

Lady Cats knock off Miego en route to sub-state championship



Louisburg senior Haley Cain holds up the Class 4A sub-state championship trophy and celebrates with her teammates following the Lady Cats' 2-0 win over Atchison in the championship match Saturday at Atchison High School. Louisburg also upset Bishop Miego in the sub-state semifinal match, 2-0.

ATCHISON – The sub-state semifinal game between Louisburg and Bishop Miego on Saturday had all the feels of a state tournament match.

Partially because a year ago, it was.

Louisburg met Miego in the state championship match only to see the Stags send the Lady Cats to a runner-up finish in two sets. Then three weeks ago the two teams met again, and like before, Miego dispatched of Louisburg in two sets.

However, Bishop Miego saw a different Louisburg team during the sub-state tournament at Atchison High School – one they didn't expect.

The Lady Cats came out on fire and never let up in a 25-18 and 25-22 win over Miego to end the Stags' season. It

marks the first time in at least 12 years, if not longer, that Miego will not be at the state tournament.

Since the state tournament began in 1971, Bishop Miego has made 39 state appearances during that time in either Class 5A or 4A and is the most in Kansas history.

“Our energy was going to be the difference in that match, so we knew we had to bring it,” Louisburg senior Erin Lemke said. “We knew we had the same skill set as Miego, but our energy was what was going to pull us through there in the end. To get there, we just had to believe in ourselves and work hard this past week to give us the confidence that we needed.”

However, even after pulling off a big revenge win that expended a lot of energy, the Lady Cats still had a sub-state championship match to play against No. 2 seed Atchison. The No. 7 seed Lady Cats took care of business as they won in straight sets, 25-12 and 25-15, at Atchison High School.

This will be the eighth time in 10 years that Louisburg has qualified for the state tournament, including three straight appearances. The Lady Cats have also finished second at state the last two seasons.

“I am super excited,” Louisburg senior Reilly Ratliff-Becher said. “We have worked so hard this past week in practice, especially coming off a bad tournament the week before. Our

mentality changed
and that was big for us.”



Sophomore setter Rinny McMullen sends the ball to the back corner for a point Saturday in Atchison.

Louisburg (21-15) came out with a purpose to open the tournament and put Bishop Miege in a hole early as the Lady Cats jumped out to a 14-5 lead in the first behind kills from junior Carleigh Pritchard, seniors Liz Jacobs, Lemke and junior Alyse Moore. Senior Haley Cain also provided two blocks during that span and the Lady Cats were off and running.

The Lady Cats went up 22-12 after sophomore setter Rinny McMullen sent the ball to the back

corner for a point
away from the Miego defense and they were able to close out
the set.

“They were amped up and ready to
play Miego,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “I think
with all the talk
with private schools against public schools, I think the girls
just said enough
is enough and we are going to do this. They realized it is
just a name on the
jersey and that they can beat them.”

In the second set, the two teams
were tied at 10-all before the Lady Cats went on a 7-0 run as
McMullen served
six straight points, including three aces, to put Louisburg up
17-10.

Miego cut the Lady Cat lead to
21-18 late, but kills from Pritchard and Lemke closed out the
25-22 victory and
put them in the sub-state championship.



Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment talks to her team during a timeout Saturday.

"I don't think Miego expected us to come out this way," Compliment said. "They saw us three weeks ago at the Ottawa tournament and went on an 11-0 run on us. I think our energy, our aggressive offense and our defense really was the difference. We had some amazing blocks up front and I think all our girls played great and I don't think Miego was expecting that."

"They are a good team and you have to respect good teams and the tradition they have. Both programs have that tradition of making it to state and doing well there and this

was a rematch of the state finals and it is odd that it is in the first round of sub-state. Now one of those teams that usually goes to state isn't going to be there and I told the girls that we don't want it to be us."

