

Buffington named 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Not many athletes had the opportunity to experience the success Carson Buffington did during the 2018-19 school year.

Buffington found herself in two state championship matches and was a team captain in all three seasons. The 2019 Louisburg High School graduate played at a high level in all the sports she competed in and did so with the respect of her teammates of coaches.

Those are just a few of the reasons why Buffington was chosen as the 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

The award, which is in its second year, is to recognize an outstanding LHS student athlete. Louisburg Sports Zone asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the

winner.

Buffington began her memorable senior year on the volleyball court as she helped the Lady Cats to a state runner-up finish for the second consecutive season. She was an outside hitter on the 2018 squad, which was a position she had to learn on the fly.

She spent the last two seasons as the team's starting setter and Buffington made the move to the front line – which gave her team the best chance to win.

Along with her state runner-up finish, Buffington also earned second team All-Frontier League honors and was named to the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Senior All-Star match.

“Carson was a great leader again this past season and played a vital role on the team,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “She handled transitioning to a new position with a lot of grace and was bound and determined to learn the ins/outs of being a hitter, than a setter. She previously ran our offense as the setter for two years. But as with each new season, new players are added to the mix and the possibility of changing positions/rosters arises.



(From left) Louisburg girls assistant soccer coach Michael Pickman, Louisburg head volleyball coach Jessica Compliment, Carson Buffington, Louisburg head girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry and Louisburg head girls soccer coach Kyle Conley

"I was very proud of how she 'handed' over the reins of the offense to two freshmen and how she encouraged and pushed them every day in practice. She was a great role model. Carson added a lot of emotional energy when we needed it and made huge plays at important times throughout matches."

Buffington was also a big part of the Lady Cat basketball team this past season, despite finishing short of a state tournament. She earned all-league and all-state honorable mention honors after she averaged eight points, seven rebounds and three steals per game.

She currently holds a school record with 864 career rebounds and was an all-league player for her entire four year stint with the Louisburg basketball team.

"Carson is one of the hardest working players that I have worked with coaching basketball, boys or girls," Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry said. "She never took a day off and always led by example. Carson was relentless as a player and was always the first one on the floor for a loose ball. As good an athlete, she is an even better young woman with great character, integrity, unselfishness and passion."

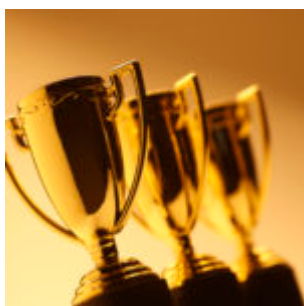
Buffington might have had her most successful season, both team-wise and individually, in the spring as the Wildcats' starting goalkeeper on the Louisburg girls' soccer team.

For the second year in a row, the Wildcats were the Class 4-1A state runner-up and Buffington was a big reason why. She started all 20 games and set school records in shutouts (13), saves in a season (115), goals against average (.952) and wins (17).

With all that success, Buffington was named the Class 4-1A Goalkeeper of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association.

"Carson in her first year as the starting goalkeeper was unbelievable," Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "She kept us in a lot of games and even won us a few. Carson is in her third year ever playing soccer as well. She started her sophomore year and has grown so much. She is a gifted three sport athlete and it shows in her ability to play goalkeeper. She has a fantastic attitude and work ethic."

2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year nominees



For the past three years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and to highlight the athletes.

For the second straight year, Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an "athlete."

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female athletes and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. In the next week, I will announce this year's recipients.

Below are the nominees for this year's award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!

FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



CARSON BUFFINGTON – SENIOR – BASKETBALL, SOCCER, VOLLEYBALL

Carson was a 3-time letter winner in her senior season and was named as a team captain in volleyball, basketball and soccer.

In volleyball, Buffington earned second team All-Frontier League honors as she helped lead the Lady Cats to a Class 4A state runner-up performance. She also moved from her starting setter position to the outside hitter spot and had a lot of success for the Lady Cats as she tallied 130 kills in her new position. With all that success, Buffington was also selected to the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Senior All-Star Match.

Buffington also wrapped up a strong career for the Louisburg basketball team as she averaged eight points and seven rebounds to go along with three steals a contest. She was named as a Frontier League honorable mention this past season, and she also was selected as an all-state honorable mention.

In girls soccer, Buffington was the starting goalie for Louisburg in all 20 games. She posted 13 shutouts, which is a school record and had a .952 goals against average, which is also a school record. Buffington had 90 saves on the season that ended as a Class 4-1A state runner up for the second consecutive year. For her efforts, she was also selected second team All-Frontier League. Buffington was also named first team all-state goalie and was named Goalkeeper of the Year.



ANNA DIXON – SENIOR – VOLLEYBALL

Anna wrapped up her fourth volleyball season as a varsity starter for the Lady Cats and guided Louisburg to its second consecutive Class 4A-state runner-up finish.

Dixon, who is currently with the Kansas State volleyball team, ended her senior season with 584 kills and had a hitting percentage of .260. She also added 325 digs, 50 aces and 42 blocks as she played all six rotations. With those lofty numbers, Dixon earned several big time honors in her final season.

