

Bats heat up for Lady Cats in season opening split at Baldwin



Louisburg freshman Delaney Nelsen puts a ball in play for the Lady Cats on Tuesday during their season opener at Baldwin. The Lady Cats lost the first game of the doubleheader, before bouncing back to win the nightcap, 8-1.

BALDWIN CITY – It took a little while for the Louisburg bats to heat up, but once they did, they didn't stop producing.

The Lady Cats rallied for six straight runs in the opener Tuesday against Baldwin, but came up just short in an 8-7 loss in the first game of the doubleheader.

Louisburg stayed hot in the nightcap as it put together an early lead and never looked back for the 8-1 win to earn the split.

"I am incredibly proud of how we played all night," Louisburg coach Nick Chapman said. "Our first game, Baldwin hit the ball really well and they were stubborn at the plate all night. They hit it hard to places where we weren't. We got down and little by little we chipped away, but our rally just ran out of steam in that first game. It would have been easy for our girls to quit and move on to game two but they stuck with the process and showed a lot of maturity.

"In game two our bats came alive early and often and we didn't

look back. It is already apparent that our upperclassmen have matured immensely and I'm so proud of them. They kept encouraging our younger girls and helped them work through their nerves and we had some underclassmen step up big time."

In the second game, the Lady Cats got started early as they scored eight unanswered runs to take an 8-0 lead, going into the bottom of the six inning, before Baldwin ended the shutout with a run in the sixth.



Louisburg third baseman Jenna Cauthon runs up to try and throw a runner out Tuesday at Baldwin.

Junior Ashley Moreau had a big night at the plate as she tallied four hits to go along with a run batted in.

Another junior, Izzy Moreland, was also key the for the Lady Cats. She finished with two hits, including a double, and had 3 RBIs to go along with two walks.

Sophomore Brynley Bauer and freshman Delaney Nelsen also had two hits each, while Bauer drove home a run. Freshman Paytyn Van Tyle finished with 2 RBIs.

Junior Megan Quinn also had a double for Louisburg and junior

Jenna Cauthon scored a pair of runs.

"In between our games you could tell the girls weren't satisfied and they knew the adjustments we needed to make and they did it," Chapman said. "Izzy and Ashley both had great games at the plate; they both adjusted to sitting back and the softball and found barrels.

"We had a lot of other girls do great things on the bases and put some great bunts down to move baserunners. Jenna had a couple steals off being smart and recognizing the catcher's tendencies. Once we got through our first at bats of the season, we started finding our groove and then in game two we exploded."

The Lady Cats also got strong pitching from both Quinn and Moreland. Quinn started the game and went five innings, didn't give up a run and allowed just four hits.

Moreland finished the job as she pitched the final two innings of relief and gave up just one run on one hit and struck out two.

In the opener, Baldwin jumped out to an 8-1 lead into the top of the fifth inning before the Louisburg offense could find any rhythm.



Louisburg junior Ashley Moreau throws out a runner Tuesday at Baldwin.

The Lady Cats nearly pulled off a memorable comeback as they scored six runs in the final three innings, but couldn't secure the tying run.

Moreland once again led the Louisburg bats with a pair of hits and two runs batted in. In their first varsity games, sophomore Katie McKain and freshmen Shyloh Waite and Nelsen also contributed.

McKain and Waite each finished with a pair of hits and an RBI, while Nelsen had an RBI double.

Throughout the doubleheader, the Lady Cats had six players who saw varsity action for the first time, which included junior Olivia Fercho and freshman Raeya Keagle, who each got their first varsity hit as well.

"Our younger girls definitely stepped up and contributed," Chapman said. "Delaney Nelsen had a great night at the plate. Our overall defense was pretty solid for the most part. We committed three errors all night and they really didn't stand out as errors that hurt us really. I'm just proud of this

group and I'm excited where we go from here."

Louisburg is back at it today as it hosts Ottawa for a doubleheader at Lewis-Young Park. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.