

Lady Cats' rally falls short in home match with Spring Hill



Louisburg junior Allie Kennedy goes up for a kill during last Tuesday's home match against Spring Hill. Kennedy had to leave with an injury in the third set.

Already down two sets to the defending league champion, the Louisburg volleyball team got even worse news later on in Tuesday's league dual with Spring Hill.

Lady Cat starting middle blocker Allie Kennedy had to leave with an injury in the third set and the Lady Cats all of sudden found themselves with their backs against the wall.

Despite all the adversity, Louisburg found its way to claw back out. The Lady Cats used its defense to win the next two sets and force a deciding fifth.

Unfortunately, the Broncos made a few extra plays and handed Louisburg a 25-21, 25-17, 20-25, 26-28 and 15-11 loss at home.

"Words cannot express how proud I am of our team for the fight they put up against Spring Hill," Willer said. "If you saw me after the game, I was very emotional because of how much heart these girls played with – they truly left it all out on the floor.

"After being down 0-2, pushing to a fifth set is a feat within

itself, and we did that facing even more adversity after losing Allie in the middle of the third. Spring Hill is a great team and we had to fight to earn every single point. They were not going to go down easily, but we knew that we weren't going down without a fight either."



Senior Aubryn Berck dives on the floor to dig up a ball against Spring Hill.

The Lady Cats were able to get back in it thanks to its defense as they kept play after play alive with key digs and several blocks.

Seniors Chase Kallevig and Aubryn Berck provided a lot of that defense as the two tied for a team-high 21 digs, while fellow senior Corinna McMullen was second with 18.

Senior Davis Guetterman and junior Adyson Ross also had double-figure digs with 11.

"Our defense, as always, kept us in that match," Willer said. "We weren't getting big swings and powerful kills, but we kept the ball alive long enough to keep us in the match and eventually force Spring Hill to make some errors. Those four seniors go all out on defense and made some huge plays for us down the stretch. They all have such high volleyball IQs and read hitters very well. We are very lucky to have such awesome defenders."



Chase Kallevig returns a serve during Tuesday's home match against Spring Hill.

Nothing seemed to be going right for the Lady Cats (9-3) early on as Spring Hill took control early and jumped out to a 2-0 lead. Then with Kennedy's injury in the third, Willer had to make an emergency substitution as Ross replaced Kennedy in the middle.

The Lady Cats responded with a lot of fire as they went on to win the third and then take a very close fourth set, 28-26.

Louisburg got better swings later on in the match and got a team-high 11 kills from McMullen to go along with three blocks and 19 assists. Kennedy had nine kills in her limited playing time.

Junior Emma Prettyman stepped up with Kennedy down as she tallied eight kills and a team-high four blocks. Junior Claire Brown and sophomore Hailey Sword each had six kills and Sword also had two blocks.

Guetterman also had a strong day running the offense with a team-high 20 assists and also a team-high five aces.



Senior Davis Guetterman rises up for a kill Tuesday against Spring Hill.

"It looked a little bleak," Willer said. "Our serve and pass game wasn't very strong in the first set, and we were making a lot of errors. However, our team made the decision that we were pushing to go to four, then to five. As far as trying to regroup after Allie's injury, they didn't see much choice other than giving it their all and doing whatever they could to make the team successful."

"Girls were placed in positions they haven't really played before and they rose to the occasion just like I knew they would. We talked about having faith in each other and trusting that every single person out there is going to do their job and give everything they have for the people standing right beside them."

Louisburg, which went on to earn the No. 1 ranking in Class 4A later in the week, will try and bounce back today when the Lady Cats travel to Ottawa for a league dual.

"The girls were disappointed of course with the loss, but I think they were also very proud of themselves – which they should have been," Willer said. "We played some of our best volleyball that night and we saw things out of each and every one of them that has since raised the bar for the expectations they have of each other moving forward. We all know just how much each one of us can give, so giving anything less than that moving forward will be unacceptable."