She was selected as an All-Frontier League first team player and was also named to the 4A State All-Tournament Team. Those honors continued as she was named the Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association Class 4A Player of the Year and earned a spot on KVA All-State First Team.

Following the season, Dixon was also named as an Under-Armour All-American also earned MaxPreps/American Volleyball Coaches Association Player of the Week honors.



ALYSE MOORE – SOPHOMORE – BASKETBALL, SOFTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD

Alyse is a 3-sport varsity letter-winner this past year as she earned letters for the basketball, softball and track and field teams. This past spring season, Moore went to state in two different sports and became the first Wildcat athlete in recent memory to do so.

In her first season in track and field, Moore threw the javelin for the Lady Cats and went on to become regional champion as she eclipsed her personal best throw by almost 25 feet in just her third competition of the season. The following week, she medaled fourth at the Class 4A state tournament with a personal best throw of 131 feet and

9 inches.

Moore was also the starting shortstop for the Lady Cats as she helped Louisburg to its first regional championship since 2014.

During the basketball season, Moore was a starter for the Lady Cats and averaged six points, five rebounds and three steals a game.



TRINITY MOORE – JUNIOR – CROSS COUNTRY, SOCCER

Trinity is 2-sport letter-winner for Louisburg this past year as she had state performances in both cross country and soccer.

During the fall, Moore was the top runner on the Louisburg girls cross country team as she helped the Lady Cats to a regional runner-up finish and qualified for state as a team for the first time in school history. Moore medaled fourth at the Class 4A state meet in Wamego and currently holds the school record for the fastest time in program history. She

also earned first-team All-Frontier League honors for her third place finish at the league meet.

In soccer, Moore was a starter on the Wildcat team that recently finished as the Class 4-1A state runner-up for the second consecutive year. At the midfield spot, she finished the season with 12 goals and six assists and was also named to the All-Frontier League first team.



DELANEY WRIGHT – FRESHMAN – BASKETBALL, CROSS COUNTRY, TRACK AND FIELD

Delaney is a 3-sport letter-winner as she took part in cross country, basketball and track and field and competed at the state level in two of those.

Wright found most of her success in track and field as she

earned four medals at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita this past month. She medaled in the long jump, 400-meter-dash, 200-meter dash and as a member of the 4×400-relay.

During the regional meet, Wright broke two school records (long jump, 400 dash) and earned a regional and Frontier League title in the long jump. She also earned a medal in the long jump at the Kansas Relays earlier in the season.

In cross country, Wright was a member of the Louisburg team that finished as a Class 4A regional runner-up and qualified for the state meet as a team for the first time in school history. In basketball, Wright saw playing time at the varsity level as a freshman at different points throughout the season.

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



BLUE CAPLINGER – SENIOR – BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WRESTLING

Blue is a 4-sport letter-winner in football, wrestling, baseball and track and field and competed at the state level in two of the sports.

In football, Caplinger was an All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball as he was named to the first team defense as a defensive back and second team offense as a multi-purpose player. On defense, Caplinger, who helped Louisburg to a 10-1 record and a regional championship, had 31 tackles from the safety spot and also had two tackles for a loss, two fumble

recoveries and an interception. Offensively, he had 544 total yards and six touchdowns.

On the wrestling mat, Caplinger was a regional champion at 170 pounds and finished his season with a 33-5 record. The Louisburg senior fell one match short of state medal with a 2-2 record at the Class 4A state tournament. He currently holds the school record for most career reversals (72) and most career escapes (86). Following the season, he was also named to the KWCA Academic All-State first team.

Caplinger split time between baseball and track and field in the spring. Although he spent time as a reserve and pinch-runner on the baseball team, Caplinger found a lot of success on the track.

He qualified for state as a member of two relays. Caplinger was a member of the 4×400 relay team that won the Class 4A state championship in 3 minutes and 25 seconds. Caplinger also helped the 4×100 relay to a fifth place finish and went on to garner two state medals.

Caplinger will join the Benedictine football team this fall.



AUSTIN MOORE – SENIOR – FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WRESTLING

Austin is a 3-sport letter winner in football, wrestling and track and field and was among the state's best in two of the sports.

Moore thrived on the football field for the Wildcats as he helped Louisburg to a 10-1 record and a regional championship. Moore was a first team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball and was the league's leading vote-getter. He went on to rack up all-state awards as the Louisburg senior earned Class 4A first team all-state honors as a running back from the Topeka Capital-Journal and the Kansas Football Coaches Association. Moore was also named as a Class 4A first team all-state linebacker from the Wichita Eagle.

When the season was all said and done, Moore tallied 1,554 total yards from the running back spot, including 1,428 yards on the ground, and had 21 touchdowns before he broke his collarbone during the regional championship game.

With those numbers, he was named the Kansas Small Class Player of the Year by 810 Varsity and was All-Purpose Player of the Year by Kpreps.com. Earlier this year, Moore was also named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl roster.

