

New defense helps Lady Cats rout Tongie in opener



Louisburg junior Sydni Keagle rips down a rebound Friday during the Lady Cats' season opener against Tonganoxie at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats rolled to a 58-26 win.

It was a new season for the Louisburg girls basketball team Friday when it opened at home against Tonganoxie, but the Lady Cats had a little different look to them.

Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry wanted to play to his team's strength and decided to employ a 1-3-1 defense to start the year. It would allow the longer, more athletic Lady Cats to cause more havoc.

It may have been just one game, but the new strategy worked like a charm.

The Lady Cats forced 25 turnovers and recorded 18 steals en route to a 58-26 victory over the Chieftains, in which Louisburg forced a running clock in the fourth quarter. It was the start to the season the Lady Cats were looking for.

"They are jacked up," Lowry said of his team. "After you go through three weeks of practice and the preseason conditioning that we had, just to get on the court and play in a game is great. Then to have a win on your home floor in the season opener is fantastic."

Offensively, Louisburg was able to feed off its defense as it used a 20-point third quarter to pull away from Tonganoxie as it got several baskets in transition. Defensively, the Lady Cats frustrated the Chieftains as they held them to just seven second half points.

“It is something we have worked on from the start of this season, but we did some stuff that I hadn’t really done before,” Lowry said of his defense. “For our first night out, I thought it went pretty good. There are a lot of things that we need to clean up, some rotation stuff that we need to work on, but all-in-all it was pretty good.

“All year long it is going to have to be that way for us. Our defense is going to have to set the tone every night out. Our effort, our hustle and our toughness is going to have to shine in every game for us to be successful.”



Sophomore Alyse Moore goes up for a basket and gets fouled Friday in Louisburg's season opener.

Several players shined for Louisburg on Friday as the Lady Cats had three finish in double figures. Sophomore Madilyn Melton had a strong start to her season as she finished with a game-high 20 points.

Forwards Carson Buffington and Alyse Moore also cracked double figure scoring, and were also problems for Tonganoxie on the defensive end. Buffington, a senior, finished with 13 points and a game-high nine rebounds. She also had six steals and a team-high five assists.

As for Moore, the Louisburg sophomore finished with a team-high seven steals to go along with her 13 points and was 4-for-4 from the field and 5-for-7 from the free-throw line. She also added three assists.

The Lady Cats also got help from players that were new to the varsity lineup, including junior Erin Lemke, who finished with seven points.

"We got a lot of opportunities off our motion stuff and it really got us some cleaner looks at the basket without having to create a lot of things on our own," Lowry said. "The girls did well with it. We do have some girls that are learning new positions, but I am so proud of those kids that have been junior varsity players for us and have developed and grown up. You have girls like Sydni Keagle, Erin Lemke and Alyse Moore who are playing a lot of varsity minutes and they did great."

Both teams struggled to get into a rhythm offensively early in the game, but the Lady Cats did get out to an 8-2 lead in the first quarter and eventually settled in and led 30-19 at halftime.

The second half was all Louisburg as it outscored Tonganoxie

20-6 in the third quarter to pull away, and it was all thanks to the Lady Cats' new defense.

"That is a good team over in that other locker room," Lowry said of Tonganoxie. "They have some really good seniors and some really good post players. In fairness to them, going into the first game of the season and going against a team you haven't seen before, was probably tough and they maybe weren't expecting that defense. If we played them next week and they knew what to expect, who knows what the outcome would be. But I thought our girls did a good job tonight."

Louisburg will try to make it back-to-back wins Tuesday when it hosts Burlington, which is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 3A. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

LOU	14	16	20	8 –
58				
TON	9	10	6	1 –
26				

LOUISBURG (1-0): Madilyn Melton 8-14 3-7 20; Carson Buffington 4-8 4-8 13; Alyse Moore 4-4 5-7 13; Erin Lemke 3-5 1-2 7; Haley Cain 1-3 0-2 2; Megan Foote 1-4 0-0 2; Aly Traffis 0-0 1-2 1. Totals: 21-42 14-28 58. 3-point field goals: 2, (Melton, Buffington)