

Lady Cats rally to finish second at Lansing Invitational



Members of the Louisburg volleyball team (from left) Carleigh Pritchard, Carson Buffington, Anna Dixon, Rinny McMullen and Riley Kallevig celebrate a point Saturday during the Lansing Invitational.

It had been six years since the Louisburg High School volleyball team found itself in the championship match of the Lansing Invitational.

The tournament, which features several state-ranked teams every year, is always a test for the Lady Cats and this time around was no exception. If they wanted to get there this time, the Lady Cats had to get through three Class 5A teams, two of which were ranked.

Louisburg put together some of its best volleyball of the season when it needed it most.

The Lady Cats advanced to the championship match for the first time since 2012 as they knocked off No. 3 De Soto in the semifinals and faced Topeka Seaman in the title round. Louisburg ended up losing to Topeka Seaman in three sets, 22-25, 25-16 and 25-21.

Although the Lady Cats came up short of their ultimate goal, they still realized they play strong volleyball throughout the 10-hour tournament.

“It was great to see the girls get back into the championship game at such a tough tournament,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “We had opportunities to make some plays against Topeka Seaman and win it all, but we just didn’t capitalize on some plays when we needed to. The girls played really strong and really well. I was so proud of what they accomplished at Lansing.”

The Lady Cats had a good start to its day as they had four rounds of pool play. Louisburg opened with a rout of Piper (25-14, 25-5) to start the day and then won a tough match against Olathe West (28-26, 25-20).



Riley Kallevig goes up for a kill

Saturday in Lansing. Kallevig and the Lady Cats finished second overall during the tournament.

Louisburg then downed Shawnee Mission West (25-8, 25-14) to face Lansing, the No. 2-ranked team in Class 5A, for the right to finish first in the pool. Unfortunately, the Lady Cats struggled in their 25-16 and 25-10 loss to the Lions, but still advanced to the championship bracket.

That set up a rematch with De Soto in the semifinals, who the Lady Cats lost to just a week before.

De Soto came out strong in a 25-18 win in the first, but Louisburg rallied thanks to its defense as it came back to take the match 27-25 and 25-18 and beat the state's No. 3-ranked team in Class 5A.

"It is just big for them confidence-wise," Compliment said. "It was a match that they really wanted and it was one they were fired up for the whole time. It was huge the way that we rebounded. Our serve receive and our digging was great and defensively we were really getting after it.

"The girls made a lot of really good plays. All the hitters were stepping up as well, and it wasn't just one or two, everyone was stepping up and making plays when they needed to."

Junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher provided a defensive presence in the back row with 17 digs and senior outside hitter Anna Dixon was strong at the net with 17 kills in the match.



Junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher gets down on the floor for a dig Saturday at Lansing.

Freshmen setters Corinna McMullen and Davis Guetterman both ran the offense well with 15 and 14 assists, respectively. Senior Carson Buffington, juniors Haley Cain, Riley Kallevig and Erin Lemke, along with sophomore Carleigh Pritchard, all provided key kills throughout the match.

The Lady Cats used all that momentum into their championship match with Topeka Seaman as they took the first set, before falling in the final two.

"Topeka Seaman is a very good team and they seem to get better every time we see them," Compliment said. "Our girls played well together on Saturday and it was a long day. For the girls to have that much energy and drive at the end was good to see, but they were just pushing through at the end and we just made a few too many mistakes."

Dixon led the Lady Cats at the net once again as she finished with a team-high 61 kills over the six matches, while Cain was second on the team with 27. Buffington was next with 16, Lemke finished with 14, Kallevig had 13 and Pritchard ended up with 10.

Louisburg also served well at times as Guetterman led the Lady Cats with eight aces. Kallevig and Dixon had seven and six, respectively. McMullen had a big day setting with a team-high 78 assists and Guetterman finished with 56.

Defensively, Ratliff-Becher had a busy day with 43 digs and Dixon was second on the team with 33. Pritchard led Louisburg with six blocks.