Bad third quarter stings Wildcats



Louisburg senior guard Jacob Welsh drives to the basket during the Wildcats' game with Spring Hill on Thursday at Spring Hill High School. The Wildcats lost to the Broncos 61-36, which is their four straight setback.

SPRING HILL – For the first half, the Louisburg boys basketball team was right with Spring Hill.

On Thursday, Louisburg matched the Broncos shot-for-shot through much of the first half before Spring Hill went into halftime with a slim six-point lead.

The third quarter was a different story

Spring Hill blew the game open as it outscored the Wildcats by 19 points in third and went on to beat Louisburg 61-36 at Spring Hill High School. It was also the fourth loss in a row for the Wildcats.

"For us, it's about getting back to the basics that led to our successes early in the year," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "We're not running the floor like we were, we're not aggressive on the boards like we were and our secondary movements in our half court sets haven't been crisp. All 11 guys on our roster are capable of scoring, and when they're in

the game it’s imperative that they assert themselves in a manner conducive to being a scoring threat.”

Louisburg junior Grant Harding provided a bulk of the Wildcat scoring in the first half as he scored 13 of his team-high 15 points in the first half to keep Louisburg in the contest. Spring Hill held a 19-17 lead at the end of the first quarter and led 29-23 at halftime.

However, after scoring 17 points in the first quarter, Louisburg (6-7) responded with just 19 points in the final three quarters combined and it was the third quarter in which the Wildcats saw the game slip away.

Spring Hill opened the second half on a big run and outscored the Wildcats 22-3 in the third quarter to put the game away.

The Louisburg defense had a tough time containing the Spring Hill duo of Trey Heinrich and Ivan Hughes. Heinrich and Hughes scored 22 points each. Hughes also connected on three 3-pointers.

Along with Harding’s 15 points, junior T.J. Dover narrowly missed double figures as he finished with nine points and four rebounds. Sam Guetterman had a team-high five rebounds from the guard spot.

The Wildcats will try and stop their losing streak tonight, but it won’t be easy. Louisburg will host the No. 3 ranked team in Class 4A-Division I, Paola. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG 17 6 3 10 – 36

SPRING HILL 19 10 22 10 – 61

LOUISBURG (6-7): Grant Harding 6-14 0-0 15; T.J. Dover 3-4 2-4 9; Jayce Geiman 2-8 0-0 5; Jacob Welsh 1-4 0-0 2; Mitchell McLellan 1-4 0-0 2; Dalton Ribordy 1-1 0-0 2; Sam Guetterman 0-2 1-2 1. Totals: 14-41 3-8 36. 3-point field goals: 5, (Harding 3, Geiman, Dover)

Louisburg comes up short at Baldwin Invite



Louisburg senior Alex Dunn dives on the floor for a loose ball with a Bishop Ward player Saturday during the seventh-place game of the Baldwin Invitational. The Wildcats went 0-3 on the week.

BALDWIN CITY – It was supposed to be the perfect time for the Louisburg boys basketball team to take an even bigger step forward.

Louisburg entered the Baldwin Invitational Tournament last week looking to build on its three-game winning streak. Instead, the Wildcats went the opposite direction.

Dealing with different illnesses and injuries in the three

games, Louisburg wasn't able to take advantage of that momentum as it went 0-3 in the tournament, including a 51-44 loss to Bishop Ward on Saturday in the seventh-place game.

Louisburg (6-6) lost to Harmon in the opener on Jan. 20 and then to Wellsville on Friday in the consolation semifinals.

"I could not be more disappointed at the outcome of the tourney," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "Coming in playing the best ball I've seen an LHS team play since I've been here, at 6-3 and as the No. 2 seed, I felt we were ready to do damage.

"For whatever reason, we deviated from our game plans and practice principles and were tentative and lacking the mentality as a team that led us to the success we'd experienced to this point."

It is difficult for many teams to get prepared to play a seventh-place game and both teams looked the part early on Saturday. Louisburg scored just six points in the opening frame, but held a one-point lead despite eight turnovers.



Sophomore Dalton Ribordy puts up a shot over a Harmon defender

on Jan. 20 in Baldwin.

In the second quarter, Bishop Ward came to life as they outscored Louisburg 21-10 before halftime to take a 10-point lead. After a back-and-forth third quarter, the Wildcats started to chip away at Ward's lead in the fourth.

Louisburg went on a 10-3 run to start the final quarter thanks to six points from junior forward T.J. Dover and four from junior Grant Harding. The Wildcats trailed by just three points with 3 minutes and 30 seconds left in the game, but Ward went on a 8-1 run of its own to push the lead back up.

Junior guard Jayce Geiman hit a pair of 3-pointers down the stretch to keep the game close in the final seconds, but the Wildcats couldn't get all the way back.

Geiman and Harding each led Louisburg with 12 points on the day and Dover added six in the loss. Senior starting guard Mitchell McLellan was forced to sit out the final two games of the tournament with an injury, while different players were under the weather throughout the week.

However, Nelson knows he watched a different team last week.

"In our previous, successful games, we valued each possession and exerted our will on teams," Nelson said. "In the tournament, we were reactive rather than proactive and we suffered because of it. Our boys fought hard, but our team mentality wasn't syncing and we forgot our identity."

