

Louisburg wins five straight to finish second at home tourney



The Louisburg volleyball team celebrates a big point against Shawnee Mission West on Saturday during the Louisburg Invitational.

After getting off to a rough start to its season, the Louisburg volleyball team needed something to go its way.

The Wildcats got just that Saturday at the Louisburg Invitational.

In a tournament in which Louisburg is the smallest school of seven, the Wildcats finished second overall with a 5-1 record on the day. Louisburg opened with a loss to Shawnee Mission East, but rallied to win five straight to secure the runner-up finish.

Louisburg improved its record to 10-10 on the season and has now won seven of its last eight matches.

“Saturday was a great day for our team, and it was important for us to finish strong after losing the first match of the day,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Between last Thursday and Saturday we felt a positive shift in team chemistry and we are really starting to play well together as a team. Our confidence is growing and I think that was evident in our play through a long day of six games.”

The Wildcats had to use a different tournament format than normal at the last minute and changed to a round-robin style. It didn't take long for them to get tested.

Louisburg squared off with eventual champion Shawnee Mission East in the first match of the day, and despite leading the first set late, fell 25-23 and 25-23.



Senior Allie Kennedy goes up for a block against Olathe North on Saturday during the team's home tournament.

The Wildcats were on the verge of their second loss against Shawnee Mission West. Louisburg won the first set 25-22, but lost the second 25-19.

In what was a back and forth third set, the Wildcats prevailed with a 27-25 win that ended on an ace by senior Adyson Ross. It was the first of many victories for Louisburg on the day.

"Yes, 1,000 percent that match was a turning point for us," Willer said. "We've been in so many close matches that go into extra sets and have been struggling to close them out, but we finished strong against Shawnee Mission West and that energy

carried us through the rest of the day.

“Ending in extra points is always very intense, but we didn’t shy away from the opportunities we were given. Finishing on an ace from Adyson was really just icing on the cake. She had a great tournament and for her to finish that match for our team that way was awesome.”

Louisburg didn’t lose a set the rest of match as it defeated Shawnee Mission South (25-12, 25-19), Olathe North (25-22, 25-14), Leavenworth (25-22, 25-21) and Basehor-Linwood (25-23, 25-18) in straight sets to get the second-place plaque.



Louisburg senior Emma Prettyman battles for the ball at the net Saturday against Shawnee Mission West.

It was a balanced effort throughout the day as several different players got attacks and blocks at the net, while others did the work on the defensive end.

Senior Claire Brown did the work on both ends as she led the Wildcats with 42 kills and was second on the team with 36 digs. Brown also had a team-high nine aces on a day where the

team had a total of 36.

Senior middle blocker Allie Kennedy was second on the team with 33 kills to go along with seven blocks and four aces. Senior middle Emma Prettyman had 17 kills and a team-high eight blocks.

Junior outside hitter Hailey Sword added 23 kills and was second on the team with eight aces, while junior Madelyn Williams had 15 kills, three aces and was second on the team with 41 digs.

Defensively, Ross led the back row from her libero spot as she tallied a team-best 50 digs to go along with six aces.



Louisburg senior libero Adyson Ross makes a pass Saturday. Ross led the team with 50 digs on the day.

Junior setter Megan Quinn also ran the offense well as she recorded 102 assists and also had six aces and 20 digs.

"I love looking back at our stats and seeing balance among all of our players," Willer said. "We play our best when we can evenly distribute the ball to all of our hitters and can trust any one of them to put it down. When we see close to an even number of kills and digs from all players across the board, it's easy to see that everyone contributed.

"When each player can step up at different moments, it relieves pressure on the individual because we can trust our teammates to help carry the load. We played some really great team volleyball."

Louisburg will try and keep its momentum going tonight as it travels to No. 3 ranked Baldwin for a Frontier League dual. The Wildcats will then return home Thursday for Senior Night against Tonganoxie.