

Lady Cats down Anderson County for first victory



Louisburg freshman Haley Cain battles for a rebound during the final game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic against Anderson County at Burlington Middle School. Cain and sophomore Carson Buffington led the Lady Cats with seven rebounds each.

BURLINGTON – Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry has seen some sort of improvement from his team every time the Lady Cats hit the floor.

They just haven't had much to show for it – that was until Friday.

Louisburg faced off with Anderson County in the final game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic in Burlington and the Lady Cats got their first notch in the win column. The Lady Cats defeated Anderson County 46-34 to snap a three-game losing streak to start the season – a season that began by playing two state-ranked teams and a Class 5A program.

“We are currently building and we aren't the team that we are going to be midway through the season and we aren't the team we are going to be at the end of the year,” Lowry said. “We have a lot of growth to do yet, and I think the girls recognize that, but what I do love is how they are playing. The way they are getting on the floor for loose balls, the way they are defending and rebounding for the most part.”

The Lady Cats (1-3) had to do a lot of dirty work against an Anderson County team that wanted to slow down the pace of the game and the Bulldogs made it difficult for them to get in a rhythm offensively.

Louisburg won the game thanks to hustle plays and big baskets from seniors Madisen Simpson and Paige Buffington. Simpson, who scored a game-high 17 points, connected on three 3-pointers and came up with big baskets to stop an Anderson County run.

Buffington and fellow senior Tayler Lancaster were also big as they finished with nine and eight points, respectively.

“All of the girls are embracing their roles and that is really cool to see as a coach,” Lowry said. “We have some good senior leadership, and when there is adversity, they are going to step up. I don’t have any doubt in that.

“The others are going to follow their lead, and they are leading by what they are doing, and not what they are saying. You see girls like Paige, Tayler and (junior) Isabelle Holtzen diving for loose balls and that is great to see.”

Anderson County got off to a quick start with a 4-0 lead to start the game, but the Lady Cats took control of the game after that with an 18-6 run that carried over into the second quarter that started thanks to a couple quick baskets from senior Chloe Renner.



Senior Madisen Simpson draws a foul as she goes up for a shot during Friday's contest against Anderson County.

Simpson tied the game at the end of the first quarter with a steal and a score, and then gave the Lady Cats the lead with a pair of free throws. Simpson then hit a pair of 3-pointers in the second quarter, while Buffington converted on a 3-point play to help Louisburg to a 27-19 lead at halftime.

The Bulldogs cut the Louisburg lead to five points early in the third quarter, but would get no closer. Along with a few baskets down the stretch, the Lady Cats made their living at the free-throw line as they converted 18 of 31 for the game.

“I knew Anderson County was going to make it tough and that they were going to make it a sloppy dogfight and that is what it was,” Lowry said. “We talked about that going into the game. The good thing about that is that we can play that way. We can play several different styles. The girls were really excited to get the win, though.”

Although they didn’t have a big scoring line, the Lady Cats had a nice rebounding game from three players. Sophomore Carson Buffington and freshman Haley Cain had seven rebounds to lead Louisburg and senior Emalee Overbay had six in the win.

Junior Isabelle Holtzen also played well defensively with a team-high four steals and Simpson added three.

Louisburg will leave tournament play behind and get started in Frontier League play beginning Tuesday when it hosts Eudora for its home opener. The Lady Cats will then hit the road again next Monday to play Ottawa before taking a break for the holidays.

“After getting a chance to play Baldwin the other night in this tournament, we are ready to get league play started,” Lowry said. “More importantly, we are ready to play at home. We want to play in front of our crowd and fans and we are excited for that as much as anything.”

LOU	12	15	8	11 –
46				
AC	10	9	8	7

LOUISBURG (1-3): Madisen Simpson 17, Paige Buffington 9, Tayler Lancaster 8, Chloe Renner 4, Carson Buffington 3, Haley Cain 2, Emalee Overbay 2, Ryan Caldwell 1. Totals: 12-41 18-31 46. 3-point field goals: 4, (Simpson 3, Lancaster)

Louisburg girls battle Baldwin in loss



Louisburg junior Isabelle Holtzen dribbles past a Baldwin defender Tuesday in the second game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic. The Lady Cats fell 56-50.

BURLINGTON – As Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry was gathering his things and getting ready to leave the floor, a group of parents walked over to him with something to say.

Those kind of conversations aren't always the most pleasant, especially after his Louisburg team just lost a hard fought contest. However, these parents weren't from his school – but his opponent.

“We had Baldwin parents stop us after the game and tell me that our kids play so hard and a great game,” Lowry said.