The Wildcats will try and stop their losing streak Thursday when they travel to Spring Hill for their lone contest of the week. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

"We need to get back to being us," Nelson said. "The team that attacked the rim in transition and in the 1/2 court game, moved the ball with the pass and rotated the defense is the team we need to be, and I need to do a better job of getting

us there, I guess.

“Defensively, we played pretty well, though we did allow a few too many offensive boards, but we just couldn’t translate that into the energy needed on the offensive end, and for that, the onus has to fall on me.”

LOUISBURG 6 10 7 21 – 44

BISHOP WARD 5 21 7 18 – 51

LOUISBURG (6-6): Jayce Geiman 12, Grant Harding 12, T.J. Dover 6, Dalton Ribordy 4, Ben Minster 4, Jacob Welsh 3, Alex Dunn 2, Jake Hill 1. Totals: 15 10-19 44. 3-point field goals: 4, (Geiman 4)

Wellsville edges Louisburg

Despite a 26-point performance from junior Grant Harding, Louisburg couldn’t quite overcome Wellsville on Friday in a 60-55 loss in the consolation semifinals.

After an even first quarter, the Wildcat offense couldn’t get going as Wellsville outscored Louisburg 12-5 before halftime and took a seven-point lead. The Wildcats came to life with 19 points in the third quarter to cut the Wellsville lead to one, but Louisburg couldn’t get the stops it needed in the final period.

Harding finished with 26 points after he shot 10 for 21 from the floor, including three 3-pointers. Junior Sam Guetterman, senior Alex Dunn and junior T.J. Dover all had six points.

LOUISBURG 15 5 19 16 – 55

WELLSVILLE 17 12 11 20 – 60

LOUISBURG: Grant Harding 10-21 3-5 26; Sam Guetterman 3-6 0-1 6; Alex Dunn 3-4 0-1 6; T.J. Dover 3-6 0-0 6; Jayce Geiman 2-5 0-0 5; Dalton Ribordy 2-2 0-0 4; Ben Minster 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 24-46 3-7 55. 3-point field goals: 4, (Harding 3, Geiman)

Turnovers haunt Louisburg in opener

Louisburg got off to the start it was looking for in the opener of the Baldwin Invitational on Jan. 20 against Harmon, but it didn’t have the finish.

Harmon scored 18 points off Louisburg turnovers and the Wildcats didn’t have enough to catch up in a 62-47 loss.

The Wildcats held a 12-11 advantage at the end of the first quarter, but Harmon went on a 13-2 run to end the first half and took a 10-point lead into halftime.

Louisburg faced the same deficit going into the fourth, but Grant Harding hit a pair of 3-pointers and Sam Guetterman made a basket to cut the Harmon lead to four with 4:23 left in the game.

Turnovers and missed shots led to a 14-0 Harmon run to all but put the game out of reach for Louisburg.

Harding led Louisburg with 18 points, including four 3-pointers, while Guetterman and T.J. Dover also scored in double figures with 10.

LOUISBURG 12 6 14 15 – 47

HARMON 11 17 15 19 – 62

LOUISBURG: Grant Harding 7-16 0-0 18; Sam Guetterman 4-8 2-3 10; T.J. Dover 5-8 0-3 10; Mitchell McLellan 3-5 0-0 6; Ben Minster 1-2 0-0 2; Dalton Ribordy 0-1 1-2 1. Totals: 21-44 3-8 47. 3-point field goals: 4, (Harding 4)

Geiman, Minster spark ‘Cats against De Soto



Senior guard Jacob Welsh goes up for a reverse layup during Friday’s road contest in De Soto. Louisburg rallied in the second half to get past De Soto 53-48 and picked up its third consecutive win in the process.

DE SOTO – It was late in the third quarter and Jayce Geiman hadn’t even attempted a shot.

Geiman, one of Louisburg’s starting guards, wanted to let the game come to him. So when the ball came his way behind the

arch, he was open and took the open 3-pointer.

His shot found the bottom of the net and it was the spark the Wildcats needed the most Friday in De Soto. The made basket cut De Soto's lead one point.

Louisburg's offense, which was sluggish up until that point, awoke to get a big 53-48 Frontier League win on the road. Missed close shots turned into makes and the Wildcats hit their free throws down the stretch to pull it out.

"It was huge," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said of Geiman's shot. "The kids that can shoot the three know who they are and they know how I feel about threes. But Jayce's shot there was monumental and it was at that point that everyone settled in and calmed down offensively."

The victory was also noteworthy as the Wildcats have already matched their season total from a season ago. The win improved Louisburg to a 6-3 record on the season and have now won three consecutive games.

"It was much needed," Geiman said of the win. "We matched our season total on wins last year so it was a big win for us, plus it was a league win so it was definitely nice to get this one. This is the high point of the season so far for sure."

Louisburg also got another spark in the third quarter – but this one was off the bench. Sophomore Ben Minster scored all of his seven points in the third to push the Wildcats in front.



Sophomore Ben Minster lays the ball up for two points during the third quarter of the Wildcats' game Friday in De Soto.

Following Geiman's 3-pointer that cut the De Soto lead to 30-29 with 2 minutes and 33 seconds left in the third, Minster drove the lane twice for two baskets and junior Grant Harding added another to push the Louisburg lead to 35-30.

