-43 11-17 42. 3-point field goals: 5, (Melton 2, Belcher, Buffington, Holtzen).