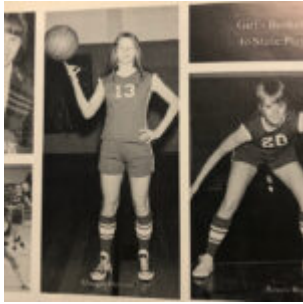


Despite being 47 years a part, 1974 and 2021 teams have one thing in common – chemistry



The 1974 Louisburg girls basketball team was the last team to make it state before this season. Pictured above from the 1974 team is coach Betty Walters, Rhonda Howard and Renea Brady.

This year's version of the Louisburg girls basketball team broke a 47-year drought last week when the Lady Cats captured a sub-state title.

It was a time of celebration and achievement as the Lady Cats finally made their way back to the state tournament. It caught the attention of many around town, including those who can relate to what those girls are feeling.

Members of the 1974 Louisburg team, which was the last team to qualify for state, know exactly what emotions they are going through right now.

"What I remember most about the honor of going to state and participating in the tournament was the camaraderie and fun we enjoyed together," Terry (Raney) Shockey said. "Win or lose we were truly a proud group of girls always supporting each other and each individual's skill for what they brought to the game."

"Looking back this time was integral in our greater life lesson of growing up and was the foundation to our close friendships that we still have and enjoy even today."

It is a strikingly similar description to the 2021 version of the Lady Cats. Throughout the season, they had each other backs and that helped them to just four losses on the season and a spot in the Class 4A state semifinals.

At one time, Louisburg was considered a regular at the state tournament.

The tournament, which started in 1973 for girls, was in its early stages when players like Sue (Truman) Apple, Rhonda (Howard) Kerr and Shockey made their debut and Louisburg qualified those first two years.

At that time, the opportunity for girls wasn't like what it is now. Treatment for girls sports didn't seem like a priority.



Terry Raney, Sharon O'Brien, Cindy Pfannes and Sue Truman all played major roles on the last Lady Cat team to qualify for

state.

The 1974 season was just the third year of girls organized sports in Louisburg.

Still, the chance to attend a state tournament was an honor for those Lady Cats 47 years ago.

In the postseason, the Lady Cats defeated Humboldt in the Class 2A sub-state finals, before falling to Centralia, 47-27, in the first round of state in Hays.

"We had a great work ethic and our team just seemed to gel," Kerr said. "We were all great friends and still are. We have gotten together pretty regular over the years. I remember leaving and having a great send off! Our community was so supportive and proud of us. We even had a full page ad in the paper supporting us."

Along with with those three, players like Renea (Brady) Hammett, Sharon (O'Brien) Brady, Debbie (Roberts) Stahl, Amy Qualizza, Therese Blanchon, Cindy (Pfannes) Laliberte and Eva Phillips helped the Lady Cats to a state appearance.

They were led by coach Betty Walters, who was in her first year of teaching at the time. Not only did she coach basketball, but she was also the school's lone coach in volleyball and girls track.

Walters did it all and found success in everything that she touched.

"Betty was a good coach and she worked us hard and got good results," Apple said. "She was just out of college, so we were her first coaching job. She was our one and only coach for volleyball, basketball, and track. She took us to state in all three sports."



The 1974 team poses with their postseason trophies.

Girls sports were obviously treated different back in the early 70s. The players wore the same uniform for volleyball, basketball and track and were forced to sacrifice for gym time, whether that meant practicing at 6 a.m. or waiting to practice at 7 at night to get access to a facility.

"We didn't have the support that the girls have now," Apple

said. "We had our parents and that was about all – no students, pep band or anything like that."

Girls basketball, and all sports in Louisburg, are drastically different 47 years later, but the thing that makes the 1974 and 2021 teams successful is still the same.

"I am so very proud and happy for this year's team accomplishments," Shockey said. "What I love about team sports is the very essence of what they stand for –a team. Players, coaches, parents and fans must be there for the winning combination."

The Lady Cats definitely have that winning combination this year as they are led by four seniors in Alyse Moore, Megan Foote, Brooklyn Diederich and Madilyn Melton. Throw in juniors Delaney Wright and Jordan Mynsted, Sierra Hahn and sophomores Brianne Kuhlman, Adyson Ross, Delanie Tally, Emma Prettyman and Emma Lohse and Louisburg has put together a team that made school history.

They also have a coach, in Adrienne Lane, who has helped the girls stay focused and in just her first year on the job.



Members of the Louisburg sub-state championship team are (front row, from left) manager Mackenzie Hill, Alyse Moore, Brooklyn Diederich, Megan Foote, Madilyn Melton and assistant coach Nick Chapman; (back row) head coach Adrienne Lane, Sierra Hahn, Jordan Mynsted, Delaney Wright, Emma Prettyman, Brianne Kuhlman, Emma Lohse, Adyson Ross, Delanie Tally and assistant coach Leanna Willer.

Even with all that success, it is the memories that will remain for all those players according to Kerr.

“Hearing another team qualified for state brought back a lot of great memories,” Kerr said. “I have not gotten to watch the current team much, but it sounds like they are a very strong. They are the best of the best and have represented Louisburg wonderfully. I am so proud of them and I wish them the best and to please enjoy the moment.

“I spoke with a couple of my teammates and we were reminiscing and each of them each said it was so much fun and an adventure. I love those girls and we are still great friends.”

As I'm sure this year's Lady Cats will be....some 47 years down the road.