"Ben was fantastic off the bench," Nelson said. "He is so athletic. A lot of times, and part of it is my fault, I expect too much of him sometimes instead of just letting the game come to him. He is just a fantastic athlete and he gave us some big minutes. He and Grant are just so fast with that dribble."

The lead didn't last long as De Soto responded with a mini 5-0 run to tie the game going into the fourth quarter.

Harding, who scored 13 points and pulled down 10 rebounds to finish with a double-double, opened the final quarter with a basket and the Wildcats never lost their lead. Senior Mitchell McLellan scored six of his eight points in the quarter, and Geiman hit another 3-pointer to push the lead to eight.

De Soto would hit back-to-back 3-pointers to cut the lead to two, but junior T.J. Dover pushed it back to four when he hit a shot and was fouled.



Louisburg coach Jason Nelson gets excited on the Wildcat bench with players Korbin Hankinson (30) and Jake Hill after a late basket from T.J. Dover.

Geiman, senior Jacob Welsh and junior Sam Guetterman each hit free throws down the stretch to seal the win for Louisburg.

“Mentally they are so tough,” Nelson said of his team. “I ask a lot of them and to be able to battle through adversity when our bunnies aren’t falling was great to see. Our execution on offense was fantastic up until the shot, which is maddening sometimes.

“They are in position and doing everything right, but it is what it is and it will come. We are still young and a lot of these guys are just in their ninth varsity game. I couldn’t ask for a better group of guys right now.”

It wasn’t an easy win as the Wildcats had to play catch up for most of the game. De Soto decided to slow the game down and made each possession difficult on the Louisburg defense.

De Soto worked the ball around the floor and took close to 30 seconds off the clock with each possession before getting the shot it wanted.

“De Soto moved the ball really well,” Nelson said. “We had a couple really good defensive series when we were in man and zone, but they were just so methodical, patient and found the open man. It was a little frustrating at times, but I thought we played pretty well defensively for the most part.”

Louisburg returns to action Tuesday when it begins play in the Baldwin Invitational. The No. 2 seed Wildcats open against Harmon at 4 p.m.



Baldwin Invitational Tournament Bracket

LOUISBURG	**13**	**8**	**14**	**18 – 53**
DE SOTO	**16**	**6**		

13 13 – 48

LOUISBURG (6-3): Grant Harding 6-14 1-2 13; Jayce Geiman 2-2 2-3 8; Mitchell McLellan 4-4 0-0 8; Ben Minster 3-4 1-2 7; Dalton Ribordy 3-7 0-0 6; Jacob Welsh 0-2 5-6 5; T.J. Dover 2-8 0-1 4; Sam Guetterman 0-1 2-2 2. Totals: 20-42 11-16 53. 3-point field goals: 2, (Geiman 2)

Wildcats hold off Frontenac for victory



Louisburg senior Mitchell McLellan goes up for a layup during a home game earlier this season. The Wildcats defeated Frontenac on the road Tuesday in a 49-41 victory. It was Louisburg's second win in a row.

FRONTENAC – The Louisburg boys basketball team couldn't have gotten off to a better start during Tuesday's road game at Frontenac.

The Wildcats scored the game's first eight points and were well on their way to a big win. Louisburg got the win it was looking for, but it got a fight from Frontenac in the process.

Frontenac made the game interesting on several occasions, but the Wildcats always had an answer on both ends of the floor in a 49-41 victory.

“Our perimeter defense was fantastic,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “We were aggressive while not jumping passes and giving them advantageous situations. Also, they were never able to get comfortable in their sets because of the pressure and consistent help defense we had.

“We did give up 10 points on second-chance opportunities, including eight in the first half, but to their credit, our boys fixed this when challenged.”

Grant Harding, who led Louisburg in scoring and rebounding with 14 points and nine rebounds, got the Wildcats off to go a good start as he scored five straight points. After a Jacob Welsh jumper, Louisburg took an 8-0 lead.

Louisburg (5-3) took a 13-7 lead into the second quarter and held a 22-18 halftime lead after a late Frontenac run. The Wildcats took an eight-point lead to start the third quarter and the Louisburg defense buckled down, holding Frontenac to just five points in the frame.

“We’ve really been stressing going through our sets, and through our secondary looks and when we did this, we got high quality, high percentage looks,” Nelson said. “When we came down, didn’t move the ball with the pass, and didn’t attack a rotating defense, our shot selection and percentage suffered.

“Given that we only scored 49 points, I was overly critical of us after the game, however, I didn’t realize how good our defense was.”

The Wildcats also did a good job taking care of the ball as they finished with just six turnovers on the night. Frontenac had several mini-runs in the fourth quarter, but each time the Wildcats had an answer.

Junior forward T.J. Dover scored two big baskets to stop runs in the fourth quarter, while senior Mitchell McLellan scored most of his 11 points in the second half to spark the Louisburg offense.

Junior guard Sam Guetterman scored nine points in the first half as he was among the team's scoring leaders. Sophomore Dalton Ribordy also gave Louisburg some good play underneath the basket with six points and six rebounds.

Louisburg, now on a two-game winning streak, will try for its third straight win Friday when it travels to De Soto. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG	**13**	**9**	**10**	**17 — 49**
FRONTENAC	**7**	**11**	**5**	**18 — 41**

LOUISBURG (5-3): Grant Harding 6-16 1-4 14; Mitchell McLellan 4-6 3-5 11; Sam Guetterman 3-6 3-4 9; Dalton Ribordy 3-4 0-0 6; T.J. Dover 2-3 0-1 4; Jacob Welsh 1-2 1-3 3; Jayce Geiman 0-7 2-2 2. Totals: 19-44 10-19 49. 3-point field goals: 1, (Harding).