On the wrestling mat, Moore missed more than half of the season with his broken collarbone, but came back in a big way. Moore won his first 14 matches when coming back at 220 pounds, which included a regional championship. He went on to earn his first state medal as he finished fourth at the Class 4A state tournament with a 3-2 record. He was also named to the KWCA Academic All-State first team.

During the spring, he was a member of the Louisburg track and field team and threw the javelin for the Wildcats. He was also on the throwers relay that ranked Top 5 nationally at one point in the season.

Moore will join the Kansas State football team this fall.



KIEFER TUCKER – SENIOR – FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WEIGHTLIFTING

Kiefer is a 2-sport letter winner in football and track and field and also went to state competition in two activities.

Tucker was a presence on the line of scrimmage for the Louisburg football team as he was a first team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball and helped the Wildcats to a 10-1 record and a regional championship.

The Louisburg senior was among on the leaders on the offensive line as he helped pave the way for more than 3,500 yards of total offense. On defense, Tucker recorded 55 tackles from the defensive end spot, including three tackles for a loss, three forced fumbles, a fumble recovery and a sack. Those numbers helped earn him honorable mention all-

state honors and was also named to the all-state team by the Kansas Football Coaches Association. The honors kept coming for Tucker as he was recently selected to participate in the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

During the winter, Tucker was a member of the Louisburg powerlifting team and certainly made his mark there as well. Tucker won the Class 4A state championship in the 220-pound class and broke a 24-year-old record in the bench press with a lift of 375 pounds.

In track and field, Tucker qualified for state for the first time in the discus. He finished as a regional runner-up and went on to take ninth at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita, just one spot away from earning a state medal.

Tucker will join the Emporia State football team this fall.

Buffington, Melton named all-league honorable mention



Louisburg senior Carson Buffington was named to the All-Frontier League team for the fourth consecutive season.

In a league that featured the state runner-up, the third-place finisher in Class 4A and another state tournament qualifier, the Louisburg girls basketball schedule was a difficult one.

The Frontier League provided a lot of difficult competition for the Lady Cats as they finished their season with a 10-11 record. Despite that, the league coaches recognized a pair of Louisburg players for postseason honors.

The All-Frontier League team was released earlier this week and Louisburg senior Carson Buffington and sophomore Madilyn Melton were both honorable mention selections.

"I think like most of the coaches, I would like to have had more of our players recognized and in higher positions," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I thought we had some girls that deserved recognition based on the scope of their work and the things they did for our team. With that said, I understand that there were a lot of really good players in our league.

"Both of these girls, along with all of their teammates, are great representatives of our program, school and community. We all couldn't be more proud of this group of girls and we are very thankful to have shared in this journey with them."

For

Buffington, this was the fourth consecutive season that she was recognized with an all-league selection. In 21 games, Buffington was second on the team with eight points a game and also averaged seven rebounds, which led the Lady Cats, to go along with 3.2 steals a contest.

"It's hard to express just how good Carson was for her team this year," Lowry said. "It wasn't just on game nights, but every day in practice with how she competed and her great leadership. She never took a day off and always led by example. Carson is one of the hardest working players that I have worked with coaching basketball – boys or girls.

"She was relentless as a player and was always the first one on the floor for a loose ball. She is fantastic example for all the younger girls in Louisburg about the level of commitment and determination that is required to be successful on and off the court."



Louisburg sophomore Madilyn Melton led the Lady Cats in scoring at 14 points a game and was named an all-league honorable mention.

Melton

earned her first all-league honor for the Lady Cats as the Louisburg sophomore led the team in scoring with 14 points and six rebounds per game.

"Madilyn

has committed herself and puts in a great deal of work to improve as a player for her team," Lowry said. "Not only that, she does so many of those things we talk about when it comes to effort, character, being unselfish and she does it all with great pride. What was most impressive about Madilyn this season was her growth as a leader that she earned through her hard work and unselfishness."

Piper

(state runner-up), Baldwin (third-place finisher) and Eudora (state qualifier) led the league with three selections each, while Piper had two first-team selections in Ryan Cobbins and Ali Vigil. Baldwin also had two first team honorees in Kayla Kurtz and Macey Frost, while Eudora's Riley Hiebert was also named to the first team.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS BASKETBALL

FIRST TEAM

Ryan Cobbins, Piper, senior

Ali Vigil, Piper, junior

Kayla Kurtz, Baldwin, senior

Riley Hiebert, Eudora, junior

Macey Frost, Baldwin, senior

SECOND TEAM

Bella Todd, Spring Hill, senior

Lauren Delker, Spring Hill, senior

Kate Ogle, Baldwin, senior

Harper Schreiner, Eudora, freshman

Evelyn Vazquez, Piper, sophomore

HONORABLE MENTION

Carson Buffington, Louisburg,
senior

Hallie Hoffine, Bonner Springs,

senior

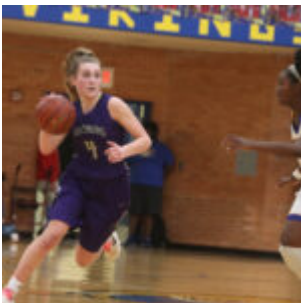
Reagan Hiebert, Eudora, junior

Madilyn Melton, Louisburg,
sophomore

Brayden Hanf, Paola, junior

Anna Soetaert, Tonganoxie, senior

Lady Cats can't slow down Parsons' Taylor in season-ending loss



Louisburg senior Carson Buffington drives toward the basket on Parsons' Nena Taylor on Thursday during the Class 4A sub-state semifinal at Parsons High School.

