

Lady Cats finish fourth at Class 4A state tournament



Louisburg's Alyse Moore and Reilly Ratliff-Becher celebrate a big point Friday during the Class 4A state tournament in Hutchinson.

HUTCHINSON – The Louisburg volleyball team lost its final two matches of the season, but those setbacks didn't take away from what the Lady Cats accomplished last weekend during the Kansas Class 4A State Championships.

For the third straight season, the Lady Cats were among the last four teams playing and brought home a little hardware for their efforts. Louisburg took fourth overall after losing its third place match to Towanda-Circle, 2-1, on Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

"Every season our goal is to put ourselves in the best position to qualify for state and then to hopefully advance to bracket play on Saturday," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "Leading up to state, we talked about how nothing is guaranteed and in order to make it to bracket play on Saturday, we have to show up and play our best

from the first
whistle to the last whistle. If we play our game, then
hopefully the winning
will take care of itself and we'd advance.

"The eight teams at state this year were
all very talented. I was happy that we qualified for the
semifinals because
that put us one step closer to the championship. Even though
we didn't reach
the championship match and finished fourth, I was still very
proud of how the
team played throughout the tournament."

It appeared Louisburg was going to bring
home a third-place trophy as it jumped out to an early lead
against Circle. The
Lady Cats took the first set 25-19, and despite falling 21-25
in the second,
they held a 20-13 lead in the third.



Carleigh Pritchard (left) and Liz Jacobs go up for a block Friday in Hutchinson.

Circle battled back to tie the match at 23-all, but junior Alyse Moore registered a kill to give Louisburg match point. Instead, Circle won the last three points and took third place from Louisburg.

Moore and senior Haley Cain led Louisburg with eight kills each, while junior Carleigh Pritchard had six. Louisburg also served well as it recorded 13 aces in the match, including five from sophomore Rinny McMullen.

McMullen also shined defensively as she had a team-high 15 digs to go along with 18 assists. The Louisburg setter went

on to be named to the All-Tournament Team.

Pritchard led the Lady Cat defense at the net with four blocks, while senior Riley Kallevig and sophomore Chase Kallevig each had nine digs in the loss.

"We made some errors at the end of the third set that allowed Circle to gain some momentum and win," Compliment said. "It does go to show that you can't take any rally or play off because a good team will capitalize on those mistakes or 'off' rallies.

"I was still proud of how we finished our season. Placing fourth at state is still a great accomplishment. We talked as a team afterwards about the tradition of Louisburg volleyball and how they helped to create another great season. These players are great role models and have shown once again what can be accomplished with hard work and teamwork."



Sophomore Rinny McMullen goes up for a jump serve Friday. McMullen was later named to the state's all-tournament team.

On Friday, the Lady Cats were forced to battle their way through pool play. Louisburg opened with a 25-10 and 25-19 loss to No. 1 seed Andale.

The Lady Cats were able to keep their hopes of a state title alive with a 26-24, 23-25 and 25-20 win over Holton to even their record at 1-1 in pool play.

Seniors Liz Jacobs and Riley Kallevig led the way for the Lady Cats offensively as they had 13 and 11

kills,
respectively, while Moore was third on the team with six.
Sophomore setter
Davis Guetterman ran the offense with a team-high 22 assists
and McMullen had
13.

Defensively, Riley Kallevig led Louisburg
with 16 digs, while senior Reilly Ratliff-Becher had 12 and
Chase Kallevig
finished with 11.

Louisburg (23-18) faced an even tougher
test against No. 5 Nickerson as it lost the first set 19-25,
but rallied to
take the next two, 25-10 and 25-20, to earn a spot in the
state semifinals.

Riley Kallevig had eight kills to pace
the Lady Cat offense, while senior Erin Lemke, Cain and Moore
each finished
with five. McMullen and Chase Kallevig added four and two
aces, respectively.



Senior Sydni Keagle leaps in the air to celebrate a point Friday against Nickerson.

Ratliff-Becher had a big match in the back row for Louisburg as the senior libero led the way with 12 digs, while Riley Kallevig added seven.

“There were many times they could have given up on Friday during the Holton and Nickerson matches,” Compliment said. “Instead, they fought through and pulled out two wins to end pool play 2-1 and lock in our place in the semifinals. Every team we played at the state tournament showed up to play, which is the way it should be. We had some difficult times on Friday, but the team persevered.”

That set up a match with Topeka-Hayden in the semifinals on Saturday, and the Lady Cats couldn't get into a rhythm in their 25-14 and 25-18 loss to the eventual state champion.

The tournament also marked the end of the high school volleyball careers of six seniors as Haley Cain, Liz Jacobs, Riley Kallevig, Sydni Keagle, Erin Lemke and Reilly Ratliff-Becher all played their final match for the Lady Cats.



Senior Erin Lemke goes up for a kill Friday against Nickerson.

"These players are great role models and have shown once again what can be accomplished with hard work and teamwork,"

Compliment said. "The seniors have been a part of three state appearances and

three finishes in the top four. That is pretty cool.

“The seniors, and the rest of the players, weren’t ready for the season to be over. The season was a bit of a roller coaster, but I think they learned a lot throughout the season and grew as a team. These six seniors will be missed. They have been great role models over the past four years and I’m excited to see what their futures outside of Louisburg High School has in store for them.”