Wildcats show heart in close victory



Louisburg junior T.J. Dover drives to the basket for two points during the Wildcats' game with Baldwin on Friday at Baldwin High School. Dover scored 13 points and pulled down seven rebounds in Louisburg's 54-52 victory.

BALDWIN CITY – Just looking at the stats, the Louisburg boys basketball team probably should have lost Friday's game with Baldwin.

The Wildcats committed 18 turnovers and converted just 8 of 30 free throws. Instead, they pulled out a 54-52 victory on the road at Baldwin High School because of something that didn't show up in the stat sheet.

"It was heart, all heart," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "This is what I am proud about. This is the first time in three years that we didn't have our best game, but we somehow had the wherewithal to win. It is what it is.

"We had 11 turnovers in the first half, which is not like us. We weren't very good from the free-throw line, we are missing bunnies and it just wasn't us. You saw glimpses of us pushing the ball and getting our secondary movements, but the kids battled. We have always had heart, but the heart is what won the game."

The victory was big for the Wildcats as they moved their record (4-3) back above the .500 mark and they got contributions from everyone who saw the floor. Ten different

players scored for Louisburg and it got some big free throws down the stretch.

Baldwin cut the Louisburg lead to two with a minute left in the game, but junior guard Sam Guetterman hit two free throws to keep the Bulldogs at bay.

Louisburg also had to overcome the shooting of Baldwin's Jackson Barth who scored nine of his 17 points in the final quarter. Baldwin had one last shot to win or tie the game with four seconds left after a Guetterman free throw, but couldn't get a good enough look.



Sophomore Ben Minster goes up for two points during the Wildcats' game with Baldwin on Friday at Baldwin High School.

"We didn't have our best game, but really everyone contributed to the win," Nelson said. "When you look up and down the bench, that was as much of a team game as we can have."

The Wildcats held the lead from the opening tip and actually got out to a fast start. Louisburg took a 15-5 lead in the

first quarter thanks to several different players.

T.J. Dover, Grant Harding, Mitchell McLellan and Korbin Hankinson each scored baskets during the run and Guetterman converted a 3-point play.

Baldwin started to creep back into the game in the second quarter as it trimmed the Wildcat lead to 21-20 with two minutes left in the first half. Dover helped Louisburg expand its lead with a pair of baskets, along with scores from McLellan and Ben Minster to take a 29-20 halftime lead.

In the fourth quarter, Barth hit a basket for Baldwin to cut the Wildcat lead to one with five minutes left in the game, but Harding responded with a pair of free throws and Dover added a basket to push the lead back to five.

It was the second time the Wildcats defeated Baldwin this season, with the first time coming in the championship game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic in December. Louisburg won by 17 on that day, but Nelson is just happy to get a road win.

“This shows how far our team has come in the last few years,” Nelson said. “We didn’t play our best game by far, but we were able to win a league game on the road and that is big for us. We showed a lot of heart and I was proud we were able to pull out the win.”

Harding led the Wildcats in scoring with 14 points, four rebounds, three assists and two steals. Dover also finished in double figures with 13 points and had a team-high seven rebounds and three steals from the forward spot.

Louisburg will try for its second win a row tonight when it travels to Frontenac. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG 17 12 15 10 – 54

BALDWIN 10 10 17 15 – 52

LOUISBURG (4-3): Grant Harding 5-11 4-7 14; T.J. Dover 6-8 1-5 13; Mitchell McLellan 3-5 0-2 6; Sam Guetterman 1-3 3-5 5; Jayce Geiman 2-3 0-2 4; Jacob Welsh 2-3 0-0 4; Alex Dunn 1-1 0-2 2; Ben Minster 1-1 0-1 2; Korbin Hankinson 1-2 0-2 2; Dalton Ribordy 1-1 0-4 2. Totals: 23-38 8-30 54. 3-point field goals: none

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Hot-shooting Ottawa sinks Louisburg



Louisburg junior Sam Guetterman rises up for a shot in the lane during Tuesday's home contest against Ottawa. The Wildcats couldn't keep up with Ottawa in the 65-50 loss as the Cyclones connected on 11 3-pointers.

Life in the Frontier League can be difficult at times, just ask the Louisburg boys basketball team.

The Wildcats faced one of the tougher teams in the league Tuesday when they hosted Ottawa, and despite staying with the Cyclones for a half, Louisburg couldn’t hold on in a 65-50 loss.

It was the second straight loss for Louisburg, which also fell to a talented Eudora squad right before the holiday break.

“It has to be one of the best leagues in any division in Kansas,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “Hopefully it will push us to work harder, and help them realize that there are good teams in this league, but we can be too. I think there is a fine line between a good team and a decent team. We are right there, we just have to cross that line. It is putting together 32 minutes.”

Louisburg (3-3) showed signs of crossing that line at different parts of the game, especially in the third quarter. The Wildcats trailed by 11 points at halftime, but rallied to cut the Ottawa lead to six points midway through the third, before the Cyclones caught fire.

Ottawa, which connected on 11 3-pointers for the game, hit six in the third to balloon its lead to 22 points going into the final quarter.

