

# Wildcats finish runner-up at home invitational



***Louisburg senior Hailey Sword goes up for a kill Saturday during the Louisburg Invitational. The Wildcats finished second at their home tournament with a 3-2 record.***

For the second straight season, the Louisburg volleyball team ended its home tournament with a souvenir of sorts – a team plaque.

After a day that featured five matches against bigger programs, Louisburg persevered through some injuries and lineup changes and it resulted in a runner-up finish Saturday in the Louisburg Invitational.

Louisburg ended the day with a 3-2 record that included wins over Shawnee Mission South, Shawnee Mission West and Basehor-Linwood. The Wildcats also lost a tough three-set match to Olathe North and fell in two to Shawnee Mission East.

“Finishing second on the day was great, especially with the level of competition that we bring in for our home tournament,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “None of those games are ever a guaranteed win, and the girls have to

battle all day long to maintain playing at a high level.

“Overall, I feel that we played well and rose to the occasion. Every now and then we see glimpses of our inconsistency, but I thought we did a good job of remaining calm and collected throughout the day and playing as a team.”

The Wildcats came out strong to start the day as they opened with a 26-24, 25-20 victory over Shawnee Mission South.

Senior Madie Williams led the attack at the net with 10 kills and senior Hailey Sword followed with seven. Setters Megan Quinn and Adelyn Moore each finished with double-digit assists with 11 and 10, respectively.

Defensively, sophomore Delaney Nelsen and Quinn each led the way with six digs. Junior Evyn Richardson tallied two blocks.



***Senior Megan Quinn sets up a teammate at the net Saturday at home.***

Against Shawnee Mission West, the Wildcats won going away with a 25-19 and 25-18 victory. Williams and sophomore Caileigh Kilgore were big at the net with six kills each.

Quinn finished with 11 assists to lead the Louisburg attack, while Sword was strong from behind the service line with four aces. Williams finished with a team-high six digs defensively, while senior Ashlyn Berck, Sword and Quinn each had four.

The Wildcats suffered their first setback of the day when they squared off with Olathe North in a 19-25, 25-20 and 25-17 loss to the Eagles.

Williams once again led the Louisburg offense with 10 kills and Sword finished with seven. Nelsen and Kilgore each added six in the loss.

Richardson led the Louisburg defense with four blocks, while sophomore McKenna Lohse – who is filling in for an injured Izzy Moreland – added three blocks along with Kilgore.



***Senior libero Ashlyn Berck gets on the floor for a dig Saturday.***

Moore led Louisburg with 16 assists in the match and Quinn tallied 12, while Berck and Williams led the Wildcat back row with nine digs each.

Louisburg got back on the right track in its next match as it downed Basehor-Linwood, 25-18 and 25-22.

Sword and Williams paced the Louisburg offense with eight kills each and Lohse finished with five from her middle blocker spot. Quinn and Moore ran the offense well with 14 and 10 assists, respectively.

Defensively, Berck and Sword each led the way with six digs and senior Katie Elpers had a team-high two blocks.

Due to previous injuries, and ones sustained in the



tournament, Willer had to rearrange her lineup at different times and was pleased to see her team still play well despite the different faces.

“Switching the lineup around is always an added challenge, but the girls have done a really great job of being willing to fill whatever role is needed to help the team,” Willer said. “We’ve moved some girls around to try to balance out our crew both offensively and defensively, and they’ve adjusted really nicely. Both Megan and Adelyn have worked hard to form connections with all of our hitters, so it’s great to be able to shift people into different positions and still get solid offensive results.”

In the final game of the round-robin tournament, the Wildcats squared off with Shawnee Mission East in what ended up being the championship match. Unfortunately, the Wildcats couldn’t keep up with the Lancers in the 25-15 and 26-24 loss.



***Members of the Louisville volleyball team that finished second***

***on Saturday are (front row, from left): Adelyn Moore, Aspen Coulter, Ashlyn Berck, Caileigh Kilgore, Madie Williams, Katie Elpers, Izzy Moreland, Delaney Nelsen, Hailey Sword, Evyn Richardson, McKenna Lohse and Megan Quinn.***

"I was proud to see us battle in the second set," Willer said. "East sort of let us have it in the first set, and after a long day of volleyball, I was glad to see us fight harder in the second set. Although we fell a little short in the end, we felt proud of leaving it all out there on the floor."

Louisburg (13-8) will be back in action tonight as the Wildcats host rival Paola in a Frontier League matchup. Varsity is set to begin at 6:30 p.m.

## **Wildcats sweep home triangular**

Coming off a league loss to Eudora earlier in the week, the Wildcats got back on the winning track Thursday in their home triangular.

Louisburg opened with a 2-1 win over Girard, before sweeping Fort Scott 2-0.

"I am proud that we were able to bounce back to get two wins," Willer said. "After the Eudora match, everyone came into Wednesday's practice on a mission, knowing that we had some aspects of our game that we definitely wanted to work on and make adjustments to. It was great to see them work implementing those things."

The Wildcats faced a little adversity against Girard. After Louisburg won the first set 25-18, Girard responded to take the second 25-20. The Wildcats were able to respond with a 25-18 win in the third.

The injury bug also hit Louisburg during the match as the Wildcats lost middle Izzy Moreland with an ankle injury and they were already without senior outside hitter Madie Williams

who was battling a knee injury.

Willer brought in sophomore McKenna Lohse to fill in and was pleased to see her play well in Moreland's absence.

"Unfortunately we have been hit with an injury bug lately, and losing Izzy in the middle of the match was a huge bummer for the team as she's been solid for us this year," Willer said. "I think it took us a little bit to get out of the shock and panic of the moment, but then we were able to regroup and continue on. It was also great to have Kenna be able to step up into this role with no hesitation, especially when it happened so suddenly. She did a great job."

Louisburg was solid from behind the service line in the two matches as it combined for 11 aces, including four each from Ashlyn Berck and Delaney Nelsen.

Sophomore Caileigh Kilgore led the Wildcats with 16 kills on the night and senior Hailey Sword added 14. Senior Katie Elpers and Nelsen finished with 13 and 12, respectively.

Adelyn Moore added a team-high 32 assists to lead the Wildcat offense and senior Megan Quinn tallied 29.

Nelsen and Lohse led the defense as the net with four and three blocks, respectively. In the back row, Berck finished with a team-high 23 digs and Nelsen had 22.

"We saw a lot of positives throughout both matches, but I would say that the other sophomores were standouts to me," Willer said. "Caileigh had a big night finishing with 16 kills. She has established herself as someone we can rely on to put a ball down which is awesome. Delaney also stepped up in a big way as she filled Madie's 6 rotation position. She did a great job of being consistent in all aspects of the game."