

Lady Cats' rally comes up short against Paola



Louisburg sophomore Brooklyn Diederich pressures the ball during the second half of Tuesday's game at Paola. The Lady Cats fell in a close game, 56-54.

PAOLA – The Louisburg girls basketball team had a never-give-up attitude Tuesday when it hit the road to face off with rival Paola.

That attitude was never more evident than when the Lady Cats found themselves down 16 points early in the third quarter. Some teams might have given up at that point, but Louisburg reached down for something a little extra.

Louisburg rallied from that deficit to take a one-point late in the fourth quarter, but didn't have enough to hold on in its 56-54 loss to the Panthers – a game in which Louisburg outscored Paola by 10 in the second half.

"I am extremely proud of them," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "But we have talked about this for some time now that we have to play hard for the entire time. It can't just be when we

feel like we have to get back in it, we have to do that throughout the game and they are capable of doing it. With some of these young kids, I think we are hopeful that some of that is going to click for them, or at least we are hopeful that it will."

Defense played a vital part of the in the Lady Cats' rally as they employed a frantic press and an active zone defense that forced the Panthers into several turnovers – 23 for the game to be exact.

Louisburg (6-8) turned those mistakes into 14 points on the other end as they gradually crept back in the game. Sophomore Brooklyn Diederich led the charge defensively for Louisburg as she played at the top of zone and created a lot of havoc.

"We didn't scheme anything different, it was just an intensity level issue," Lowry said. "If they can play with that same intensity, then that defense can look that good all the time. I have to give Brooklyn Diederich a lot of credit. We put her up at the top and she really set the tone for us. I think other girls fed off of what she did and a lot of credit to her in that second half."

However, the downfall for the Lady Cats was at the free-throw line. Louisburg converted just 9 of 26 attempts, including several empty trips to the line late in the game.

Down two points, Louisburg missed six straight at one time in the final minute, but got the offensive rebound each time to give itself more chances.



The Louisburg bench including (from left) assistant Leanna Willer, head coach Shawn Lowry, Megan Foote and Kennia Hankinson celebrate a big play Tuesday in Paola.

“That is just heart,” Lowry said of the team’s offensive rebounds. “We have talked about how free throws will have a chance to win us a game and this was a great example of one. At the same time, it didn’t come down to just missing those free throws, it was everything we did up to that point. Even after missing those, we gave ourselves opportunity after opportunity to get right back in it.”

Sophomore Madilyn Melton once again led the Lady Cats in scoring with 20 points to go along with six rebounds

and four steals. Senior Kennia Hankinson had her best scoring game of the season as she finished with 14 points, including four 3-pointers.

Senior Carson Buffington had a team-high 10 rebounds to go along with seven points and sophomore Alyse Moore had eight points and three steals.

Louisburg trailed 32-20 at halftime and then saw its deficit expand to 16 a few minutes into the second half. The Lady Cats eventually cut the deficit to six on six straight points from Moore, then to start the fourth quarter, Hankinson scored five quick points to make it a two-point game before fouling out.

The Lady Cats eventually took a 46-45 lead on a 3-pointer from Diederich with 2 minutes and 50 seconds left in the game, before Paola ballooned its lead back to five at one point. Another basket by Moore with 48 seconds left cut the Paola lead to two, but the Lady Cats weren't able to cash in at the free-throw line and Paola was able to hold on.

Louisburg will try and get back on track today when it hosts Ottawa for homecoming. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

LOU	11	9	12	22 –
54				
PAO	15	17	8	16 –
56				

LOUISBURG (6-8): Madilyn Melton 7-19 5-12 20; Kennia Hankinson 5-8 0-0 14; Alyse Moore 4-6 0-6 8; Carson

Buffington 2-10 2-2 7; Brooklyn Diederich 1-4 0-0 3; Sydni Keagle 0-0 1-2 1; Megan Foote 0-3 1-2 1. Totals: 19-50 9-26 54. 3-point field goals: 7, (Hankinson 4, Buffington, Diederich, Melton)