“Defensively I thought we played really well,” Nelson said. “We have been emphasizing limiting offensive rebounds in practice and I think we did a good job fixing that. We were good defensively, but some of those shots they hit, there wasn’t much we could do.”

Ottawa forward Isaac McCullough hit six of the 3-pointers for Ottawa and finished with a game-high 26 points. Cyclone guard Perry Carroll was also difficult to stop on the perimeter as he added 21 points, including four 3-pointers.

The Wildcats got off to a slow start and fell behind 13-3 in the first quarter, but they fought back to cut into the Ottawa

lead. Louisburg went on a 7-1 run to end the quarter after baskets from Grant Harding and Jayce Geiman.



Sophomore Dalton Ribordy gets ready to drive the lane Tuesday against Ottawa.

Geiman then forced a turnover, which led to a basket from Jacob Welsh and the Wildcats trailed just 14-10.

Cyclones answered right back in the second quarter as they went on a 14-4 run to push their lead back to double digits.

“Our post defense was fantastic for the most part and gave up very few points,” Nelson said. “We knew they were going to be quick, and after the first quarter, for whatever reason our help defense just wasn’t there and they go on an (14-4) run. Once our help defense got better, the game evened up.”

Harding and Welsh were both bright spots throughout the game. Harding finished with a team-high 17 points and Welsh also scored in double figures with 11. Sophomore Dalton Ribordy led the Wildcats with five rebounds.

Louisburg came out strong to start the second half as it went on an 8-3 run after two baskets from Mitchell McLellan and four free throws from Harding. However, Ottawa would catch fire from behind-the-arch as they connected on those six 3-

pointers – many of which were well defended.

The Wildcats didn’t give in as they cut the 22-point lead to 13 late in the fourth quarter thanks to a pair of buckets from T.J. Dover and a 3-pointer from Sam Guetterman.

“That is the intensity we are trying to get to and that is something I need to get better at,” Nelson said. “That intensity in the fourth quarter is the same intensity we have to have the entire game. Everyone knows that is what they need to do, it is just me getting them to the point where they are that way from minute one to minute 32. No one works harder than our kids, it is just putting all these pieces of the puzzle together and figuring it out.”

Louisburg will try to snap its losing skid Friday when it travels to Baldwin. The Wildcats will be on the road the rest of this month and won’t return home until their game against Paola on Feb. 2.

LOUISBURG		**10**	**13**	**12**	**15 – 50**
OTTAWA		**14**	**18**	**23**	**10 – 65**

LOUISBURG (3-3): Grant Harding 6-17 5-8 17; Jacob Welsh 4-5 3-4 11; T.J. Dover 2-6 1-2 5; ; Mitchell McLellan 2-7 0-0 4; Ben Minster 1-1 2-2 4; Dalton Ribordy 2-3 0-0 4; Sam Guetterman 1-5 0-0 3; Jayce Geiman 1-3 0-0 2. Totals: 19-47 15-20 50. 3-point field goals: 1, (Guetterman)

Eudora too much for Louisburg boys



Louisburg junior Jayce Geiman tries to dribble around a Eudora defender Tuesday during the Wildcats' Frontier League opener in Eudora. The Wildcats fell to Eudora 57-25 to move their record to 3-2 on the season.

EUDORA – In what was a joyous locker room a few days earlier, the mood for the Louisburg boys basketball team was the complete opposite following Tuesday's league opening contest against Eudora.

The Wildcats traveled to Eudora on Tuesday to face off with the Cardinals just days after winning the Bulldog-Wildcat Classic. Louisburg seemed to have the momentum going in, but it was Eudora who had the upper-hand from start to finish.

Eudora scored 20 points in the first and second quarters and shut down the Wildcats' offense in the 57-25 win over Louisburg. It marks just the second loss of the season for the Wildcats as they now take some time off for the holiday break.

It was hard for the Wildcats to get much going offensively as the longer, athletic Cardinals made it difficult. Eudora forced 10 first quarter turnovers, many of which turned into baskets on the other end.

The game was tied at 3-all after Louisburg junior Grant Harding completed a three-point play, but Eudora took off after that and went on a 17-1 run to take a 20-4 lead into the second quarter.

It also didn’t help the Wildcats that the Cardinals also caught fire from the field, including forward Brian Tolefree. The Eudora senior was 6-for-6 from the 3-point line in the first half and had 18 points at halftime.

The rest of the Cardinals were right behind him as they shot nearly 50 percent from the field for the game.

Harding led the Wildcats in scoring with eight points on the night and Ben Minster was next with four points.

The Wildcats will try and get back on the winning track on Jan. 5 when they host Ottawa. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG 4 6 4 11 – 25

EUDORA 20 20 11 6 – 57

LOUISBURG (3-2): Grant Harding 3-8 2-6 8; Ben Minster 2-4 0-0 4; Alex Dunn 1-1 1-2 3; Jacob Welsh 0-1 3-4 3; Jayce Geiman 1-6 0-0 2; Korbin Hankinson 1-2 0-0 2; Dalton Ribordy 1-1 0-0 2; T.J. Dover 0-3 1-4 1. Totals: 9-29 7-18 25.

Wildcats respond to win tourney crown



The Louisburg boys basketball team raises the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic first place trophy into the air following Friday's 69-52 victory over Baldwin in the championship game. The Wildcats won two straight games to win the tournament.

