

# Wildcat volleyball cruises past Baldwin in season opener



***Louisburg's Delaney Nelsen digs up a ball during a match last season. The Wildcats won their home opener on Sept. 2, 3-1, over Baldwin.***

The Louisburg volleyball team has high hopes and goals this season and the Wildcats took their first step in accomplishing those on Sept. 2 when they hosted Baldwin in their season opener.

Despite a shaky start, the Wildcats took the match 27-25, 25-27, 25-20 and 25-17. Louisburg leaned on a balanced attack and a solid defensive effort to outlast the Bulldogs in a match full of momentum swings, especially early on.

"It was a nice win for us," Louisburg coach Rich Brown said. "Honestly, we were getting tired of playing against ourselves

when we know all our tendencies. Making adjustments to the competition is going to be a necessary skill for this group if they want to succeed in the long run.

“I think having strong club seasons helped us keep the long-term goals in sight. With younger players, they might have put too much pressure on each point. I’m lucky I have so much experience with this group.”

Senior Caileigh Kilgore led the way for the Wildcats with a standout all-around performance. She tallied 10 kills, fired in five aces, and was second on the team with 15 digs.

“Caileigh got off to a rough start with some hitting errors because she puts a lot of pressure on herself to try and get kills every time she swings,” Brown said. “When she settled down for the third set, the blocks opened up and she let the game come to her. That’s a problem a lot of the girls had against Baldwin. We will get better at that as the season progresses.”

The Wildcats got strong production in the middle from senior McKenna Lohse and junior Breck Nielsen, who each finished with nine kills. Lohse also added four aces in a dominant showing at the net and behind the service line.

Senior Rylee Telken chipped in with seven kills, giving Louisburg a well-rounded offensive threat across the board.

Running the offense was junior setter Adelyn Moore, who dished out 38 assists and added three aces of her own. Moore also reached double figures defensively with 11 digs.

On the back row, junior libero Regan Williams anchored the defense with a team-high 25 digs, while Addi Mallett (12) and Delaney Nelsen (10) all reached double digits in digs to help frustrate Baldwin’s attack.

“I really liked the way our defense worked,” Brown said. “We

looked like we had been playing together a long time and really understood our roles. I think we pursue out of system balls better than we did last year.”

With the win, Louisburg gains momentum heading into a home triangular on Sept. 9, where the Wildcats will host Piper and Wichita-Trinity. Matches begin at 4:30 p.m.