PARSONS – Going into Thursday's Class 4A sub-state semifinal game, the Louisburg girls basketball team knew if it was going to leave Parsons with a win, the Lady Cats were going to have to slow down the Vikings' best player – Nena Taylor.

As much as the Lady Cats tried,

there was no slowing Taylor and her Vikings teammates.

Mixed in with a slow start offensively, Louisburg had a tough time containing Taylor as Parsons handed the Lady Cats a 50-44 loss and ended their season one game short of a sub-state championship.

“The one thing that is great about it is that they are so disappointed,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “They didn’t want to be done. It says a lot about this group that they wanted to play together for another game. They are disappointed, but at the same time they are disappointed for the right reasons. It hurts for sure.”

Offensively, Louisburg struggled to get going as it scored two points in the first quarter before picking up the pace that led to a 22-point fourth quarter as it tried to rally. The rally, unfortunately for the Lady Cats, came up short thanks to Taylor.

The Lady Cats had a tough time keeping Taylor out of the lane as she scored a bulk of her game-high 34 points around the basket or at the free-throw line. She also added 12 rebounds to her line for the double-double.

“She is a great player and will be a good player again next year,” Lowry said of Taylor. “She is really talented. We tried to do some different things with her and I thought the girls battled better in the second half with her, but she is going to do

what she does.”



Lady Cat sophomore Brooklyn Diederich puts up a runner at the buzzer Thursday in Parsons.

Louisburg stayed within striking distance of Parsons for much of the game and trailed by just six points early in the third thanks to back-to-back 3-pointers from senior Kennia Hankinson.

Next, it was Taylor's turn to answer as she went on a 10-0 run on her own and eventually helped give Parsons a 15-point cushion heading into the fourth quarter.

The Lady Cats chipped away at the Parsons lead and eventually cut it to six with 30 seconds left after a couple baskets from sophomore Madilyn Melton, but Louisburg could get no closer.

Melton led the Lady Cats in

scoring with 19 points and also had a team-high seven rebounds. Hankinson was next with nine points and senior Carson Buffington had seven points, five rebounds, six deflections and four steals in her final game.



Louisburg senior Kennia Hankinson drives past a Parsons defender Thursday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament.

Sophomore Alyse Moore had a team-high seven steals to lead the Lady Cats on defense and also had six rebounds and five points. Junior Haley Cain had a team-high five assists to go along with six rebounds.

"I knew they were going to continue to battle," Lowry said of his team's rally. "What is great about it is we have younger players that are battling their tails off and they are going to be hungry coming back next year. I also can't say enough about

our leadership. I can't say enough about our captains Carson and Haley, and even our younger players are starting to be leaders now like Alyse, Madilyn and Brooklyn (Diederich). They turned into great leaders right in front of us here at the end of the season. It is a result of what the program has done throughout the years."

Louisburg finished its season with a 10-11 record and saw improvement from a year ago, but the end of the year is always difficult, especially as Buffington and Hankinson played their final game as Lady Cats.

"I thought we competed all year and they did what I asked them to do," Lowry said. "The personal and collective growth of this group was fantastic and I can't ask any more of the kids than what they gave here at the end. I am proud to be their coach."

LOU	2	10	10	22 –
44				

PAR 12	10	15	13 – 50
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LOUISBURG (10-11): Madilyn Melton 6-12 6-13 19; Kennia Hankinson 3-9 0-0 9; Carson Buffington 2-5 2-4 7; Alyse Moore 2-8 1-2 5; Brooklyn Diederich 1-8 0-0 3; Haley Cain 0-5 1-2 1. Totals: 14-49 10-21 44. 3-point field goals: 6, (Hankinson 3, Buffington, Diederich, Melton)

Lady Cats down Paola on emotional Senior Night



The Louisburg girls basketball team celebrates following its 54-48 victory over rival Paola on Friday in Louisburg. The Lady Cats are now 10-10 on the season.

The Louisburg girls basketball team squared off with Paola on Friday and the Lady Cats wanted to honor their two seniors – Carson Buffington and Kennia Hankinson – with a win in their final home game.

Louisburg didn't disappoint its two seniors as it ended the regular season with a 54-48 win over Paola and avenged a close loss from earlier in the season. It all culminated in what was a special night for everyone involved.

"It was the best feeling for me," Buffington said. "Paola has always been our rival, but to beat them for the final time that we will ever play them is just really special.

"It was really emotional out there. There was a lot going on, but we just had to remain

level-headed and keep believing in ourselves. Even when Kennia and I both got into foul trouble, we just had to keep moving forward.”