“Those are great things to hear. These girls give everything. They play their tails off and they are just tough kids.”

It wasn't something it could put in the win column, but for the Louisburg High School girls basketball team, Tuesday's game with Baldwin had its fair share of small victories.

The Lady Cats faced off with the Bulldogs in the second game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic at Burlington Middle School and left with a 56-50 loss. Still, against one of the top teams in the Frontier League, Louisburg showed it wasn't going to back down.

Louisburg (0-3) trailed by as many as 17 points in the second quarter and whittled the Baldwin lead all the way down to a two possession game late in the fourth quarter. The Lady Cats did all this as they were saddled with foul trouble for most of the contest.

Starters Carson Buffington, Paige Buffington and Madisen Simpson all had three fouls in the first half and the Lady Cats had to rely on their bench for much of the second quarter and into the second half.



Senior Paige Buffington puts up a shot in the lane Tuesday against Baldwin at Burlington.

Juniors Isabelle Holtzen, Haven Turner and Ryan Caldwell, along with freshman Haley Cain, all gave Louisburg valuable minutes to keep the game within reach.

“That is a good team we played,” Lowry said. “Baldwin is as good as any team that we will see and there are a lot of good players in that group. We had other kids step up when we

needed them to. We had freshmen and sophomores come and contribute when we need them. That was great to see. We had a lot of players that had to sit down and just couldn't play. We had players foul out at the end and we had players still battle away and that is awesome to see."

Louisburg whittled the Baldwin lead to single digits in the third quarter on a quick 6-0 run on baskets from Paige Buffington, Carson Buffington and Lancaster as Baldwin battled foul trouble itself.

Baldwin ballooned its lead to double digits again in the fourth quarter, but with 45 seconds left Lancaster hit a 3-pointer to cut the lead to six again. Louisburg could get no closer.

Still, the Lady Cats outscored Baldwin 25-17 in the second half and hope to carry that forward for the rest of the season.

"We have struggled a lot with the third quarter," Lowry said. "But this time we won the third and fourth quarters and that was big for us. It is a confidence builder because we haven't been doing that. We haven't been winning that third quarter, which is something that I think is important for the entire game.

Simpson led Louisburg in scoring with a team-high 15 points and Lancaster also finished in double figures with 11. Carson and Paige Buffington each added seven points.

Carson also pulled down a team-high six rebounds and senior Emalee Overbay added five. Holtzen came off the bench to lead Louisburg with four steals.

Louisburg will try for its first win of the season Friday in the final game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic as it faces off with Anderson County.

BAL	17	22	8	9
- 56				
LOU	12	13	13	12 -
50				

LOUISBURG (0-3): Madisen Simpson 15, Tayler Lancaster 11, Paige Buffington 7, Carson Buffington 7, Isabelle Holtzen 6, Haley Cain 1, Ryan Caldwell 1. Totals: 13-33 20-31 50. 3-point field goals: 4, (Simpson 2, Lancaster, Holtzen)

BUFFINGTON BREAKS REBOUND RECORD IN LOSS

Louisburg sophomore Carson Buffington had the night of her life Monday – at least as far as rebounds are concerned.

Buffington broke her own school rebounding record as she pulled down 22 boards in the first round game of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic against Burlington. In the season opener, Buffington pulled down 18 rebounds against Pittsburg on Friday when she eclipsed her school record of 17 a year ago.

“That is impressive,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “To average about 20 rebounds in two games is pretty good. I peeked at the state record and it is like 423, which is a crazy number. Who knows though, Carson has a lot of ball to play left.”

Buffington’s record-breaking performance was the lone positive in what was a rough night for Louisburg as it lost to Burlington 60-35. Burlington, which is ranked No. 4 in Class 4A-Division II, put pressure on the Lady Cats for most of the night.

Louisburg trailed 40-26 going into the final period, but Burlington went on a 20-9 run in the final frame to secure the win.

“It was ugly for us,” Lowry said. “It was night and day from how we played against Baldwin. Our effort wasn’t really good and our defense wasn’t where it needed to be.”

Paige Buffington led Louisburg in scoring with nine points and Tayler Lancaster finished with eight. Carson Buffington also had seven points and four steals in the loss, while senior Emalee Overbay added seven rebounds.

BUR	12	16	12	20	–
60					
LOU	7	12	9	9	
– 35					

LOUISBURG: Paige Buffington 9, Tayler Lancaster 8, Carson Buffington 7, Haley Cain 4, Madisen Simpson 3, Isabelle Holtzen 3, Emalee Overbay 2, Chloe Renner 1. Totals: 13-72 7-23 35. 3-point field goals: 4, (Lancaster 2, P. Buffington, Simpson)

Lady Cats fall to Pittsburg in season opener



Louisburg senior Emalee Overbay stretches out for a rebound

Friday during the Lady Cats' season opener at Pittsburg High School. Overbay finished with seven rebounds in a 51-35 loss.