As Mitchell McLellan gazed on the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic championship plaque following Friday's 69-52 victory over Baldwin, it was like hitting the jackpot.

For McLellan, and several other Louisburg basketball players, it was their first opportunity to actually hold a first place trophy. The Wildcats have gone through several lean years lately when it comes to wins, but they are off to a good start this year.

For the first time since 2012, the Wildcats won the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic championship and they had to earn it. After losing their first game of the tournament to Iola, which was held at Louisburg High School, the Wildcats battled back to win their next two games by an average of 17 points and were crowned champions.

"I couldn't be more pleased," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "To think about where we were after the Iola loss and to

learn what we learned from that was the big thing. We learned our lesson. These boys want it and are intelligent enough to understand what they needed to.

“They were fantastic these last two games.”

It concluded with a strong 17-point victory over Frontier League foe Baldwin in the championship game as Louisburg got a team-high 22 points from McLellan, who scored 16 of those points in the first half.



Louisburg junior T.J. Dover fights through two Baldwin defenders for a shot Friday during the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic.

Louisburg jumped out to a 20-11 lead at the end of the first quarter and never looked back as it pressured the Bulldogs defensively and contested most of their shots. The Wildcats held Baldwin to just 32 percent from the field.

Offensively, Louisburg was just the opposite as it shot 53 percent from the field, with many of those opportunities coming from around the basket.

“We were just ready from the opening tipoff,” McLellan said. “We caught fire and we did a good job of running the court and pressing the ball. We never settled to their game, we wanted them to play our game and that is what happened. We were able to feed the ball inside and we took advantage of a lot of those close shots that we couldn’t make (against Iola).”

McLellan had a big night for Louisburg. Along with game-high 22 points, he also finished with 10 rebounds to record his first double-double of the season. Five of those rebounds came on the offensive end that led to several put backs.

“He is so important for us,” Nelson said of McLellan. “He finds that weak side, and as soon as the help slides over to the strong side, he is so good at sliding underneath and getting those easy buckets and it was fantastic to see.”

The Wildcats (3-1) also got double digit performances from juniors T.J. Dover and Grant Harding. Dover finished with 15 points and seven rebounds, many of which came the second half. Harding added 14 points and eight rebounds in the victory.

“Everyone is on a mission to win,” McLellan said. “Our program has had losing seasons every year for a very long time and we are all just tired of losing. We have that desire to win every time we step on the court.

“We took smart shots. We didn’t have to force anything and we got the looks we wanted to get most of the night, which were easy short shots and we didn’t settle.”

To get to the championship game, not only did the Wildcats have to beat its final opponent in pool play, Burlington, but they had to do so convincingly. Since Louisburg opened tournament play on Dec. 8 with a loss to Iola, the Wildcats had to do defeat Burlington by at least 13 points to advance to the title game.

Louisburg left a little cushion on that number.

The Wildcats jumped on Burlington from the start and never let up in their 71-53 victory. Like in its championship game win, Louisburg put a 20 spot on the board in the first quarter and held a 20-8 advantage into the second.

“Eliminating turnovers and attacking the rim is what was key for us,” Nelson said. “We know that we have guys that can shoot, but why shoot a low percentage 3-pointer when we can attack the rim and exploit matchups. Our boys may not be the biggest, but there is always mismatches somewhere and it is their job to find those and exploit them and that is what we did.”



The Louisburg boys basketball team poses with its championship trophy following Friday’s win over Baldwin. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Korbin Hankinson, Mitchell McLellan, Grant Harding, Jacob Welsh, Alex Dunn; (back row) Dalton Ribordy, Jayce Geiman, Sam Guetterman, Ben Brummel, T.J. Dover, Ben Minster and Jake Hill.

Louisburg definitely found one as Burlington had a hard time containing Harding. The Wildcats forward exploded for a game-high 28 points and seven rebounds and Burlington didn’t have an answer.

Harding also connected on four 3-pointers along with driving to the basket and getting to the free-throw line. The Louisburg junior was 8 for 8 from the line.

After Harding, the Wildcats had balanced scoring across the board. Dover finished in double figures with 10 points, while juniors Sam Guetterman, Jayce Geiman and McLellan each added eight points.

It was a big relief for Louisburg following its 54-46 loss to Iola two nights before. The Wildcats struggled offensively and trailed 24-18 at halftime.

Louisburg seemed to get some momentum back in the third quarter and even held a 36-32 lead into the fourth quarter. However, Iola outscored the Wildcats 22-10 in the final frame to get the upset.

Harding and McLellan each scored 13 points in the loss.

Louisburg will go for its first official Frontier League victory tomorrow when it travels to Eudora and hopes to get a win in its final game before the holiday break.

“The Frontier League is tough and we have to go out on a mission to win,” McLellan said. “We have to come out ready to play every night, and even if we don’t win, we can’t hang our heads and let it carry over. This league is no joke and every game is going to be tough.”

BALDWIN 11 16 14 11 – 52

LOUISBURG 20 18 14 17 – 69

LOUISBURG (3-1): Mitchell McLellan 11-18 0-2 22; T.J. Dover 7-11 1-2 15; Grant Harding 5-8 4-4 14; Jayce Geiman 3-6 0-0 8; Sam Guetterman 2-2 1-1 5; Jacob Welsh 1-3 2-7 4; Dalton Ribordy 0-2 1-2 1. Totals: 29-55 9-20 69. 3-point field goals: 2, (Geiman 2).

