

Lady Cats outlast Baldwin to win battle of state-ranked teams



Sophomore Hailey Sword (left) is congratulate by her teammates after coming through with an ace Tuesday during the Lady Cats' home match with Baldwin.

Tuesday's match between Louisburg and Baldwin had all the battles and emotions of two state-ranked teams going against each other.

That is because they were.

Going into the night, the Lady Cats held the No. 2 spot in Class 4A and Baldwin was No. 6. Since then, new rankings came out and Baldwin is now the No. 2 team in the state and Louisburg is No. 7 after a difficult previous week.

The Lady Cats protected their home court and did so in dramatic fashion as they held on for a 3-2 victory over the Bulldogs in what was a big league victory for Louisburg.

Louisburg won 18-25, 25-23, 25-18, 22-25 and 15-11 and handed Baldwin just its third loss on the season. It was an evening of spurts that led to a lot of tension-filled moments.

"Baldwin is definitely a really tough team and they have beaten some tough teams this year," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "They play with so much energy and we haven't

really seen that out of Baldwin. The first set was a tough loss and we just made too many errors. For them to bounce back was good to see and the girls starting taking more ownership of their jobs and their roles.”

The Lady Cats (15-6) had their back against the wall after losing that first set, but made several big plays down the stretch to win the next two and take a 2-1 advantage.



Senior Corinna McMullen sets up a teammate up at the net Tuesday against Baldwin.

Those emotions took a turn for the worst in the fourth set as Baldwin jumped out to a 10-1 lead and took all the momentum away from the Lady Cats. Louisburg didn't back down as they eventually battled back to tie the match at 21, before Baldwin went on a 4-1 run to end the set.

"In one of the timeouts I told the girls that we got to stop

having these emotional roller coasters,” Willer said. “We have to play with intensity and keep it level-headed. We wanted to capitalize on the runs that we do get and focus on playing good defense.

“That was a big hole to dig out of. It was an impressive feat to play that well to catch up, only to fall apart again late in the set. It was a game of streaks and that fourth set was the epitome of the whole night. The girls were able to figure it out and play well in the last set.”

Louisburg took an early lead in the fifth set and were able to hang on to take the match.



Senior Davis Guetterman runs down a ball in front of the Louisburg student section to keep it in play Tuesday against Baldwin.

It came down to a lot of defense for the Lady Cats as they

strung several good rallies together with diving plays from almost everyone on the court.

Senior libero Chase Kallevig was as big part of that as she led the Lady Cats with 27 digs. Senior Corinna McMullen had 18, while Aubryn Berck and Davis Guetterman had 15 and 13, respectively.

"We made some big plays, but I even think we could have made a few more," Willer said. "We were a little hesitant in some of those sets where we were down, and making some defensive errors we don't usually, but overall the defense did really well. Chase had a really great game for us and came up with a lot of big digs."

McMullen, who also finished the night with 18 assists, led the Lady Cats with 23 kills and also had two aces and two blocks.

Junior Claire Brown also had a big night at the net with 14 kills and Guetterman had 11. Guetterman also led Louisburg with 30 assists and had two aces as well.



Junior Claire Brown goes up for one of her 14 kills on Tuesday against Baldwin.

Sophomore Hailey Sword had a team-high three aces and the Lady Cats combined for 10 on the night. Junior Emma Prettyman had six kills and two blocks.

The Lady Cats also had to work around Baldwin's talented middle blocker, Fisayo Afonja. The sophomore finished with a team-high 13 kills and seven blocks.

"She is very athletic and can kind of jump crazy high," Willer said. "Her contact point is so much higher and she is a really good player. We got blocked so many times and I think we finally started to realize that we needed to hit around those. We made some good adjustments for sure."

It was also Breast Cancer Awareness Night and the two teams raised \$1,080 that will go directly to the Sarah Cannon Cancer

Center of Overland Park. Money was raised through T-Shirt sales and donations.

Louisburg will try for back-to-back league wins tonight when they travel to Tonganoxie.