

Wildcats battle through long week, go 2-3 at Silver Lake Invitational



Louisburg's Caileigh Kilgore goes up for a kill last Tuesday against Paola.

SILVER LAKE – The Louisburg volleyball team endured a tough, but competitive week on the court, capped by a 2-3 finish at the Silver Lake Invitational on Saturday.

The Wildcats earned hard-fought victories over Rossville (2-1) and Jefferson West, but suffered two losses to Perry-Lecompton (2-0, 2-1) and fell to Hays in a tight 2-1 match.

“Silver Lake was a very tough tournament with teams from the greater Topeka area in attendance,” Louisburg coach Rich Brown said. “We don’t get a chance to see many teams from that area,

so I like the fact that every opponent looks new to us. Like we continue to do, a lot of our matches went three sets and we wore out before the day was over.”

Despite the final record, Louisburg showcased strong individual and team performances throughout the tournament. Senior outside hitter Delaney Nelsen paced the offense with 38 kills, five aces and 29 digs, continuing her steady play on both ends. Fellow senior Caileigh Kilgore also had a standout showing, racking up a team-high eight aces while adding 33 kills and 36 digs.

The Wildcats’ front line received a boost from senior Rylee Telken, who recorded 31 kills and added eight blocks, while Breck Nielsen contributed 28 kills over the five matches. In the middle, McKenna Lohse was a key presence at the net, finishing with 26 kills and a team-best 10 blocks.

Defensively, junior libero Regan Williams anchored the back row with a team-leading 62 digs, and senior Stella Bohnenstiehl added 36 digs of her own. The offense flowed through senior setter Adelyn Moore, who orchestrated the attack with 135 assists.



Louisburg junior Adelyn Moore sets up a teammate last week against Paola.

"Our middle blockers were active for most of the day and that helps everyone out when we can use all parts of our offense," Brown said. "We started out rough covering tips and made a few little adjustments that helped us later."

Before their weekend tournament, the Wildcats had a pair of league matchups that showcased the team's resilience and talent.

On Thursday, Louisburg went toe-to-toe with Frontier League foe Spring Hill on the road but came up just short in four sets: 25-22, 19-25, 25-19, 25-21. Kilgore led the attack with 13 kills, while Nelsen and Nielsen chipped in 12 and 11 kills, respectively. Lohse turned in a strong all-around performance with five aces and three blocks. Moore finished with 37 assists, while Nelsen led the defense with 17 digs.

"I wish we had found our groove going into the third set,"

Brown said. "I know we will split sets with a lot of teams we face based on how consistent our serve receive is. Spring Hill did a good job keeping us out of system and we are still trying to find an answer for our troubles in that aspect of the game."



Louisburg's Rylee Telken (4) celebrates with her teammates after a big play against Paola.

Earlier in the week, on Sept. 30, the Wildcats earned a big rivalry win over Paola in four competitive sets: 26-24, 18-25, 25-16, 25-22. Lohse came up big for Louisburg with 15 kills to lead the team, while Kilgore added 12. Nielsen posted eight kills and three blocks in the win, and Moore dished out 39 assists. Kilgore also led the defensive effort with 17 digs.

It was also the Dig Pink night as the Wildcat team raised money for a local family battling cancer.

"I love the atmosphere whenever we get to play Paola," Brown said. "I think the girls were looking forward to this one on

the calendar. It was an exciting night as we were also honoring those who are affected by cancer.”

With several players stepping up in big moments, the Wildcats (17-10) continue to battle through a challenging stretch of the season, gaining valuable experience and chemistry along the way.

Five seniors will play their final home match tonight as the Wildcats host Tonganoxie for Senior Night. The Wildcats will honor McKenna Lohse, Delaney Nelsen, Caileigh Kilgore, Rylee Telken, Stella Bohnenstiehl and manager Morgan Latham prior to the start of the game. Varsity is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m.