BURLINGTON 8 15 14 16 – 53

LOUISBURG 20 17 18 16 – 71

LOUISBURG: Grant Harding 8-14 8-10 28; T.J. Dover 5-10 0-0 10; Sam Guetterman 4-4 0-0 8; Jayce Geiman 1-6 6-9 8; Mitchell McLellan 4-8 0-0 8; Dalton Ribordy 1-2 4-4 6; Alex Dunn 2-2 0-0 4; Jacob Welsh 0-0 2-2 2. Totals: 25-48 20-25 71. 3-point field goals: 4, (Harding 4).

IOLA 10 14 8 22 – 54

LOUISBURG 5 13 18 10 – 46

LOUISBURG: Mitchell McLellan 6-11 1-3 13; Grant Harding 5-16 3-7 13; T.J. Dover 2-5 2-7 6; Dalton Ribordy 2-4 0-0 4; Ben Minster 1-2 1-1 3; Jacob Welsh 0-1 3-4 3; Sam Guetterman 1-4 0-0 2; Alex Dunn 1-3 0-0 2. Totals: 18-49 10-22 46.

Wildcats win thriller against Pittsburg



Louisburg junior Grant Harding dunks the ball after a steal during Friday's season opener against Pittsburg in Louisburg. The Wildcats rallied from seven points down with under three minutes left to pull off a 51-50 victory.

It may have been just the season opener, but the Louisburg boys basketball team provided all the drama any fan could ask for.

There were rallies, dunks, floor burns, big defensive stops and enormous free throws all played in front of an electric crowd Friday inside the LHS gymnasium. When all was said and done, it was the Wildcats that were left standing.

Louisburg rallied from seven points down with under three minutes left in the game to outduel Pittsburg 51-50 and provided the Wildcats with a positive start to the season.

"I love these kids so much," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "When we were down we didn't get discouraged and they all stuck together. They don't care who is on the court, they just play well together. This is a team and these kids are close and that is what makes this a special group. The effort was there the whole time and that was fantastic."

Except for the opening minutes of the game, the Wildcats found themselves behind most of the way, until they took the lead for good with a minute left in the contest. Louisburg trailed 48-41 with 2 minutes and 41 seconds remaining, then went on a 10-0 run to end the game.

The game seemed to turn the Wildcats' way when they got baskets on back-to-back steals with under two minutes left. The first one came thanks to junior Sam Guetterman and then fellow junior Grant Harding stole the ball and drove it down the floor for an uncontested dunk to cut the Pittsburg lead to just one.

Senior Mitchell McLellan came through for the Wildcats after that with a basket with 1:10 remaining, then after a Pittsburg missed free throw, calmly hit two free throws himself with 28 seconds left. It would be all the Wildcats would need.



Mitchell McLellan puts up a shot Friday against Pittsburg. The Louisburg senior scored the final four points to help the Wildcats get the win.

“Grant was outstanding and Mitchell was outstanding,” Nelson said. “Mitchell will be the first one to tell you that he didn’t have his best game, but when the time mattered he was there.”

Louisburg (1-0) got production from up and down its bench throughout the contest.

Junior T.J. Dover led the Wildcats in scoring with 12 points as he was 6 for 9 from the field. McLellan was also in double digits with 10 points.

Harding was all over the floor for the Wildcats with nine points, including a pair of dunks, to go along with nine rebounds, five assists and three steals. Senior point guard Jacob Welsh ended with six points, two assists and two steals, while sophomore forward Dalton Ribordy had five points in his first varsity game.

“Welsh was outstanding,” Nelson said. “Dalton, for his first varsity game, I really thought his defense was fantastic in the paint. Jayce (Geiman) hit a big 3-pointer down the stretch too, so a lot of guys contributed for us. We have a lot more options this season and we can go 9 to 10 players deep, while last season we could go seven or maybe eight, on a good night.”

The first quarter wasn’t the start Louisburg was hoping for. While they scored 14 points in the opening frame, the Wildcats gave up 23 points to Pittsburg and weren’t able to get many stops on the defensive end.

After that, Louisburg clamped down on the Purple Dragons defensively and the Wildcats found themselves on the floor for countless loose balls and seemed to frustrate Pittsburg, especially in the second and fourth quarters.

The Wildcats held Pittsburg to just 27 points in the final three quarters, including just five points in the second and

fourth quarters.

“Pitt can pose a lot of matchup problems,” Nelson said. “They are athletic, super quick and they are a handful. The problem in the first quarter was we gave up 23 points. One of the kids’ goals before the season was to hold teams to 56 points a game and we give up 23 in the first quarter.

“They knew they made some young mistakes that they shouldn’t have made and came out after that and only gave up 27 points in the next three quarters. A lot of it just comes with the maturation process and having each other’s back, which they clearly did.”

The Wildcats return to action tonight as they host the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic all week. Louisburg will matchup with Iola at approximately 6:30 p.m. tonight and then will play Burlington at the same time Thursday.

