

Lady Cat volleyball hoping for return to state tourney



Louisburg senior Carleigh Pritchard is one of several returners who will help lead the Lady Cats for the 2020 season.

Louisburg volleyball has been a regular fixture on the state tournament stage as they have placed among the best teams in Class 4A the last three years and the Lady Cats' goal is no different for 2020.

After finishing second – twice – and fourth a year ago, Louisburg is ready to reload after losing six players to graduation, many of which played a big role in their state tournament run a year ago. Despite that, the Lady Cats have big expectations for themselves.

With all that, comes another hurdle – COVID-19. The disease limited summer workouts and have made practices a little different than in year's past in regards to social distancing.

While a state tournament is always the goal for Louisburg, it realizes this season may be different than others.

"As with every season, we are working to improve each day and week," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "Postseason and the opportunity to play at state is always a goal of ours, and we are still pushing toward that goal. This season our focus is to take it week by week and hopefully we'll be able to have a full season. Practices have been going well. The

girls are excited to be back at school and at practice.”

Louisburg will lean on its returning starters to help the Lady Cats through another difficult schedule and it begins with the two players who run the offense. Juniors Rinny McMullen and Davis Guetterman have shared the setting responsibilities the last two years and it won't change this season.



Setter Rinny McMullen, who was an all-state and all-league player a year ago, will run the Lady Cat offense along with fellow setter Davis Guetterman.

The all-Frontier League setters, however, will be asked to do a little more – including seeing some action on the front row.

“Davis and Rinny do such a good job of leading the team and they play so well together,” Compliment said. “They will still share the responsibility of leading the offense as setters, but we will be looking at them to contribute more as six

rotation players and hitting from the front row. They both bring a spark to the team that is needed at all times so having them on the court 100 percent of the time just makes sense. They have adapted to their new roles really well and are embracing the challenge of not only setting and running the offense, but the opportunity to hit and block at the net."

The Lady Cats will also return a pair of hitters that will help the attack at the net. Senior Carleigh Pritchard, who was a second-team All-Frontier League player last season with a team-high 232 kills, will start at middle hitter.

Senior Alyse Moore also saw varsity time last season and will contribute as an outside hitter. Louisburg will also look to sophomore Allie Kennedy to provide a spark as well, but Kennedy is currently recovering from an injury. Senior Alison Prettyman is also on the roster as an outside hitter.

"Alyse grew a lot last summer and season, and she carried the momentum and growth into this season," Compliment said. "She will be an offensive threat at the net and we'll be looking to her to have a big year. Carleigh also had a good season last year, and we'll be looking to her to help lead again. Allie Kennedy had a strong summer, and is currently recovering from an injury. Once she is healthy, she should also be a strong force at the net both offensively and defensively."

Defensively, junior Chase Kallevig returns to lead the Lady Cats as this is her third varsity season and will serve as the team's libero. Seniors Madi Quinn and Sydney Keaton also figure to see time on the back as well.



Junior Chase Kallevig will be the team's libero this season

"Chase is back and ready for her third year on varsity," Compliment said. "Her leadership and experience in the back row will be key this season. Sydney and Madi are both seniors who will see time defensively as well. They have both worked hard over the summer to improve their defensive play."

The Lady Cats will play a difficult schedule that currently has them playing several bigger schools and are playing in three tournaments. Those tournaments will be different as the Kansas State High School Activities Association recommended tournaments be changed to quads, which is what the Louisburg Invitational will look like.

Louisburg will also travel to Lansing and Ottawa for tournaments, but schedules for those have not been released at this point. The players also know that games could be changed at any given moment due to the spread of COVID-19.

"We are fortunate that we were able to start our season on time and that our schedule is currently full," Compliment said. "The players know not to take a single day for granted, and they need to enter each practice and match ready to leave it all on the court. This is another great group of athletes, and I'm fortunate to have quite a few returning and others ready to step up and play at the varsity level.

"I expect them to work hard, stay focused, and improve each day. We are still looking toward the end of the season, but just like every year, we know nothing will be handed to us and that we have to earn each win."

Louisburg will begin its season Tuesday at home when the Wildcats host Paola for Senior Night. Due to COVID-19, all Louisburg teams have moved up their Senior Night to their first home contest of the season.