

# Lady Cats fall to Andale in first game of state tourney



**Louisburg senior Karson Griggs tags out an Andale runner Thursday during the Class 4A state softball tournament in Salina.**

SALINA – The Louisburg softball team was still riding high into the state tournament after the Lady Cats’ regional championship victory a week earlier.

Louisburg’s only problem was the Lady Cats were the No. 8 seed going into tournament action and had to face off with No. 1 seed Andale/Garden Plain.

The Lady Cats had hoped to pull off another surprise after knocking off two higher seeds at regionals a week prior. Unfortunately, Andale used one big inning to pull away from Louisburg and handed the Lady Cats a 10-0 loss Thursday at the Bill Burke Complex in Salina.

Andale scored eight times in the third inning and the Wildcats were never able to catch up as the Indians eventually knocked Louisburg out of the state tournament with two runs in the sixth inning to complete the shutout.

“Andale is a team, where if you give them a little opening by making mistakes here and there,

they are going to make you pay for it and that is kind of what happened,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “We talk about winning as a team and losing as a team and these girls were so supportive of each other, even after we had a couple hiccups there.”



**Louisburg senior Madison Svoboda makes contact with a pitch Thursday in Salina.**

Louisburg got off to a good start in the top of the first inning to try and put some pressure on Andale after a single from Madison Svoboda and a walk from Molly Rison. The Lady Cats weren't able to get a hit to bring home a run, and as it turned out, that was their best chance to score.

Lady Cat starter Brooklyn

Diederich held Andale scoreless through the first two innings, but with one out and no one on in the third inning, Andale reached with nine straight batters and took an 8-0 lead

August Daniels and Mia Wilson came in for relief against Indians, and while Andale went scoreless the next two frames, it scored two more runs in the sixth to get the win. Andale went on to advance to the championship game, but it fell to Augusta, 5-2.

Alyse Moore and Svoboda had the lone hits for the Lady Cats, while Rison walked two times to lead the Louisburg offense.



**First baseman Molly Rison runs into foul territory to make a catch against Andale.**

“I think the most important thing for us was to come out early in the game and show them that we were not going to be intimidated and we were not going to back down,” Ozier said “That is exactly what we did. We made some nice plays and we had a chance to make some noise there in that first inning and just couldn’t get that hit to get it going.”

With the loss, Louisburg had to say goodbye to its three seniors in Karson Griggs, Rison and Svoboda. They helped give the Lady Cats (8-15) a memorable final run to its season that included their first regional championship since 2014.

“When they started off, Karson and Molly both started as freshmen and they didn’t know any different and didn’t know they were supposed to be anxious or nervous,” Ozier said. “They just always had that attitude. We got Maddie her sophomore year, and even though they were our underclassmen, they have led our team these last few years. They came out and played so hard, especially in that regional tournament and they didn’t want to go home.

“It was hard for them to address their teammates after this was over, but we issued a challenge to the underclassmen that this is a taste of what it is like and we were just so proud to represent our school and community.”



**Outfielder Paige Eccher runs into to make a catch Thursday during the state tournament in Salina.**

Although the Lady Cats' season ended with a loss, it was still a memorable run for Louisburg, and one many of the players won't soon forget after their wins in regionals against No. 2 seed Ottawa and No. 7 Chanute.

"I wish I could have predicted this," Ozier said. "To see these kids walk out there as one of the top eight teams in 4A is really just a great moment for us coaches. It was a great moment for me as well, going through some of the lean times, and we reached the goal that I had for this team. We have some degree of respect and credibility back, and that will be up to the younger kids to take that and run with it and keep it going."