The Lady Cats had a balanced attack offensively as Pritchard, Jacobs and Lemke each had five kills to lead the way, while senior Riley Kallevig added four. McMullen also finished with a team-high four aces and had nine assists along with fellow setter Davis Guetterman.

Louisburg also stepped up on defense as Lemke, Pritchard, Cain and Kallevig each had a pair of blocks in the win. Kallevig also finished with a team-high eight digs, while Ratliff-Becher and McMullen both had five.

"I wasn't surprised because this summer we did amazing things like that and that is how it felt out there on the court," Cain said of the Miego win. "It seemed like we had been missing something lately and I think we brought it out for sub-state.

"I think we played amazing. We were all consistent and played so well and beating Miego is one of the best feelings I've had."

Louisburg finished the first match on a high, but the Lady Cats had to keep that momentum going against Atchison in the championship game.

McMullen helped the Lady Cats jump out to a 6-1 lead over Atchison in the first set thanks to three aces and they held the advantage throughout the set. Louisburg finished the first set on a 7-2 run thanks to a pair of kills from Moore and an ace from Chase Kallevig.



(From left), Riley Kallevig, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Haley Cain and Liz Jacobs celebrate a big point during the Lady Cats' win over Bishop Miege.

The Lady Cats picked up right where they left off in the second set as they opened on an 11-5 run after two aces from Chase Kallevig and kills from Moore, Riley Kallevig, Pritchard and Cain. Louisburg then took a 21-9 lead after a pair of kills from Cain and never looked back.

“When we play for each other is when we have our best outcome,” Lemke said. “We had to have same mentality that we had against Miego. We knew the skill level wasn’t exactly the same, but we knew we had to play the same way and we are able to go to state.”

Cain led the Lady Cats with eight kills in the championship match, while Moore finished with five and Pritchard added four. McMullen set up some of those kills with 10 assists and Guetterman added seven.

Serving was a strength for Louisburg as it recorded 10 aces, four of which came from Chase Kallevig.

McMullen recorded three aces and Ratliff-Becher had two.

Defensively, Ratliff-Becher had six digs to lead the Lady Cats and Riley Kallevig had five.



Sophomore Davis Guetterman sets up junior teammate Carleigh Pritchard for a kill Saturday in Atchison.

"Every year going to state is our goal, but every year you know that you can't take anything for granted and you can't expect that trip to state to happen," Compliment said. "Kudos to the girls because every year they have made the time in the offseason, they have come in during the summer and they have worked hard. We had kind of an up and down year, and I think some people thought that we weren't going to be as good this season.

"It says so much for the girls this year and I told them that they are capable of doing this

but they had to believe in themselves, put in the work and become a team. This whole season we have been struggling to find who the go-to person was going to be, and Anna (Dixon) was that person for us for the longest time, and I am proud of how they stepped up to play.”

Louisburg will now prepare for the Class 4A state tournament which begins Friday afternoon at Hutchinson Community College. The Lady Cats are the No. 8 seed and will open pool play at 4:30 p.m. against No. 1 Andale (35-2), and then follow up with matches against No. 4 Holton (24-11) and No. 5 Nickerson (27-13).



Members of the Louisburg sub-state championship volleyball team are (front row, from left) Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Sydni Keagle, Riley Kallevig, Haley Cain, Erin Lemke, Liz Jacobs;

(back row) assistant coach Kallie O'Keefe, head coach Jessica Compliment, Madi Quinn, Chase Kallevig, Carleigh Pritchard, Davis Guetterman, Rinny McMullen, Alyse Moore and assistant coach Leanna Willer.

No. 2 Independence (35-3), No. 3 Towanda-Circle (33-6), No. 6 Eudora (26-13) and No. 7 Topeka-Hayden (25-14) are in the other pool. The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the semifinals on Saturday.

After two runner-up finishes in as many years, the Lady Cats are ready to take that next step to the school's first state championship.

"Our mindset is to definitely go out there and win state," Ratliff-Becher said. "We have come up short the last two years and now it is time to win."