The Lady Cats (10-10) started and finished the game strong as they got out to a big lead, gave it up, but put together a good rally in the second half to get back in the game.

Louisburg jumped out to a 13-4 lead in the first quarter thanks to seven points from sophomore Madilyn Melton, but the Panthers responded to the run. Paola held Louisburg to just six points in the second quarter as the Lady Cats battled foul problems.



Senior Carson Buffington goes up for shot Friday against

Paola.

Buffington had to sit for much of the second quarter with foul trouble, and during that time, Paola jumped out to a 23-19 halftime lead.

Foul problems got even worse in the third quarter when the team's leading scorers, Buffington and Melton, along with Hankinson, all picked up four fouls.

The Lady Cat bench responded and kept the game close as Brooklyn Diederich swished 3-pointer to give Louisburg a 31-30 lead, but Paola would take the lead back until the final seconds of the third.

Hankinson knocked down a 3-pointer at the buzzer to give the Lady Cats a 36-35 lead going into the fourth quarter and gave her team some much needed confidence.

"It was huge, but I thought our bench was really good all night and the energy they brought," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "Different girls were making plays and our bench was so excited and happy for their teammates that were on the floor and they were feeding off that. When Kennia hit that shot, it was a boost of adrenaline for everyone and it led into our fourth quarter."



Senior Kennia Hankinson drives to the basket Friday against Paola.

Paola either had the lead or the game was tied for half of the fourth quarter, but the Lady Cats went in front on a Buffington 3-pointer. Paola tied it again, but junior Haley Cain broke the game open with a 3-pointer with 3 minutes and 47 seconds left in the game to give Louisburg the lead back and it wouldn't relinquish it.

"It was a deep a three for sure,"

Lowry said of the shot. "It was just another kid stepping up when we needed it.

I was just so proud of their togetherness and how special that is.

"A lot of different girls had to

step up. Whether it was Brooklyn working her tail off on defense, or Sydni (Keagle)

coming off the bench and gave the minutes that she gave. They continue to

battle and push. No matter what was happening, the girls refused to lose this

game on Senior Night for those two seniors. It was awesome to see and great to be a part of.”

Buffington was then able to ice the game at the free-throw line as she knocked down 3 of 4 attempts to help put the game away.

Buffington made a lasting memory for the Wildcat crowd as she led all scorers with 18 points to go along with eight rebounds and a team-high four steals.

“You talk about leadership and putting the team on her shoulders, Carson provided all of that for us,” Lowry said. “We needed the ball to be in her hands and she made some big free throws there down the stretch. That is what she is and what a great way for both seniors to finish out their career on their home floor. You can’t draw it up any better.”

Melton also scored in double figures for the Lady Cats as she finished with 14 points, while sophomore Alyse Moore had seven points and a team-high nine rebounds and four steals. Diederich also had a team-high six deflections and Cain led Louisburg with five assists.

“It felt pretty amazing, especially since everyone contributed to it and we all just came together and came out with a lot of energy and we were able to get the win,” Hankinson said.

Postseason play now begins for the

Lady Cats as they earned the No. 11 seed and will travel to No. 6 Parsons (14-6) for a 7 p.m. tipoff on Thursday. The winner of that game will face the winner between No. 3 Baldwin (17-1) and No. 14 Atchison (7-13) on Saturday for the sub-state championship.

"We are going to take a road trip down to Parsons and they have a really nice player and a really nice team," Lowry said. "It will be a challenge, but we just want a shot to get in the sub-state championship game and hopefully we can go down there and play well."

LOU	13	6	17	18 –
54				
PAO	8	15	12	13 –
48				

LOUISBURG (10-10): Carson Buffington 5-6 7-8 18; Madilyn Melton 5-14 4-9 14; Alyse Moore 1-6 5-9 7; Haley Cain 2-6 1-3 6; Kennia Hankinson 1-9 0-2 3; Brooklyn Diederich 1-5 0-0 3; Sydni Keagle 1-4 0-0 2; Erin Lemke 0-0 1-2 1. Totals: 16-51 18-33 54. 3-point field goals: 4, (Buffington, Hankinson, Cain, Diederich)

Bench helps Lady Cats in win over Metro Academy



Freshman Delaney Wright drives to the basket on a Metro Academy defender last Tuesday in Louisburg.

It wasn't a typical game for the Louisburg girls basketball team last Tuesday as it prepared for its next to last game of the season against rival Paola.

The Lady Cats hosted Metro Academy, an Olathe school that is not part of the Kansas State High School Activities Association, and one the team wasn't familiar with.

Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry decided to use that opportunity to go down deeper into his bench to get players some varsity time ahead of postseason play. Several Lady Cats made an impact on the game as they came away with a 46-36 win and picked up their second straight victory in the process.

Lowry subbed in five players at a time through most of the game and the Lady Cats were able to wear down Metro Academy.

"It was an opportunity for us to

look at some different lineups or rotations for postseason looks,” Lowry said. “It wasn’t our Senior Night and it was a different opponent than we are used to. It allowed us to do some different things and gave girls an opportunity to show what they can do.”