PITTSBURG – It went up against a bigger school on its home floor, but the Louisburg girls basketball team didn't back down.

The Lady Cats traveled to Pittsburg for their home opener Friday and stayed with the Purple Dragons for much of the contest, but Pittsburg used a couple different runs to pull away for a 51-35 win over Louisburg.

Both teams got out and ran, especially in the first half, which made for a back-and-forth contest for much of the night.

"I liked it," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "At this point, with this being the first game out against a good 5A team who will probably win their league, I thought we did OK. This is a tough place to play. We work hard enough though that we can play any style of play."

Louisburg made things difficult on Pittsburg early as it took a one-point lead when sophomore Carson Buffington got an offensive rebound put back to give the Lady Cats a 12-11 lead. Down 13-12 to start the second quarter, Paige Buffington connected on a 3-pointer to give Louisburg the lead right back.

The game was tied again with six minutes left in the second quarter when senior Madisen Simpson hit a jump shot to give Louisburg a two-point lead again. It was there where Pittsburg went on an 11-2 run toward the end of the first half.

Senior Tayler Lancaster knocked down a 3-pointer and Simpson hit a basket to cut the Pittsburg lead to four with 33 seconds left in the first half, but Louisburg could get no closer.

The Lady Cats had a chance to get back in the game at the

free-throw line, but couldn't convert as they were 5-for-17 for the game.

"I think Pittsburg might have been a little shocked that we were playing that tough early," Lowry said. "We have a lot of stuff to shore up like free throws and stuff around the basket, but it is all fixable.

"You can't leave free throws on the table, especially against a team like this. It also starts to build upon itself. If you aren't hitting those, then the score starts to spread out a little bit, it starts to affect your other shooting too."



Louisburg senior guard Tayler Lancaster finished the game with a team-high 11 points.

Lancaster led Louisburg in scoring with 11 points, while Paige

Buffington and Simpson each finished with eight points.

Carson Buffington added seven points in the loss, but that wasn't where she made the most impact. Carson pulled down a career-high 18 rebounds, eclipsing her previous high of 17 rebounds last season.

"Carson takes a great deal of pride in doing something that very few want to give the kind of effort that is required," Lowry said.

Pittsburg's Taylor Muff also proved to be a difficult matchup as the 5-foot-11 forward brought the ball up the floor, drove the basket and hit baskets from all over the floor. Muff, who has signed with Northern Colorado to play volleyball, is a state track champion.

Louisburg senior Emalee Overbay drew the challenge of guarding Muff for most of the night and did her job as she, and the rest of the Lady Cats, held her to 13 points.

"She is a really good player," Lowry said of Muff. "She is one of the best players that we will get a chance to see this year. But I thought Emalee did a good job on her. Emalee is a good defender, she is physical and she limited her a little bit. I thought a lot of our individual efforts were good. Pittsburg has some good guards and I thought Madisen, Paige, Tayler and Isabelle (Holtzen) all did good things defensively."

Pittsburg pulled away in the third quarter as it opened the frame on a 12-2 run and built a 15-point lead late. Louisburg struggled to find an offensive rhythm in the second half as it scored just 11 points in the two quarters combined.

"The first couple minutes of the second half was just a stalemate," Lowry said. "Both teams were trying to find some rhythm in that first quarter and we just couldn't. That is something we are going to have to fix. Last year, we weren't a

very good third quarter team and that is going to have to change. We have to play well in the third quarter. We can't play a decent half and then come out flat."

Louisburg will have a busy week ahead of itself this week as it competes in the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic in Burlington. The Lady Cats will play Burlington, the No. 4 in Class 4A-Division II, tonight and then face No. 8 Baldwin (4A-DII) on Tuesday. The tournament will wrap up with games Friday.

"It is going to be fun," Lowry said of the tournament. "They have worked their tails off in practice and they are just happy to be on the court playing someone. We are going to be playing two ranked teams back to back in Burlington and Baldwin and the girls are ready to go play them. That is what I like about this group is they are tough kids."

LOU	12	12	5	6 -
		35		
PITT	13	17	12	9 -
		51		

LOUISBURG (0-1): Tayler Lancaster 11, Madisen Simpson 8, Paige Buffington 8, Carson Buffington 7, Haley Cain 1. Totals: 12-55 5-17 35. 3-point field goals: 6, (Lancaster 3, P. Buffington 2, Simpson)

Lady Cats ready to build off last season



Louisburg's Madisen Simpson is one of five seniors on the Lady Cats basketball team this season as those players look to lead Louisburg starting Friday when they travel to Pittsburg in their season opener.

