

Lady Cats sweep Baldwin for special start to season



Louisburg coach Nick Chapman fires up his team after a big inning last Tuesday against Baldwin at Lewis-Young Park.

The 2022 campaign for the Louisburg softball team is already off to an electrifying start.

The Lady Cats competed in all phases of the game Tuesday in their home opener against Baldwin. Louisburg won by playing small ball in the first game in a 5-2 victory, but the Lady Cats showed a different side to themselves in the second.

Louisburg's bats came alive as the Lady Cats rolled the Bulldogs in the nightcap for a 12-3 victory to win their first two games of the season.

In just their first outing, the Lady Cats already eclipsed their one win from a season ago and it was a memorable start to their season.

"They had confidence in not only themselves, but each other, which is huge for our young team right now," Louisburg coach Nick Chapman said. "They need to believe in each other. They communicated and celebrated with each other. From the girls that started both games to the ones that pinch ran for us, they worked together to make it happen. Once we got through our lineup once and got that first at bat out of the way, they got going. We got down 1 kind of early and for 3 or 4 innings but again I saw the change in them. They never once hung their

heads. They worked through it and then we found our big two innings that helped seal the first win.

“Same thing in the second game, it just happened a little sooner. I think when Sabra (Brueggen) caught that last out in the first game, each of us took a big sigh of relief. Then we were able to play free in the second game. It felt good to me to win those two games but even more important is it allowed the girls to smile and have fun playing this game. It was just a fun night overall. We actually had fun in our team huddle at the end. I started a new tradition last year of giving out game balls after wins. Well I gave out twice as many out Tuesday night as I did all of last year and the girls laughed about it and you could tell there was a lightness that they finally felt and as a coach, that was really nice to see.”



Second baseman Ashley Moreau snags a ground ball and tags out a Baldwin runner.

In the first game, Louisburg found itself down 1-0 going into the bottom of the fifth inning. With two outs, Rylee Hickey worked a walk and then went to third on a bunt single from Sabra Brueggen.

Hickey went on to score on a passed ball and then Brueggen came around to score when Ashley Moreau reached on an error.

The Lady Cats (2-0) broke the game open in the sixth. Jenna Cauthon singled to open the inning and Izzy Moreland followed with a bunt single and Addy Stohs singled to center to load the bases.

Megan Quinn singled home pinch-runner Brooklyn Harmon and then Brueggen broke the game open when she doubled home Stohs and pinch-runner Sami Lane.

It was that "small-ball" mentality of moving runners that helped Louisburg persevere in that first game.

"The small stuff is what we are going to have to be good at," Chapman said. "The big inning doesn't always come from a home run or big hit. For our team, we are fast and sneaky, but also have some power. I have given the girls a lot of freedom to make things happen this year. With a young group, that could be dangerous but it could also create less stress for them. They utilized it well on Tuesday. If something didn't work out, we talked about and learned from it.

"Not only is this group athletically talented, they are smart girls. The softball IQ was very high on Tuesday and how they executed things without me saying anything. That's going to be huge for us if we continue to grow in that aspect."



Sophomore Izzy Moreland winds up for a pitch Tuesday against Baldwin at Lewis-Young Park.

Starter Mia Wilson kept the Lady Cats in the game as she allowed one run to go along with seven strikeouts, but had to work around six walks. Moreland came in for the final three innings and gave up just one run on one hit and struck out three.

After a strong performance from Quinn, who allowed just one earned run on four hits and struck out three in the nightcap, Moreland came in for the final three inning to close the door as she struck out six.

“Our pitching staff was incredible,” Chapman said. “Mia started and struck out the side in the first inning and set the tone for the night on the mound. She got in some trouble a couple times, but worked herself out of it. Megan started game 2, hit her spots and got girls to hit into our defense. Then

Izzy came in in both games and completely dominated to close out both. These three offer different things that batters were never able to get comfortable in the box. They were awesome.”

Louisburg was led by a pair of freshman hitters Tuesday. After Brueggen came through in the first game, it was Mackenzie Rooney’s turn in the second.

Rooney came up twice with the bases loaded, and cleared them both times with a double and triple to finish the night with a team-high 6 RBIs.



Freshman Addy Stohs cheers for her teammates after she scores a run in the first game of the doubleheader Tuesday against Baldwin.

“These two definitely came in clutch,” Chapman said. “Sabra was consistent at the plate all night and is the one that helped get that big inning going for us and led the charge as

freshman in that inning. Mack struggled in the first game at the plate, with her nerves, but did a lot of great things on the bases. Game two she finally found her bat. The first one is what sparked us and the second one sealed it for us. I'm so proud of these two along with the other freshmen who did a lot of the small things correctly that helped us get girls over and scored."

Baldwin once again got out to a 1-0 lead, but Louisburg scored three in the third, one in the fourth, four in the fifth and four more in the sixth.

Wilson led the team in hits with three, to go along with 2 RBIs. Moreau also had a pair of hits and 2 RBIs.

Brueggen also had a pair of singles, while Quinn had a two-run single of her own.

Louisburg will try to keep its winning ways going this Tuesday when it hosts Spring Hill for a doubleheader at Lewis-Young Park. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.