

Lady Cats ready to put in work during summer workouts



Louisburg sophomore Madilyn Melton works on her dribbling during a drill, while being guarded by junior teammate by Erin Lemke, during the team's camp earlier this month.

In what was a transition year that saw the inclusion of several young underclassmen to its lineup throughout the season, the Louisburg High School girls basketball team is still a little young and inexperienced.

After an 8-13 record a year ago, the Lady Cats had just two seniors – Carson Buffington and Kennia Hankinson – at their week-long team camp that ended on June 7. Despite the small senior class, there was still plenty of leadership to go around.

It was on full display during the team camp, not just at the high school level, but the Lady Cat players also showed it during the elementary and middle school camps as well.

“We had a very good week of camps at all levels,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “Our returning players did a great job of setting the tone for us with great energy, effort and leadership. I thought everyone did a good job of competing for everything and several girls have made big improvements in their development. I was impressed with the incoming freshmen group’s attitudes, athleticism and their willingness to learn

and compete.”

Lowry had 28 players attend his high school session, while he had 100 total girls attend the high school, middle school and elementary school camps.

Since they last left each other in early March after a sub-state tournament loss to rival Paola, the Lady Cats came back together in hopes of, not only improving their record, but making a longer run in the postseason tournament.



Louisburg head girls coach Shawn Lowry speaks to his team with new assistant coach Leanna Willer during the Lady Cat team camp earlier this month.

To do that, the players all had to get back on the same page, which is where the team camp comes into play.

“Team camp is primarily about the start of shaping our team’s

identity through our work and competition during the week,” Lowry said. “Throughout the week the girls learn about each other and they start to build trust in and respect for each other. It’s also about establishing a mentality within this group to compete and battle for everything.”

There will be enough competition to go around through the summer as the Lady Cats will compete in several summer league games and tournaments, not to mention the usual summer workouts.



Louisburg junior Sydni Keagle goes up for a basket during the Lady Cats' team camp.

“The girls have strength training and basketball open gyms three days a week,” Lowry said. “The girls understand the importance of their commitment to getting stronger and

improving their fundamental skills this offseason.

“We will be participating in several scrimmages with schools we don’t have on our schedule along with some of our league schools. In addition, we have or will be participating in several games played at one of the Missouri universities and in a local tournament.”

It is that work over the summer, along with what they learned last year, is what Lowry hopes can help his team take another step forward this coming season.

“We have several girls returning that gained some very good experience last season,” Lowry said. “As part of that experience they already know what kind of effort they have to give, what kind of teammate they have to be and they have a lot of confidence and trust in each other. We have some great upperclassmen that will provide our team with strong leadership and we really like how the girls are embracing the opportunities and challenges ahead of them.”