The Louisburg High School girls basketball team took more than its fair share of lumps from a season ago.

Louisburg featured a lineup of underclassmen, with little varsity experience and low numbers forced a lot of freshmen and sophomores into big spots for the Lady Cats. All that equaled to just a three-win season, but this year they hope those experiences turn into positives.

The Lady Cats return all but one starter from a season ago, and with that, have a strong five-member senior class to help lead the way through what is a difficult Frontier League schedule.

"Last season was good from the perspective that this group never wavered from the process in how they prepared or what they gave in games," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They have carried that same mentality into this preseason and it has shaped the team's identity."

That identity is a hard-working group that goes after every loose ball and rebound, finds themselves in the right spots on offense and is aggressive on defense.

It is the senior class of Madisen Simpson, Paige Buffington and Emalee Overbay that helped shape that identity a season

ago and they have joined up with a pair of new seniors – Tayler Lancaster and Chloe Renner – to continue the same type of play.

All five seniors figure to play big minutes for the Lady Cats this season as Lancaster will join Simpson and Buffington at the guard spot, while Renner will help out Overbay in the post.

“Paige, Madisen and Emalee will have been in the program for all four years,” Lowry said. “They have each grown so much in that time and have really matured into good leaders. They embrace the process, they are great teammates and have a great deal of pride in their program.

“Chloe and Tayler are a great fit and have both made an immediate impact to our team by their work ethic and discipline in learning their offensive and defensive responsibilities.”



Sophomore Carson Buffington led the Frontier League in rebounding a season ago and looks to do the same this year.

The Lady Cats also return their top post player from last season in sophomore Carson Buffington. As a freshman, Buffington led the Frontier League with 11 rebounds a game, which earned her honorable mention all-league and all-state accolades.

Junior guard Isabelle Holtzen also figures to see playing time for the Lady Cats after logging several varsity minutes as a sophomore. That group of seven players could also expand as the season goes on.

“We should have a good rotation with those players,” Lowry said. “There are also some juniors, sophomores and freshmen that I expect to contribute in various roles this season.

“I would say our strengths at this point are our senior leadership, returning some experienced players that understand how we want to play and that our players are unselfish in everything they give.”

The schedule doesn't get any easier for the Lady Cats as it features a round robin with their fellow Frontier League teams, including state-ranked squads in No. 2 Paola (4A-Division I) and No. 8 Baldwin (4A-Division II).

However, the fact the Lady Cats return all but one starter from a season ago should help them navigate through some rough waters.

“It is definitely a positive to return most of the players in this year's sophomore, junior and senior classes,” Lowry said. “We were able to get right into the core of our work and allowed for more intense competition.

“The Frontier League will again have some of the best 4A and 5A teams. In addition to a very strong league, we have the opportunity to play some non-conference and tournament games against some very good, ranked teams. With all this said, I trust in our players to give great effort and compete with great pride every time we take the floor against these teams.”

Louisburg opens its season Friday when it travels to Pittsburg for a 6 p.m. tipoff. It is a game the players have been waiting for since the end of last season.

“The girls have worked hard in preparing for the upcoming season,” Lowry said. “Our seniors have helped foster an environment that is competitive and positive with their work ethic and attitudes. As with each year, we stress the importance of competing hard on every rep and every play.

“The girls are always anxious to start playing games after the preseason conditioning work and three weeks of practice.”

Lady Cats bring program together at team camp



Isabelle Holtzen drives to the basket and tries to get up a shot while being defended by Paige Buffington on Friday during the team’s scrimmage on the final day of camp.

Walking onto the floor with so many young players last season, the Louisburg girls basketball team sometimes had its back against the wall before the game even started most nights.

The Lady Cats had a lot of inexperience, low numbers and were forced to play a lot of underclassmen. That resulted in a three win season, but they found a lot of positives in the process.

Whether it was watching underclassmen grow, playing state-ranked teams close or coming together as a team, Louisburg has plenty of things to build off of and it started last week.

Coach Shawn Lowry held his week-long team camp as 29 high school players took part in sessions from 8 to 9:30 every morning. Lowry also held a middle school session all week, along with a fourth through sixth grade portion for three days and a first through third grade mini-camp last Thursday.



Carson Buffington (4) goes up for a shot while being defended by teammate Julianne Finley on Friday during the team's scrimmage.

