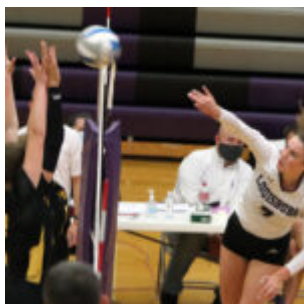


Lady Cats sweep Paola on Senior Night



Senior Carleigh Pritchard hits the ball past a pair of Paola blockers during Tuesday's season opener at Louisburg High School.

Tuesday's season opener was different in many ways for the Louisburg volleyball team.

Not only did the Lady Cats have to take all the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but they also wanted to make sure their five senior players and their manager were honored in the proper way. Normally scheduled for the final home game of the year, Louisburg conducted Senior Night in its opener instead.

Senior players Sydney Keaton, Alyse Moore, Carleigh Pritchard, Ali Prettyman and Madi Quinn, along with manager Wyatt Axmann, were recognized prior to their match with Paola at Louisburg High School and the Lady Cats made sure the Panthers didn't spoil their special evening.

Louisburg took control early in the match and never let up in the 25-12, 25-18 and 25-20 victory over the Panthers and got their season started with a victory.

"You always want to be able to honor those seniors and hope for that win," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "It was nice to see them to be able to be recognized and to get a win at the same time. They had fun out there and it was great

to see.

“Overall, I think they did a really good job. They played together well as a group. We didn’t have a lot of time over the summer. I think we only had five days of camp and two open gyms, where we are used to having like 20 days over the summer where we are doing things. For not having a lot of time, the way they have worked up to this point and how they came out against Paola, they played really well as a team. Even though we graduated a huge chunk of our team from last year, they still feel like a cohesive group and are starting to find that chemistry early.”

The Lady Cats (1-0) got out to an early 13-5 lead in the first set after a kill, block and an ace from Pritchard, along with kills from Moore, Davis Guetterman and Rinny McMullen. McMullen then finished the set as she served six straight points, including a pair of aces.



Louisburg senior Sydney Keaton keeps the volley alive Tuesday against Paola.

Louisburg had the same success in the second set to take a convincing 2-0 lead, but had a little trouble getting going in the third.

Paola jumped out to a 9-5 lead early on, but Louisburg rallied for six straight points, including three consecutive aces from junior Chase Kallevig. Guetterman provided two aces of her own late in the set, while Kallevig got two more aces as she served the final three points.

"The jitters and the nerves started to come in a little bit in the third set and we were making far too many errors on our side," Compliment said. "We just had too many mental mistakes. The one thing we did was serve aggressively and that really helped out. Chase had a big night serving back there as did Rinny and Davis. It was good to see them bounce back quickly and finish the set."



Sophomore Emma Prettyman and junior Davis Guetterman (4) go up for a block Tuesday against Paola.

McMullen and Guetterman, Louisburg's two setters, showed they

were more than that Tuesday as they assumed their new role of being a six-rotation player and led the Lady Cats running the offense, along with playing well at the net and with their serve receive.

Guetterman finished the night with 14 assists, five kills and four aces, while McMullen had 13 assists, three aces, four kills and a team-high seven digs.

“Those two are so much fun to have out on the court,” Compliment said. “I love how they play together and I love how they interact with their teammates. They read each other and they get along so well. The two of them running the offense together, it is just seamless. It doesn’t matter if it is Davis or if it is Rinny, it is like the two minds out there are one, especially with the way they interact with the hitters.

“Since we graduated a lot of hitters, we are going to need some people to step up and they were 100 percent on board with what we wanted them to do. It gives us some options on serve receive and they have both stepped up. They have loved that challenge and we need them both out there on the court to set the tone and be the leaders.”



The Lady Cats celebrate a big play during Louisburg's 3-0 sweep of Paola on Tuesday.

Kallevig also had a big night from behind the service line as she had a team-high seven aces and six digs.

Pritchard was a force at the net as she had a team-high 12 kills to go along with a block and an ace.

Louisburg will be back in action tonight when it travels to De Soto High School as it has a triangular with Notre Dame de Sion. Matches are set to begin at 5 p.m.