

Lady Cats left in all on the floor in loss to eventual state champ



Louisburg senior Carleigh Pritchard records a kill past a pair of Bishop Miege blockers during the Class 4A sub-state semifinal match at Eudora High School.

EUDORA – The 2020 season brought its fair share of challenges for the Louisburg volleyball team and did so before the season even got underway.

Every team was forced to deal with the COVID-19 precautions and had the idea that its season could end prematurely. Injuries then prevented the Lady Cats from playing with their full complement of players for most of the season.

“We battled more adversities this season than any other season over the past 15 years,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “Between the challenges of COVID and our injuries, we battled each day on court and in the gym and grew as a team – probably the most that I’ve ever seen a team do. Many of the players stepped up this season and filled roles they had never played before.”

Louisburg put together a 21-win regular season and had its eyes on another state tournament appearance. The Lady Cats had another obstacle to face to get there – Bishop Miege.

The Lady Cats, who were ranked No. 4 in the state going into

the Oct. 24 sub-state tournament, faced Bishop Miege, the No. 3 team in 4A, in the first round of sub-state for the second year in a row.

It may have been just the sub-state semifinals, but the two teams played to a state championship level. In the end, however, Miege had the answer as it defeated Louisburg 27-25 and 25-20 to end the Lady Cats' season with a 21-10 record.

"The girls were disappointed by the loss," Compliment said. "None of us were ready to see the season come to an end. Miege played really well. It is hard to beat a team that makes very few errors. I thought we played very well too. We left it all out there on the court, and it was one of our best matches this season."

Both sets went back-and-forth and neither team could pull away from the other.

The Stags jumped out to an early 9-6 advantage, but was able to rally and take a 13-12 advantage after kills from Alyse Moore, Rinny McMullen and Allie Kennedy. Juniors Chase Kallevig and Davis Guetterman each had an ace during that run.



Louisburg junior Davis Guetterman sets up a teammate against Bishop Miego.

It was tight the rest of the way, but the Lady Cats had match point following a block from Kennedy and a kill from senior Carleigh Pritchard to go up 25-24. Miego, however, would go on to take the final three points and win the set.

"We'll never know what could have happened if we had won that first set," Compliment said. "Volleyball is very much a game of momentum, and losing such a close first set does sting a little. We knew we'd have to come back out and start the second set strong if we wanted a chance to win that one and force a third set. Unfortunately, Miego never let up."

The second set actually started well as Louisburg jumped out to a 5-2 lead and led 13-12 following a kill and an ace from Moore. Kennedy and Pritchard each registered kills to stay up 15-14, but the Stags went on an 8-2 run that the Lady Cats

couldn't recover from.

Bishop Miege would go on to win the state championship over Andale last Friday in Hutchinson.

Louisburg played one of its best matches of the season defensively as the Lady Cats were constantly digging balls out of the net and diving on the floor to keep volleys alive. It was what they needed to do to stay with a powerful attacking Miege squad.



Junior Rinny McMullen dives on the floor to keep the ball in play during the sub-state semifinals.

Kallevig led Louisburg with eight digs on the day, while Guetterman finished with seven. Moore also added five digs and three blocks. Kennedy led Louisburg with five blocks, while McMullen, Guetterman and Pritchard had two each.

“Over the past few weeks, we talked about how important it was to go all out defensively and to not let a ball fall to the

ground untouched,” Compliment said. “The girls really embraced that challenge of leaving no ball untouched. Going up against a team that is very aggressive offensively, we knew we would need to step our defense up. I thought the players at the net did a great job of putting up some good blocks or at least getting a touch on the ball which helped slow it down.”

Offensively, the Lady Cats also played well as Guetterman led the Louisburg offensive with 10 assists and also had four aces in the two sets. McMullen added seven assists and three kills, while Pritchard had a team-high six kills and Kennedy finished with five.



The Lady Cats celebrate a big play against Bishop Miege at Eudora High School.

Despite the early ending, the Lady Cats had a successful season and one that brought many good memories along the way.

"We had a mixture of returning starters and players who had never suited up varsity before," Compliment said. "The way the players grew individually and as a team was amazing to watch. I was very proud of how this team handled everything this season. I've never had a season where the line-up changed every week. But due to injuries, we had a different line up almost weekly. They never skipped a beat though."