In all, Lowry had 110 campers fill the Louisburg High School gymnasium in what was a busy week of basketball.

"It was a really good week of camp at all levels," Lowry said. "From the first minute of camp, our upperclassmen set the tone with great attitudes, great effort and great leadership. With the number of girls returning to play from last season's team, we were able to get right into a lot of our offensive and defensive team work."

Lowry also tried something different this season as he invited all the campers from fourth grade on up to participate in a scrimmage-like atmosphere in front of their parents Friday on the final day of camp.

The camp ended with a feast of pizza and cookies, but more importantly, Lowry wanted to bring everyone together to experience what life as Lady Cat basketball players is all about.

“It is important that we create excitement and pride for those that have been Lady Cats, those that are currently Lady Cats and those that will someday be a Lady Cat,” Lowry said. “It was great to see the older girls cheering and high-fiving the younger girls. It was nice to see all the parents that came to watch and afterwards seeing the high school girls hanging out with many of the younger girls.”

Even though the camp is over, the Lady Cat players still have a lot of work in front them. They will have open gym workouts twice a week through mid-July and the players also have weight sessions twice a week.

Louisburg will also compete in a summer league in Shawnee Mission for the next month.

Still, Lowry believes the team camp was a great way to kickoff the summer for his players and he likes what he has seen thus far.

“For us team camp is primarily about establishing our program’s culture and shaping our team’s identity,” Lowry said. “We find out who are leaders will be because they are pushed to the forefront as the week progresses. We also find out what younger players will compete.

“We have several girls returning that gained some very good experience last season. As part of that experience they know what kind of effort they have to give, what kind of teammate

they have to be and they have more confidence and trust in each other.”

Buffington earns postseason honors



Louisburg High School freshman Carson Buffington dives on the floor for a loose ball during a game earlier this season. Buffington led the Frontier League with 11 rebounds a contest and earned honorable mention all-league and all-state honors.

It was just her first year of varsity basketball, but Carson Buffington seemed to make quite an impression on the rest of the Frontier League coaches.

The Louisburg forward did a lot of the dirty work for the Lady Cats this season and the coaches made sure she was rewarded for it. Buffington earned a spot on the all-Frontier League basketball team as an honorable mention when the team was released last week.

Buffington was the lone selection for the Lady Cats after they finished with a 3-18 record, but she had a season to remember.

As a freshman, she led the league in rebounding with 11 boards a game to go along with four points and two steals a contest.

“Carson takes a great deal of pride and gives exceptional effort in rebounding the ball on both ends of the floor,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “She does many of those things coaches ask of their players when it comes to effort, hustle, character and being unselfish.

“She is the first one on the floor for a loose ball. She is a great teammate, always positive and encouraging, and I expect her to develop into a good leader for her team this offseason.”

The honors didn’t stop there, however.

Buffington also earned all-state honors as she was named to the Class 4A-Division I honorable mention team by the Topeka Capital-Journal.

As for the rest of the all-league team, Paola, which finished as a state runner-up, led the way with four all-league selections. Baldwin, which made the state tournament in Class 4A-Division II, also had four selections.

2016 All-Frontier League Girls Basketball Team

First team: Morgan Laudan, senior, Paola; Kyna Smith, sr., Baldwin; Matti Morgan, jr., Paola; Maddie Neufeld, sr., Baldwin; Kamryn Shaffer, soph., Ottawa.

Second team: Mariah Grizzle, soph., De Soto; Julia Johnson, jr., De Soto; Kristen Saucerman, sr., De Soto; Abby Ogle, soph., Baldwin; Taylor Williams, sr., Paola.

Honorable mention: Lauren Delker, fr., Spring Hill; Carson Buffington, fr., Louisburg; Meghan Goff, fr., Spring Hill; Taylor Cawley, jr., Baldwin; Brynn Ferguson, sr., Ottawa; Chandler Karr, jr., Paola.

Paola AD proposes bill to help classification issue



Last October, Paola activities director Jeff Hines went to a Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) regional meeting to get updates on classification issues.

Six months later, Hines found himself in Topeka, in front of the Kansas Senate Education Committee to talk about a bill that could change the way schools are classified.

On Thursday, Hines sat in front of the committee to discuss Senate Bill 464 – a bill that he proposed with guidance of Sen. Caryn Tyson.

Statute 72-130 establishes specific guidelines pertaining to the organizational structure and functions of KSHSAA. Senate Bill 464 would change one part of the statute and strike the line which allows schools to be classified only by student enrollment.

“The total number of students in schools is a great starting point for classifying them,” Hines said. “It makes sense that the largest schools should play the largest schools and the smallest schools should play the smallest schools, but there

are other things that need to be considered.”

