

Lady Cats rally to win first game of season, tourney opener



Louisburg's (from left) Sabra Brueggen and Shylar Whiting come out to celebrate with Sami Lane following the Lady Cats' win over Northeast Kansas on Tuesday in the opener of the Louisburg Invitational.

As the Louisburg coaches walked into the locker room following Tuesday's opening round game of the Louisburg Invitational, the sounds that emitted from beyond the walls were something they haven't heard all season.

The joyous screams were that of elation, mixed with a little bit of relief.

Their losing streak was over.

Louisburg snapped an eight-game losing skid and picked up its first win of the season as the Lady Cats downed Northeast Kansas, 49-41, to get a victory in the first round of their home tournament.

"This was a really important win for us," Louisburg coach Adrienne Lane said. "I told them before the game that (Tuesday) was the night and we needed to get this. I really think that this will help us the rest of the week and even into the next week. Hopefully we can get some momentum going from this. We just really needed this so the girls know that they can do it and that we are good enough."

The Lady Cats entered the 23-24 season with little to no varsity experience and were thrown into the fire of what was mostly a difficult Frontier League schedule.

Louisburg got that first win over Northeast Kansas, a homeschool program based out of Topeka, and the Lady Cats had to overcome some obstacles along the way.



Louisburg junior Ashlyn Kuhlman scored a team-high 16 points Tuesday against Northeast Kansas.

The Lady Cats were down five points with four minutes to go, but they were able to flip a switch as they outscored the Nighthawks 18-5 in the fourth quarter to pull away for an eight-point victory.

"I told the girls that we need to play to win and not be scared with the ball," Lane said. "We came down and hit a 3, then hit a 2 and then Morgan (Latham) got fouled and hit a pair of free throws. It seemed like the girls took that to heart and did a good job of going to the basket when they were open.

Latham started the run by hitting 3 of 4 from the free-throw line, then Sami Lane hit a 3-pointer with two minutes remaining to give Louisburg a 40-39 lead.

The Nighthawks scored on a runner to take the lead back, but junior Ashlyn Kuhlman knocked down a runner to put Louisburg up on its next possession.

Northwest was then called for an intentional foul and sophomore Zyleigh Melton hit a free throw to put the Lady Cats up two. Kuhlman would go on to hit four straight free throws to put the Lady Cats up six.

Melton hit two more free throws late to seal the win for Louisburg.

"Those were awesome free throws," coach Lane said. "Mo started it, Zyleigh hit a couple and Ash hit four in a row. If we don't make those we don't win and that was a game changer for us. They seemed calm up there and those also helped us reset on defense as well."



Louisburg's Morgan Latham (front) and Zyleigh Melton go in for a rebound Tuesday at home.

Louisburg had three players score in double figures and it started with Kuhlman as she finished with a team-high 16 points to go along with four rebounds and two blocked shots.

Junior Shylar Whiting gave the Lady Cats a spark offensively, especially in the first half, with 11 points. Lane finished with 10 points to go along with four rebounds.

Latham finished with seven points, while sophomore McKenna Lohse had a team-high six rebounds. Junior Jillian Asher finished with five boards and Melton had a team-high three assists.

The Lady Cats will try for back-to-back wins tonight as they host Chanute in the second round of the Louisburg Invitational. Tipoff is set for 5:30 p.m.

Louisburg will end tournament play at 7 p.m. on Friday against Girard.

“Chanute will be a lot different because they like to play at a slower pace, and they will play a zone defense, so we will have to see how that goes,” coach Lane said. “I am glad that we got this one and hopefully it will carry into the final two games of the tournament.”

LOU 5 15 11 18 – 49

NEK 3 18 15 5 – 41

LOUISBURG (1-8): Ashlyn Kuhlman 5-11 4-4 16; Shylar Whiting 5-8 1-4 11; Sami Lane 3-8 2-2 10; Morgan Latham 2-4 3-4 7; Zyleigh Melton 0-1 3-4 3; Jillian Asher 0-5 2-2 2. Totals: 15-45 15-20 49. 3-point field goals: 4, (Kuhlman 2, Lane 2)