

Wildcats battle to take second place at home tourney



Louisburg senior Evyn Richardson sends a kill over the net Saturday during the Louisburg Invitational.

The Louisburg volleyball team put itself to the test Saturday during the Louisburg Invitational.

The Wildcats went up against five bigger schools during the round-robin tournament and finished with a 3-2 record. When it was all said and done, it was enough to garner themselves a runner-up trophy.

Louisburg earned victories over three Shawnee Mission schools – South, West and East – and suffered losses to eventual champion Olathe North and Basehor-Linwood. It was a strong

showing in what started a busy week for the Wildcats.

“We are very proud of our second place finish at our home tournament,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “It’s a tough tournament filled with all 5A and 6A schools aside from us, so we always know that it’s going to be a challenge going into it. Teams throughout the day did seem to be pretty evenly matched as many games went to three sets.

“Overall, Saturday was a good day for our team. It was a good test to see what we can do against tough competition all day long, and how we can bounce back from a rough game in the middle of the day. I think we had some good learning moments throughout the day and we learned more about each other as a team and how we respond in tough situations.”

All those evenly-matched teams provided some drama at the end as there was a 3-way tie for second place when it was all finished. Louisburg came out on top due to win percentage and head-to-head battles.



The Louisburg volleyball team took second at its home tournament. Pictured (front row, from left) is Aspen Coulter, Katie McKain, Ally Brown, Evyn Richardson, Jaden Bentz; (back row) Addi Mallett, Adelyn Moore, Stella Bohnenstiehl, Delaney Nelsen, McKenna Lohse, Rylee Telken, Caileigh Kilgore and coach Leanna Willer.

As it turned out, the Wildcats' victory over Shawnee Mission South proved to be its most important as South was one of the teams tied with Louisburg at the end of the day.

It was a rocky start for Louisburg as it lost the first set 21-25, but rebounded to win the second 25-18. The Wildcats put together a big rally in the third set and eventually held on for the 30-28 victory.

The Wildcats found themselves down 23-17 in the third set, but junior Delaney Nelsen served six straight points and recorded an ace in that stretch to tie it up at 23-all.

South had match point three different times after that, but

all three times junior Caileigh Kilgore staved off elimination with a kill. The Wildcats eventually held on for the victory and forced a couple South mistakes.

“The match against Shawnee Mission South proved to be one of the most exciting of the day as we went extra points in that final set,” Willer said. “ It did take us a little bit to wake up and get going in the morning, but having that high of an intensity level during the first match of the day was good for us moving forward, and we were able to carry that momentum into the game against Shawnee Mission West as well.”

Louisburg took care of business against Shawnee Mission West, 25-14 and 25-22, before moving on to tough matchup with Olathe North. The Wildcats fell 25-15 and 25-12 to the tournament champion.



Louisburg senior Katie McKain rises up for kill Saturday

against Shawnee Mission South.

Basehor-Linwood was next up for the Wildcats in what proved to be another three-set match. After taking the first set, 25-22, the Wildcats couldn't quite pull off the upset as they lost the next two, 18-25 and 21-25.

"The loss to Basehor was tough as we were close and went back and forth a bit throughout the whole match, but we did recognize that they are a solid team and we just couldn't quite get over the deficit we built for ourselves," Willer said. "It wasn't fun to lose of course, but we held our own more than in the previous match against Olathe North, so I was happy to see that we put up more of a fight even in the loss."

The Wildcats had a chance to end their tournament with a winning record against Shawnee Mission East, and they took advantage as they went three sets again. Louisburg won the match 25-19, 17-25 and 25-23 to secure the second place finish.

"Going into the last match of the day, we talked about how we wanted to leave it all out there on the floor and end the day on a positive note," Willer said. "We rallied around each other and pushed hard to make sure that we ended up on top against a solid Shawnee Mission East team and we were happy to walk out that day knowing we finished on a more positive note than we had seen through most of the day."

Several different players stepped for Louisburg throughout a long day of volleyball and it started with setter Adelyn Moore. The Wildcat sophomore did a little bit of everything as she led the team with 107 assists on the day and had a team-best 37 digs.

Moore finished with 16 kills, five aces and two blocks. She also distributed the well to several different hitters.



Louisburg senior Aspen Coulter dives on the floor for a dig Saturday at the Louisburg Invitational.

Kilgore and junior Addi Mallett led Louisburg with 29 kills on the day and junior McKenna Lohse was right behind them with 28. Senior Evyn Richardson had 26 kills and led the team in blocks, along with Lohse, with five.

The Wildcats also did a lot of work from behind the service line as the team tallied 29 aces on the day. Senior Ally Brown had strong performance with a team-high 10 aces and Lohse finished with six.

Senior Aspen Coulter and Nelsen each finished the day with four aces. Coulter also tied Moore with a team-high 37 digs, while Brown had 29.

“Throughout the day, I was happy to see different players step up at different times to lead both verbally and by their actions on the court,” Willer said. “We are working to develop our team identity and I think we are growing closer with each

and every game.”

Louisburg is back on the court tonight as the Wildcats will celebrate Senior Night against Spring Hill. Varsity is set to begin at 6:30 p.m.