For several months, KSHSAA has had a classification committee discuss different ways to have a competitive balance with its member schools. They came up with ideas of reducing the number of classifications or changing the number of schools in a division.

“There were no other factors being considered and that bothered me,” Hines said, “All that would do was reshuffle the schools just a little bit but we would have the same problem.”

The problem for the committee was its hands were tied thanks to the wording in Statute 72-130 that specifically states schools can only be classified by enrollment numbers and nothing else.

So Hines went to work and helped create Senate Bill 464, which does not give a specific solution to the problem, but rather would take wording out of the statute to allow KSHSAA to figure out how to classify schools on its own.

Hines gave a 15 minute testimony in front of the committee and then answered questions from the committee members for more than 30 minutes afterward. Before the hearing, Hines received support from every member in the Frontier League, Pioneer League and all but two schools in the Kaw Valley League, as those two didn't respond before the hearing.

Following Hines' testimony, Sen. Vicki Schmidt, R-Topeka, had concerns as to why KSHSAA did not come in front of the committee itself to ask for changes.

Hines informed the committee that it would be redundant for KSHSAA to endorse the plan, because if approved, member schools would still have to vote on it. He believes Bill 464 would let KSHSAA come up with a system and let schools improve it, instead of the legislature.

“KSHSAA wants to be neutral because this proposal would affect different schools in different ways,” Hines said. “It could be very beneficial to some schools and others may not like it because they might have to move up a class. So, why should KSHSAA have to pick sides in it and pit member against member? It doesn’t have to be that way in my opinion.

“Yes, a school that has to move up a classification might not like it, but is it the best thing overall for the association? They can’t look themselves in the mirror and say ‘No, this isn’t the right thing to do?’

A major problem for some member schools in KSHSAA is they do not believe it is competitively equal the way it is currently structured.

“I am not a believer in participation medals,” Hines said. “If they are kindergartners, sure, but when you start playing, part of being successful later in life is learning how to compete. We all competed for a job when you have gone in for an interview and that is good. You need to have that skillset and I am not saying that we need to give more trophies out and give everyone a shot, but I just want a system in place that is equitable for all so that some don’t have an unfair advantage at the expense of the rest and I think that is what is happening.”

One of the problems is the lack of balance between championships won between public and private high schools. Hines did research and presented numbers at the hearing at the number of state championships won between private and public schools from 2004 to 2014.

Here is what he found.

- Private schools make up slightly less than 8 percent of the KSHSAA membership.
- Private schools have won slightly less than 32 percent of the state championships.

- Based on membership percentage, private schools should only win approximately 8 percent of the titles, not nearly 32 percent.
- Private schools are winning four times more state titles than should be expected based on their memberships.
- Private schools are nine times more likely to win five or more state titles than their public school peers.

“In that period of time, I looked for who has won five or more state titles,” Hines said. “That is a difficult feat. You look at Paola’s history and we have won like seven and Louisburg has won three in 100-plus years. During those 10 years, 37 percent of those private schools won five or more during that time and public schools had 4 percent win five or more. Private schools are nine times more likely to become a dynasty or a successful program with strong tradition. You tell me how we are all the same?”

Another problem they are facing is schools with a high percentage of low socioeconomic status (SCS) students, cannot compete against fellow schools in their own classification in many activities, including football.

“There is a whole bunch of schools in the Kansas City, Kansas school district that are 6A or 5A that have no business competing against those really hard schools,” Hines said. “They don’t have resources, they don’t have the students, there is no interest and they have all those things working against them and I feel bad for those kids. Who wants to trot out against some of those bigger schools and know you are going to get your ears boxed in? That is not fun. Moreover, it is not challenging for the kids those schools are playing against.”

Hines believes competition is important when it comes to the growth of the student athlete and it is beneficial for the school and its community.

“Not only what it does for grades, but for what it does for the human spirit,” Hines said.

“When I was the FFA advisor in Paola, we won 10 state championships in nine years and you could tell the interest by the students and the community went through the roof. You can say the same thing about Louisburg and what Jim Morgan does with his FFA kids. People flock to success.

“Naturally, when they are there they feel better about themselves, they want to work harder in the classroom to stay eligible and kids that want to stay involved are going to be more successful in life. It is all about having the chance to be successful.”

During Hines’ testimony in front of the Senate Education Committee, not all of the legislatures seemed open to the idea. Molly Baumgardner, R-Louisburg, asked Hines if he would be willing to relinquish state funding if the legislature agrees to release oversight of how KSHSAA classifies schools.

“If we relinquished the funding behind it, (high school activities) would disappear,” Hines said at the hearing.