Junior Madilyn Melton was a force inside for the Lady Cats as she finished with a game-high 18 points, including an 8 for 9 performance from the free-throw line, and also had a team-high four steals.

Junior Sydni Keagle came off the bench and was second on the team in scoring, along with sophomore Brooklyn Diederich, who each finished with six points.

Freshman Delaney Wright also helped Louisburg defensively with four steals and senior Carson Buffington had a team-high seven rebounds and four assists. Juniors Erin Lemke and Ashley Moore, sophomores Madison Quinn and Megan Foote and freshman Jordan Mynsted also gave the Lady Cats good minutes

“I am extremely proud of those girls that came in off the bench,” Lowry said. “I think they were a little shell-shocked at first, but once they settled in, I thought their defense was really good, they caused turnovers, were active and did a really nice job.”

It was a back and forth game for

much of the first half, but the Lady Cats ended the second quarter strong as they went on an 11-0 run thanks to baskets from Melton, Diederich, Quinn and Mynsted to take a 27-19 halftime lead.

Metro Academy cut the Louisburg lead to one early in the fourth quarter, but the Lady Cats went on another 8-2 run to put the game away.

"As a coach, I need to see those starters or regular players show a little more intensity," Lowry said. "We have to get more intensity and that is on our captains to set the tone for us and they will do that. They have a done it all year. It was a little different night and had so many distractions, but now it is time to get dialed in."

LOU	9	18	6	12
- 46				
MA	11	8	10	7 -
36				

LOUISBURG: Madilyn Melton 5-10 8-9 18; Brooklyn Diederich 2-4 0-0 6; Sydni Keagle 1-1 3-4 6; Erin Lemke 2-4 0-0 5; Jordan Mynsted 2-5 0-0 4; Delaney Wright 1-4 2-3 4; Madison Quinn 0-2 2-2 2; Carson Buffington 0-2 1-2 1. Totals: 13-45 16-20 46. 3-point field goals: 4, (Diederich 2, Keagle, Lemke)

Defense carries Lady Cats in win over Bonner Springs



Louisburg senior guard Kennia Hankinson pushes the ball up the floor Thursday during the Lady Cats' game with Bonner Springs in Louisburg.

It was a frustrating first half for both Louisburg and Bonner Springs on Thursday at Louisburg High School.

The two teams combined for just 16 points offensively, and neither squad could get in any kind of rhythm.

As for the second half, Louisburg was able to work out its kinks on offense and still made it difficult on Bonner Springs. The Lady Cats scored 35 points in the second half and rolled to a 47-21 win as they got a nice victory heading into their final week of the season.

"They were playing hard and our defense set the tone for us," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "Our defense can be really good and we are able to make adjustments out of it. I am not sure

this group knows how good they can be if they can clean up some things like finishing at the rim, free throws and some discipline things like with our passing. They will grind it out and work their tails off defensively, but we have to get more offense out of our defense.”

Louisburg held Bonner Springs to just four first half points, and while the Braves were able to score a bit more in the second half, the Lady Cats’ defense still set the tone and it started with junior Haley Cain.

Cain had the assignment of shadowing Bonner Springs forward Kim Whetstone, who is the Braves’ main scoring threat on the inside. Cain and the Lady Cats held Whetstone to just three points and made it difficult for the Braves to score.

“I have to give credit to Haley for that,” Lowry said. “I had her shadow (Whetstone) most of the night and she did a good job of being physical with her and moving her out of place. Haley has been that good defensively all year for us. Sometimes it won’t show up on the stat sheet, but what she does is really good for our team.”

The Lady Cats (8-10) took a 12-4 lead into halftime and struggled offensively with leading scorer Madilyn Melton in foul trouble for most of the first half with three fouls.

Louisburg picked it up in the

second half and it started with senior Carson Buffington, who was all over the floor for the Lady Cats. Buffington was one rebound and three steals away from recording a triple-double as she affected the game on both sides of the floor.

Buffington finished the game with a team-high in points (16) and rebounds (nine). Defensively, she was a force as well with 10 deflections that led to seven steals.

"This is what she has been since she came here as a freshman," Lowry said of Buffington. "No one will out work her and no one will be tougher than she is. She will be that way until she walks off that floor in her last game."

Melton came back from foul trouble in the second half to finish with 15 points and junior Sydni Keagle came off the bench to finish with seven. Keagle gave the Lady Cats' some nice minutes with Melton on the bench in the first half.

"Our defense will hold us together, even if we have one or two players go out with foul trouble," Lowry said. "I thought Sydni did a nice job for us coming off the bench and again she plugs right in and defensively she knows where she needs to be and offensively she gave us a boost too."

Louisburg will try and make it two wins in a row tonight when it hosts Metro Academy for a 5 p.m. tipoff.

