

Lady Cats fall to Paola in regular season finale



Sophomore Delaney Wright goes up for a shot against Paola during a game earlier this season. The Lady Cats fell to the Panthers on Friday, 46-35.

PAOLA – After losing in the final seconds last time it squared off with Paola, the Louisburg girls basketball team was hoping to return the favor when the Lady Cats traveled to Paola.

Unfortunately, a slow start cost the Lady Cats and they weren't able to recover in a 46-35 loss Friday to the Panthers and they ended their regular season with an 8-12 record. Despite a rough first quarter, Louisburg went on to outscore Paola in the next two frames as it continued to try and chip away at the lead.

"I feel like the girls played very hard, and they fought until the end," coach Leanna Willer said. "We were very proud of the team and how we battled. We never hung our heads or gave up whatsoever."

Paola jumped out to a big lead as it outscored Louisburg 15-5 in the opening quarter and the Lady Cats tried to battle back. Louisburg leaned on

junior Madilyn
Melton to help get them there.

Melton
scored a game-high 16 points to go along with six rebounds in
the loss,
including an 8-for-11 performance from the free-throw line.

Junior
Megan Foote had a team-high five steals to go along with five
rebounds and junior
Alyse Moore had a team-high eight boards. Another junior,
Brooklyn Diederich,
had a team-best four assists.

The
Lady Cat defense also improved in the second half as it held
Paola to 20 points
in the final two quarters. Trinity McDow led Paola in scoring
with 19 points
and Brayden Hanf also scored in double figures with 12.

“Without
that 10 point spread in the first quarter, we are looking at a
very different
ball game,” Willer said. “From that point on, we played pretty
much even with
them, and we actually won the second and third quarters. We
definitely saw a
lot of positives in that game.

“First
of all, I think Madilyn played a great game for us – she got
to the rim and the
free throw line, which is exactly what we needed from her. I
think our defense
stepped up in the second half and took them out of their
element. Delaney

Wright played a huge role in that as she guarded McDow and limited her touches in the second half. I also think we did a much better job moving the ball around on offense and being patient on that end of the floor. It took us a bit to settle into it, but once we did, we started getting the looks we wanted and creating more opportunities for success.”

Louisburg is hoping some of those positives carry over into the postseason. The Lady Cats, who are ranked No. 12 in the Class 4A East playoffs, will travel to No. 5 Baldwin tonight for the sub-state semifinals. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.

The winner of that game will play the winner of No. 4 Labette County and No. 13 Atchison on Friday evening for the sub-state championship.

“We are very excited heading into sub-state, and it’s always nice to start the postseason with a clean slate,” Willer said. ‘Wins, losses, record – none of that matters now. Each team comes in at 0-0 and anything can happen. We are geared up and ready to go for what will inevitably be a tough battle. It’s now or never.”

LOU	5	12	9	9 –
35				
PAO	15	11	8	12 –
46				

LOUISBURG (8-12): Madilyn Melton
4-10 8-11 16; Brooklyn Diederich 2-6 0-0 5; Delaney Wright 2-7
0-1 4; Alyse
Moore 1-6 1-6 3; Megan Foote 0-3 3-6 3; Brianne Kuhlman 1-1
0-0 2; Haley Cain
1-6 0-2 2. Totals: 11-39 12-26 35. 3-point field goals: 1,
(Diederich)