No action was taken following the hearing, but the committee chairman spent 15 minutes with him and Tyson to help them strategize on what to do next.

One option is to amend the bill to include more specifics that could include a multiplier or a separate division for private schools and a low SCS school de-multiplier.

Another option, Hines said, would be to have the classification committee draft a letter to the Senate Education Committee that states they would like to study these other factors as part of a proposal for revamping the classification system, but not until they feel the legislature is open to changing the law.

Whatever decision comes next, however, Hines wants it to be

decided by multiple people within KSHSAA on how to proceed.

“I don’t feel comfortable making that change because I feel a committee needs to do the work,” Hines said. “I shouldn’t be doing it, nor should 11 legislators, you need more. We should let the classification committee work on it and hopefully we can get some things accomplished.

“The only way to allow this to happen is to remove the barrier in place that exists due to the state statute.”

Paola ends Lady Cats’ season



Louisburg junior Paige Buffington tries to get a shot up over a couple Paola defenders Thursday during the first round of the Class 4A-Division I substate tournament at Louisburg High School. Paola defeated Louisburg 67-39.

It was a cliché performance for the Louisburg girls basketball team – but that was a good thing.

The Lady Cats squared off against No. 1 seed Paola in the first round of the Class 4A substate tournament Thursday and as the old cliché goes “they gave everything they had.”

However, sometimes that just isn’t enough – especially against one of the top teams in Class 4A-Division I.

Despite a competitive first half, Louisburg couldn't keep up with Paola in a 67-39 loss at Louisburg High School. Paola would beat Spring Hill 52-36 in the substate championship game two days later, while the Lady Cats saw their season come to an end.

"We came into this game saying that we were going to leave it all on the table, we are going to give every ounce we have for every quarter and for every play," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "For the most part, the effort and toughness was there and I can't say enough about these kids."

The Lady Cats weathered the storm early as they found themselves down 23-10 going into the second quarter and were having some problems slowing the Paola offense down. Louisburg slowed Paola down a little in the second and the Lady Cats even outscored the Panthers 15-14 to only trail by 12 points at halftime.



Louisburg senior Megan Lemke puts up a shot during Thursday's substate tournament game in Louisburg.

Louisburg cut the deficit to eight points at one time early in the second quarter after back-to-back 3-pointers from Paige Buffington and Madisen Simpson. However, Paola's Matti Morgan hit a 3-pointer with under a minute left to push the lead back up to double digits before halftime.

To start the second half, Louisburg junior Emalee Overbay hit a basket to make it a 10-point game, but shortly after is when Paola went on a tear. The Panthers proceeded to go on a 22-0 run and were 11-for-11 from the free-throw line during that span.

Paige Buffington led the Lady Cats in scoring with 12 points, and in her final game as a Lady Cat, senior Megan Lemke finished with 10 points and six rebounds.

"Megan Lemke has set a great example for her teammates by her work ethic, leadership and unselfishness and I can't say enough what a big part it was for our team this year," Lowry said. "It was hard in the locker room with her after the game, that is for sure. It is hard because you get so close to them."

The Lady Cats also had several young players step up this season, including freshman Carson Buffington, who ended the Paola contest with 13 rebounds and averaged more than 10 rebounds a game.

Although Louisburg finished with a 3-18 record, it was the effort the team gave throughout the season – on and off the court – that left Lowry optimistic for the future.

"We talk about different expectations and things, but my expectation for them was what they gave out on the floor and the character that they did it with," Lowry said. "It is such a success for me. When they leave this program, I hope that they look back and say they got more out of this than playing basketball."

LOUISBURG	10	15
4	10 – 39	
PAOLA	23	14
22	8 – 67	

LOUISBURG (3-18): Paige Buffington 4-8 1-2 12; Megan Lemke 4-13 2-4 10; Carson Buffington 3-8 0-0 7; Kennia Hankinson 1-4 0-2 3; Madisen Simpson 1-8 0-0 3; Emalee Overbay 1-1 0-0 2; Haven Turner 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 15-53 3-11 39. 3-point field goals: 6, (P. Buffington 3, C. Buffington 1, Hankinson 1, Simpson 1)

Lady Cats fall to No. 4 Paola in finale



Louisburg junior Emalee Overbay looks to get up a shot during the Lady Cats' game with Paola earlier this season in Louisburg. The Lady Cats fell 74-30 to Paola on Friday at Paola High School.

PAOLA – Going on the road for an opposing team's senior night

is difficult for any program, but it is even more difficult when you are going up against a ranked opponent.