LOU	4	8	14	21
– 47				
BON	2	2	7	10
– 21				

LOUISBURG (8-10): Carson

Buffington, 5-10 5-5 16; Madilyn Melton 5-8 5-7 15; Sydni Keagle 2-4 2-5 7;

Alyse Moore 2-11 0-0 4; Jordan Mynsted 0-0 2-3 2; Kennia Hankinson 1-10 0-0 2;

Ashley Moore 0-0 1-4 1. Totals: 15-56 15-25 47. 3-point field goals: 2,
(Buffington, Keagle).

Lady Cats fall to Eudora in home contest



Louisburg's (from left) Brooklyn Diederich, Haley Cain and Madilyn Melton try and trap a Eudora player for a steal Tuesday in Louisburg.

The last time the Louisburg girls basketball team squared off with Eudora, the Lady Cats walked off the court after a 23-point loss.

It was a different game Tuesday when Louisburg hosted Eudora in its first of four straight home contests. The Lady Cats trailed by just six points early in the fourth quarter and were within striking distance of the No. 9-ranked team in the state.

Instead, foul trouble and turnovers hampered the Lady Cats in their comeback effort as they fell 49-39 and are now 7-10 on the season.

"We have to find ways to finish plays," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "Defensively we are doing a good job, but we are killing ourselves right now with turnovers, not finishing and those are things that are on us. No one is doing that stuff to us, we are doing it to ourselves."

"The good thing is, those are things we can fix, but it's just about the focus and discipline to be able to do it. This group wants to do the right thing, but it is just understanding and getting execution part right."

Louisburg trailed just 13-12 after a back-and-forth first quarter and was down 24-19 despite seniors Carson Buffington and Kennia Hankinson picking up three fouls. Buffington would go on to pick up her fourth in the third quarter and the Lady Cats managed just five points in the third.

The Lady Cats committed 24 turnovers against the Eudora zone

defense and also sent the Cardinals to the free-throw line 30 times as they converted 19 of them. Louisburg made it to the line just seven times.

Eudora's Riley Hiebert caused Louisburg problems all night as she finished with a game-high 22 points. Harper Schreiner added 13 and Reagan Hiebert added 11 in the win. The three Eudora players combined for 46 of the team's 49 points.

"We did a fairly good job at times against the zone," Lowry said. "Eudora has some nice players that present some issues, in particular with their outside shooting. We didn't contain on the drive very well and that is some things we need to clean up on. Part of it was we did some different defensive stuff with a 3-2, but we just got together (Tuesday) after having no practices or school for a while, but we have to be ready either way."

Louisburg sophomore Madilyn Melton led Louisburg in scoring with 14 points and also had a team-high eight rebounds in the loss. Hankinson also finished in double figures with 11 and junior Haley Cain added seven.

Sophomore Alyse Moore and Buffington each ended the game with six rebounds and Buffington also had a team-high six assists.

The Lady Cats will try and get back on track tonight when it hosts Bonner Springs. The game was originally

scheduled for Friday, but was moved up to due inclement weather. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

“It is not necessarily about wins or losses, but we need to have three good games going into postseason play,” Lowry said. “We are going to hammer on that. It is all about how we want to finish. How do the seniors want to finish this journey? How do their teammates want to finish this ride together? It has to be the work we do in practice and having a high intensity level in games.”

LOU	12	7	5	15
– 39				
EUD	13	11	9	16 –
49				

LOUISBURG (7-10): Madilyn Melton 6-13 2-2 14; Kennia Hankinson 3-11 2-2 11; Haley Cain 3-4 0-0 7; Alyse Moore 1-3 1-2 4; Brooklyn Diederich 1-7 0-0 3. Totals: 14-42 5-7 39. 3-point field goals: 6, (Hankinson 3, Cain, Diederich, Moore).

Lady Cats' rally falls short at Spring Hill



Louisburg senior Kennia Hankinson drives on Spring Hill's Lauren Delker on Friday in Spring Hill.

SPRING HILL – The Louisburg girls basketball team did exactly what head coach Shawn Lowry wanted them to do after halftime.

Lowry implored his team to come out focused, play aggressive and perform well offensively. The Lady Cats did all those things as they scored 19 third quarter points to take a slim lead over Spring Hill on the road Friday.

Louisburg just couldn't sustain it.

Spring Hill went on a big run to start the fourth quarter and the Lady Cats couldn't recover in a 53-44 loss to the Broncos at Spring Hill High School.

"We talk about the first few minutes of that third quarter being some of the most important of the game,"

Lowry said. "It kinda sets the tone and I thought the girls really took that to heart. I thought our leadership was really good and they were talking to each other out there and flying around. Once we get to that position, we need to find a way to take it to the next level."

Louisburg (7-9) held a 36-35 lead

late in the third quarter, but Spring Hill went on a 15-3 run in the fourth thanks to five Wildcat turnovers that turned into baskets on the other end. For the game, Spring Hill scored 20 points off the Louisburg mistakes.

Neither team shot well from the field, as Louisburg shot 26 percent for the game and Spring Hill made 32 percent of its shots. At the free-throw line, the Lady Cats were just 12 of 23.