PITT	**23**	**5**	**17**	**5 – 50**
LOU	**14**	**9**	**13**	**15 – 51**

LOUISBURG (1-0): T.J. Dover 6-9 0-0 12; Mitchell McLellan 4-9 2-2 10; Grant Harding 4-13 1-2 9; Jacob Welsh 3-6 0-1 6; Dalton Ribordy 1-3 3-4 5; Ben Minster 2-2 0-0 4; Jayce Geiman 1-5 0-0 3; Sam Guetterman 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 22-48 6-9 51. 3-point field goals: 1, (Geiman)

Wildcats ready to take step forward



Junior Grant Harding (right) is one of the top returning players for the Louisburg boys basketball team this season. Harding was an honorable mention all-league player last season as he nearly averaged a double-double.

It may not have been the most ideal situation for Louisburg boys basketball coach Jason Nelson last year.

The Wildcats had just three seniors, didn't have much height and had to throw a group of inexperienced sophomores into the fire of varsity action. As it turned out, the Wildcats got better as the season went on despite only finishing the season with six wins.

Now, Louisburg is hoping to take an even bigger step forward this season.

Those group of sophomores are now juniors and features a senior class that has some veteran experience and a couple newcomers as well.

"Every junior has had some sort of varsity experience and that is huge," Nelson said. "There won't be a transition period and they'll know the difference in speed, aggression and tempo between junior varsity and varsity from the beginning."

Seniors Mitchell McLellan and Jacob Welsh return to the guard spot and will lead the Wildcats, while Alex Dunn and Ben Brummel are new to the team this year. McLellan, who missed half of the season last year with a leg injury, will be one of the team's outside scoring threats.

Welsh, on the other hand, will take over the point guard duties from Corbin Wertz, an all-league player from a season ago.

"Jacob will be our point and has done a superb job of preparing for the season," Nelson said. "Mitchell is an example of why I love my job. He's always had the ability to do well, but has grown into a leader capable of rallying those around him. He's going to have a good year.

"Alex will help us around the perimeter and brings a quality aggression that is contagious. Ben hasn't played in high school, but is a talented young man who will fill in when needed and is a fantastic teammate."



Jacob Welsh will be relied on to run the offense this season for Louisburg.

Despite that senior leadership, the Wildcats will also look to get a lot of production out of an underclassmen. Junior Grant

Harding emerged as one of Louisburg's top players a season ago, as he has the ability to play on the wing or inside.

Harding, who was an honorable mention all-league selection last season, averaged nearly a double-double with 11 points and nine rebounds a contest.

"Getting all-league honorable mention in the Frontier League is quite a statement, let alone for a sophomore and Grant has embraced the role of emotional leader and worked hard to improve his overall game," Nelson said. "Grant is a special talent with the ability to make those around him better while excelling himself and he's ready for the constant challenges this brings."

Harding, McLellan and Welsh are slated to start for the Wildcats with several others in the mix to fill the final two spots. Junior guard Jayce Geiman will look to give the Wildcats some scoring punch from the outside and fellow junior Sam Guetterman will back up Welsh at the point guard spot.

Junior T.J. Dover and sophomore Dalton Ribordy will also see a lot of minutes at the forward spot.

"Jayce has worked as hard as any player I've seen at improving his all-around game," Nelson said. "He's always been a good spot shooter, but he's now one of our better defenders, ball handlers and has added an element of attacking the rim that has made him a good all-around player.

"Sammy is also ready to step in at the point guard or off-guard spot. T.J. learned a great deal last year about being a post in the Frontier League and is ready to take the reins in that position. Dalton is just a sophomore, but will most definitely be counted on at times and is ready for some varsity experience."

The Wildcats open their season at 7:30 p.m. Friday when they host Pittsburg. Louisburg will also the Wildcat-Bulldog

Classic next week with games on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Louisburg will also host the substate tournament this season and will be paired with Spring Hill, Paola and Fort Scott.

To start the season, however, Nelson likes what he has seen so far out of his group and is excited for what the season holds.

“Couldn’t have asked for a better beginning for the first couple of weeks,” Nelson said. “Every single player has been eager to learn, competitive and willing to push themselves both physically and mentally. Probably the most enjoyable part for me has been watching them push each other in practice. They’re truly dedicated to making each other better through competition and at the conclusion of the competition, they understand that they’re teammates with a common goal.

“Being a true believer in transparency, our players all know where they stand with their coaching staff and have a good idea of their roles in our program.”

2015-16 LOUISBURG BOYS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Dec. 4
Pittsburg
7:30 p.m.

Dec. 8 Iola (Wildcat Bulldog Classic) 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 10 Burlington (Wildcat-Bulldog Classic) 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 11 Wildcat-Bulldog Classic TBA

Dec. 15 at

Eudora
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 5
Ottawa
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 8 at
Baldwin
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 12 at
Frontenac
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 15 at De
Soto
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 19 at Baldwin
Invitational TBA

Jan. 22 at Baldwin
Invitational TBA

Jan. 23 at Baldwin
Invitational TBA

Jan. 28 at Spring
Hill 7:30
p.m.

Feb. 2
Paola
7:30 p.m.

Feb. 5
Eudora
7:30 p.m.

Feb. 12 at Ottawa
7:30 p.m.

Feb. 16
Baldwin
7:30 p.m.

Feb. 19 Spring Hill
7:30 p.m.

Feb. 23 De Soto
7:30 p.m.

Feb. 26 at Paola
7:30 p.m.