The Louisburg High School girls basketball team faced off with Paola, the No. 4 ranked team in Class 4A-Division I, on Friday in Paola and it was a challenge from the opening tip.

Paola was sharp from the start as it defeated Louisburg 74-30 and captured its fourth consecutive Frontier League title. As for the Lady Cats, it was hard to keep up with Paola as the Panthers connected on 11 3-pointers to pull away.

The Panthers jumped out to a 26-12 lead at the end of the first quarter and never looked back. Paola led 45-17 at halftime.

Louisburg junior Madisen Simpson was a bright spot offensively for the Lady Cats as she racked up 17 of the team's 30 points, including four 3-pointers.

Fellow junior Paige Buffington added seven points in the loss and freshman Carson Buffington led Louisburg in the rebounding department with a game-high 14 boards.

Although the regular season is now complete, it doesn't get any easier for the Lady Cats, who will host the Class 4A substate tournament beginning on Thursday. Louisburg (3-17), the No. 4 seed, will meet up with No. 1 seed Paola (18-2) again at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday.

No. 2 Spring Hill (11-9) and No. 3 Fort Scott (7-13) will play at 6 p.m. on Thursday and the two winners will play in the championship game at 6 p.m. on Saturday.

LOUISBURG	12	5
11	2 - 30	
PAOLA	26	19

LOUISBURG (3-17): Madisen Simpson 5-13 3-4 17; Paige Buffington 2-7 2-2 7; Isabelle Holtzen 1-6 1-2 3; Haven Turner 1-1 0-0 2; Megan Lemke 0-8 1-2 1. Totals: 9-38 7-10 30. 3-point field goals: 5, (Simpson 4, Buffington 1)

De Soto pulls away from Lady Cats



Louisburg's Megan Lemke (left) and Carson Buffington go up for a rebound during Tuesday's home contest against De Soto. The Lady Cats came up short in a 55-31 loss on senior night.

In its first meeting with De Soto, the Louisburg girls basketball team had a hard time stopping De Soto's inside game.

So when Tuesday's contest came around, the Lady Cats took on the challenge to slow down De Soto's post players – and they did. In doing so, however, Louisburg saw what the other half of the De Soto lineup can do.

De Soto connected on seven 3-pointers, many of which came in

the second half and Louisburg didn't have the offensive firepower to keep up in the 55-31 senior night loss.

"We defended it much better, but we just have to pick your poison with them," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They are a good young team and they are pretty solid.

"They hit those shots in the second half, but at the same time they had a couple big girls that we had to defend inside. The first half we kept it close, but in the second half they just hit some big shots."

Following the game, two Lady Cats and their parents were honored during senior night ceremonies as Megan Lemke and Megan Roy played their final regular season home contest.



Seniors Megan Lemke (left) and Megan Roy were honored during a senior night ceremony following their game Tuesday against De Soto.

"I can't say enough about both girls," Lowry said. "Megan Roy has been hurt, but it was a situation where she was helping

her team out and she got injured. I am so glad that she decided to come out and play again. She is an absolute pleasure to be around and such a great kid.

“This is Megan Lemke’s fourth year playing. She will be a four-year, three-sport athlete and she is our team captain. The girls follow her and love her to death. She is a great teammate and I am going to miss both of those girls a lot.”

As for the game, the Lady Cats (3-16) got off to a good start and held a 9-7 lead with under a minute remaining in the first quarter on a 3-pointer from Madisen Simpson, but De Soto rallied to take a 12-11 lead going into the second.

De Soto opened the second quarter with a mini 6-1 run, which led to a 23-16 halftime lead, but the Lady Cats were still in the game.

After halftime is when De Soto started to pull away. It went on a 10-0 run to start third quarter and outscored Louisburg 22-8 to lead 45-27 going into the fourth quarter.

“We came in with a game plan and for the most part our players did pretty well,” Lowry said. “There were a few breakdowns, but they did what we asked them to do. De Soto just hit shots. They are a good team.”

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 10 points, while Lemke added seven points, seven rebounds and a team-high three steals. Freshman Carson Buffington led Louisburg with 11 rebounds on the night.

Louisburg will end its regular season Friday when it travels to Paola in its final game before the substate tournament. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOUISBURG

11

5

8

7 - 31

DE SOTO

12

11

22

10 - 55

LOUISBURG (3-16): Madisen Simpson 2-10 4-4 10; Megan Lemke 1-6 5-8 7; Isabelle Holtzen 2-5 1-2 5; Carson Buffington 1-5 2-6 4; Kennia Hankinson 0-5 3-4 3; Haven Turner 1-2 0-0 2. Totals: 7-33 15-24 31. 3-point field goals: 2, (Simpson 2)