

Lady Cats' rally not enough in loss to Spring Hill



Louisburg sophomore Carlee Gassman drives to the basket on a Spring Hill defender Friday during the Lady Cats' 61-45 loss to the Broncos. The Lady Cats return to action Wednesday when they host De Soto for Senior Night.

When Spring Hill knocked down a 3-pointer at the buzzer to end the first quarter, the Broncos built a 15-point lead on the Louisburg girls basketball team and the Lady Cats could have just played it out.

In two previous matchups earlier in the year, No. 10 Spring Hill ran away from Louisburg and it looked like déjà vu all over again.

Instead, the Lady Cats weren't about to let the same thing happen. Louisburg rallied to cut the Spring Hill to five at one point in the second half, before leaving with a 61-45 loss to the Broncos on Friday at Louisburg High School.

Despite the loss, Louisburg saw progress against a Spring Hill team that has all but locked up the No. 1 seed in the upcoming sub-state tournament.

"It was obviously an improvement from the first two times we played them," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I think it was a little sloppy for both teams, but there are things that

we are getting better at and are continuing to get better at. We just have to get back in the gym for practice and continue to get better. With this group, it is about how much we can improve this week coming up as we get ready for sub-state."

Louisburg (7-11) struggled early on as the Lady Cats couldn't stop Spring Hill from the perimeter. The Broncos knocked down four 3-pointers in the first quarter, that included the buzzer-beater that gave them a 21-6 lead going into the second.

The Lady Cats picked it up offensively as they outscored Spring Hill 14-9 before halftime and trailed just 30-20. Louisburg opened the third quarter on a quick 7-2 run that cut the Bronco lead to just five points with 5 minutes left in the period, but the Broncos fought back and extended their lead to 13 going into the final frame.

"The girls just fight," Lowry said. "They are scrappy and they battle. Sometimes it is ugly, but that is what we are and what we have been. Our girls are just going to fight their tails off and just like that we were back in it. But then comes the experience part that hurts when you overcome a big deficit and you have to try and keep it going. It was tough."



Sophomore Haley Cain weaves in-between two Spring Hill defenders Friday in Louisburg.

Spring Hill kept its double-digit lead throughout the fourth quarter and were able to hold off the Lady Cats' run.

Senior Isabelle Holtzen and freshman Madilyn Melton provided the scoring punch as they each scored 11 points and had five 3-pointers between them.

Junior Carson Buffington had eight points and a team-high 13 rebounds and freshman Alyse Moore was next on the team with seven rebounds off the bench. Senior Bailey Belcher provided the Lady Cats with a spark with six rebounds and four assists to go along with two steals.

Although the Lady Cats suffered the loss, Lowry is still happy with where his team is heading.

"We still had a lot of defensive breakdowns, but I see more

positives all the time,” Lowry said. “I saw it individually and collectively. When you see that, and then you see a girl like Bailey Belcher working her tail off on defense at the end of the game. She didn’t care that the game was basically over, she was going to work when the buzzer sounded. That is the mentality that we have to play with from start to finish and I think that this group will.”

Louisburg will play its final home game at 5:30 p.m., on Wednesday against De Soto on Senior Night. The game was originally scheduled for today, but had to be postponed due to inclement weather. Senior Night ceremonies will be immediately following the girls contest as they will honor seniors Isabelle Holtzen, Bailey Belcher and Mikayla Quinn.

“We are going to play our hearts out for our seniors,” Lowry said. “Then we go to Paola for their Senior Night, so we have a nice run coming up before sub-state begins. This will be an important week for us.”

LOU	6	14	12	13 –
45				
SH	21	9	15	16
– 61				

LOUISBURG (7-11): Isabelle Holtzen 11, Madilyn Melton 11, Carson Buffington 8, Haley Cain 6, Alyse Moore 3, Bailey Belcher 2, Carlee Gassman 2, Sydni Keagle. Totals: 18-48 4-10 45. 3-point field goals: 5, (Melton 3, Holtzen 2)