

# Lady Cats' season comes to close with walk-off loss to Ottawa



***Louisburg junior Megan Quinn led the Lady Cats with 3 RBIs in their 7-6 loss Tuesday to Ottawa in the Class 4A regional semifinals.***

OTTAWA – Halfway through its regional semifinal game with Ottawa, the Louisburg softball team was right where it wanted to be.

The Lady Cats, the No. 13 seed, had a five run lead on No. 4 Ottawa and they were primed for an upset. However, Louisburg couldn't quite pull off the victory.

Ottawa scored a pair of runs in the bottom of the seventh inning to get the 7-6 walkoff win over Louisburg at Orlis Cox Sports Complex in Ottawa.

"We started the game the way we needed to in order to give ourselves a chance to win," Louisburg coach Nick Chapman said. "Ottawa is always a solid, fundamental team. Throughout the whole lineup, we executed so many things really well. Girls were not only laying bunts down when they were called, but placed them perfectly in order for the defense to have to make a play.

"Our base-running caused chaos for them. We had girls hit the ball hard. Our pitching was on point and our defense was

perfect for about five or six innings. We played really solid softball for most of the game. We made a couple errors at the wrong time.”

The Lady Cats jumped out to a big lead as they scored a pair of runs in the first inning. Junior Ashley Moreau scored on a steal of home to start the game and then Megan Quinn singled home Jenna Cauthon to make it a 2-0 contest.

Louisburg added two more runs in the third to make it a 4-0 game when Moreau scored on an Ottawa error, then Cauthon scored on a sacrifice by Quinn.

Olivia Fercho crossed home plate in the fifth on a sacrifice fly from Rylee Hickey to give the Lady Cats a 5-0 lead in the top of the fourth.

Ottawa started to chip away at the lead with two runs in the fourth, two in the fifth and another in the sixth to tie the game.

Louisburg took the lead right back in the top of the seventh. The Lady Cats had the bases loaded, and Quinn hit a sacrifice fly to score Moreau and the Lady Cats found themselves three outs away from a regional championship appearance.

“Right before we went to hit in the top of seventh, you could tell the girls were ready for the challenge,” Chapman said. “We got bases loaded quickly and were able to scratch one run with sac fly, but just couldn’t finish getting the others home. Ottawa threw a girl who slowed it down on us, and that has kind of been our weak spot – being able to adjust, sit back and wait on it to barrel up a ball.”

Ottawa led off the seventh with a triple by Brooklyn Hadl and scored on a single from the next batter. With one out, and runners on first and second, Ottawa hit a hard ground ball and the runner from third was able to score to seal the win for the Cyclones.

Moreau finished with three hits to lead the Lady Cat bats and also scored three times. Quinn had a team-high 3 RBIs, while junior Izzy Moreland had a pair of hits, including a double.

Moreland started the game for Louisburg and allowed three earned runs in five innings and struck out two.

The Lady Cats ended their season with a 7-14 record, but it was one that saw several positives despite their ups and downs.

“The girls wanted this one and you could see it on their face afterwards,” Chapman said. “I think as a softball culture, with club ball and all that, the emotions of losing a ball game are rarely there because there’s always ‘another game.’ For us, it hurt. That one was tough because you could tell how badly the girls wanted that game, especially with how we started.

“As tough as this one was to swallow, this loss gave our program hope because of how we played. We showed what we are capable of doing. We have a lot of potential and when we play up to it, these girls are capable of great things on the diamond. I’m excited for what is in store for Louisburg softball.”