"I sure like our group of kids and I really enjoy coaching them," Lowry said. "They give so much and they play together and are so unselfish. For them, I am not sure they realize the team that they can be if we can have that mentality that we can finish at the rim and be disciplined about making our free throws. It is those two things that is the gap for us right now and those are two of the easier parts of the game. The kids are playing hard, the defensive effort is really good and they are rebounding the ball for the most part, so we need to get some of those other things cleaned up."

Sophomore Madilyn Melton gave the Lady Cats a big boost inside as she finished with a team-high 18 points and nine rebounds. Fellow sophomore Alyse Moore also chipped in nine points and eight boards.

Senior Carson Buffington also had

a big night on the glass with a team-high 14 rebounds and finished with seven points.

After a back-and-forth first quarter, Spring Hill started to pull away and actually led by 11 points late in the first half. That is when the Lady Cats made their move as they outscored Spring Hill 19-9 in the third quarter and took the lead on two different occasions thanks to baskets from Melton and Moore.

Louisburg had its chances in the fourth, but were just 3 for 11 in the final period from the free-throw line and the Lady Cats weren't able to catch back up.

Lauren Delker led Spring Hill in scoring with 14 points and Alli Frank finished with 10. Bella Todd was also big for Spring Hill with eight points and 13 rebounds.

The Lady Cats return home for the final four games of the season starting Tuesday when they host Eudora.

Louisburg will then face off with Bonner Springs at home Friday.

"Eudora is going to be a really good basketball team that we see on Tuesday, and Bonner has some really good players on Friday and it will be tough," Lowry said. "But I think this group is going to respond in these last four games and I am excited to get back on the court with them."

44

SH

12

16

9

16

– 53

LOUISBURG (7-9): Madilyn Melton

7-14 4-6 18; Alyse Moore 3-7 2-2 9; Carson Buffington 1-7 4-6 7; Kennia

Hankinson 2-15 1-5 6; Haley Cain 1-2 0-0 3; Megan Foote 0-3 1-4 1. Totals:

14-55 12-23 44. 3-point field goals: 4, (Buffington, Hankinson, Cain, Moore)

Lady Cats get big win at home over Ottawa



Louisburg sophomores Madilyn Melton (left) and Alyse Moore team up to trap an Ottawa player Friday during the Lady Cats' 54-16 win over the Cyclones.

It had been a rough couple of weeks for the Louisburg girls basketball team as the Lady Cats had lost five of their last six games going into Friday's homecoming game with Ottawa.

As it turned out, a home game was

just what the Lady Cats needed.

Louisburg jumped on Ottawa from the start behind a strong defensive effort and rolled to a 54-16 win over the Cyclones. The Lady Cats forced 34 Ottawa turnovers, several of which, turned into easy baskets on the other end.

"Anytime you can hold a team to 16 points for the game, that is a good defensive effort," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "Sure we still had some breakdowns, but that is a good defensive effort.

"Ottawa has some young players that are going to be around for the next 2-3 years and are going to be good basketball players. It is part of their learning process now, kind of like some of the stuff we have been through."

The Lady Cats (7-8) also had one of their better games offensively as they shot 45 percent from the field and held Ottawa to just 16 percent from the field. Louisburg was also able to find success from the outside with six 3-pointers.



Louisburg junior Haley Cain puts up a shot Friday against Ottawa.

Louisburg made a statement early as it outscored Ottawa 17-5 in the first quarter and never looked back.

“Defense is creating offense for us and that was a big part of our success,” Lowry said. “We were also able to hit some nice shots on the perimeter and I think we are getting more confidence there. We did a lot of shooting in practice and I think our free throw shooting improved as well.”

Sophomore Brooklyn Diederich had a strong game offensively as she finished with a team-high 14 points, including a

pair of 3-pointers. Defensively, she was also all over the floor and led the team with five deflections and three steals.

Senior Carson Buffington also scored in double figures with 12 points and a team-high seven rebounds.

Sophomore Madilyn Melton also added 10 points and finished with five deflections and two steals on defense.

Louisburg will try for some revenge on Friday when it competes in its final road game of the season against Spring Hill and the Lady Cats will have some extra practice time to get ready.

Earlier in the season, the Lady Cats watched Spring Hill comeback from an 18-point deficit to steal a win and Louisburg is hoping to do the same this time around.

"It is an interesting time of the season, but it gives us a chance to work on some fundamental stuff and then get ready to play our last away game of the season against Spring Hill," Lowry said. "The girls like playing Spring Hill and they have a lot of friends on that team and they are excited to play them, especially after giving up an 18-point lead."

LOU	17	10	14	13 –
54				
OTT	5	5	6	0
– 16				

LOUISBURG: (7-8): Brooklyn

Diederich 5-7 2-2 14; Carson Buffington 4-8 2-3 12; Madilyn Melton 4-7 2-3 10;

Alyse Moore 3-5 0-0 6; Haley Cain 1-3 1-2 4; Kennia Hankinson 1-7 0-0 3; Megan

Foote 0-1 3-5 3; Jordan Mynsted 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 19-42 10-15 54. 3-point

field goals: 6, (Buffington 2, Diederich 2, Hankinson, Cain)