

Louisburg shoots way past Spring Hill



Louisburg senior Paige Buffington tries to dribble past a Spring Hill defender Thursday during the Lady Cats' home contest against the Broncos. Louisburg defeated Spring Hill 60-49.

It never mattered how close Spring Hill got – or even when the Broncos took the lead for a few moments – Louisburg wasn't about to give in, especially on its home floor.

Louisburg got a career-high in points from senior Madisen Simpson and the Lady Cats connected on 10 3-pointers as they put away Spring Hill, 60-49, in front of a large contingent of fans Tuesday at Louisburg High School.

The Lady Cats used a big second half to overcome a halftime deficit and improve their record to 5-4 and are currently 3-1 in Frontier League play.

"This is a big win for us and another one for us to build off of," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "After not playing for a week prior to this, it was good to come back and play well. This was a team that is in our league, in our substate and someone we are going to see in a tournament coming up.

"It was really good to get this win on our home floor. We had a great crowd, a fantastic student section and it felt like

substate so that was neat for the girls to play in.”

Simpson provided the Lady Cats with several big baskets down the stretch as she connected on five of the team’s 10-3-pointers and scored 31 points, which was a new career high. Her previous personal best was set last month with a 28-point performance with a win at Ottawa.



Madisen Simpson drives to the basket for two points Thursday against Spring Hill. Simpson scored a career-

high 31 points.

"This is her senior year and she put a lot of work in on her own and it is showing for her now," Lowry said. "Madisen is playing with great confidence and she is playing her tail off all the way around. She is doing it defensively, offensively, she was our point guard in this game and she is taking care of the basketball for us. We are asking a lot of her, but that is why she is a captain."

The two teams stayed within a few points of each other in the first half, but Louisburg took a three point lead to end the first as Simpson finished the quarter with five straight points and sophomore Kennia Hankinson hit a 3-pointer to overcome a small Spring Hill lead.

Spring Hill found its rhythm offensively in the second quarter as it scored 18 points in the frame. Louisburg's Tayler Lancaster made a 3-pointer and Emalee Overbay hit a basket to open up a five point lead for the Lady Cats, but Spring Hill went on a 8-0 run to take a 22-19 advantage.

Simpson responded with back-to-back 3-pointers to give Louisburg the lead again, but the Broncos went on mini 7-2 run to take a 29-27 halftime lead.

Spring Hill played several different lineups and Louisburg had to adjust. Sometimes the Broncos would play with two post players in Savannah Leaton and Camie Williams who stand 6-0 and 6-1, respectively, and other times they would play with quicker lineups.



Isabelle Holtzen gets on the floor to tie up a Spring Hill player for a loose ball Thursday.

The Broncos would also try and change defenses to confuse the Lady Cats, but Louisburg was able to shoot itself out of any problem it encountered.

“Spring Hill mixes their defenses up quite a bit and give us different looks with their zone and man,” Lowry said. “I wasn’t sure what lineup they were going to start with, but we were prepared for those differences. We are not a big team, but you see how we play against big teams, and that is with toughness. Our girls will play with anyone no matter how tall they are.”

Louisburg took the lead right back to start the third quarter and never gave it back to the Broncos. Simpson and Lancaster

opened with back-to-back 3-pointers and eventually took a 42-36 lead into the fourth.

Spring Hill caught fire to start the fourth as Spring Hill's Lauren Delker hit back-to-back 3-pointers to tie it at 44-all with under five minutes left in the contest.

However, Louisburg's Paige Buffington and Lancaster answered with two consecutive 3-pointers of their own to stop the Spring Hill run and the Lady Cats were able to pull away from there.

"Those are just two more seniors that basically said there that they refuse to lose on their home floor," Lowry said. "It is a pride thing for us too. We want to defend this place and we work really hard to make sure we win as many games as we can at home."

Lancaster ended the game with nine points and was second on the team in scoring. Buffington finished with seven points, six assists and a pair of steals.

On the glass, sophomore Carson Buffington finished with a team-high 13 rebounds and guard Isabelle Holtzen was next with five.

The Lady Cats won't have to wait long to see Spring Hill again as they will face off with the Broncos Tuesday in the opening round of the Top Gun Tournament at Wellsville High School. Tipoff is set for 6:45 p.m., and if the Lady Cats advance, could meet Piper – the No. 1 team in Class 4A – in the next round.

"It is a fun tournament," Lowry said. "I would love to have our tournament back, but this one is great to play in. They do a lot of different things for the girls and we will play some great teams. The No. 1 team in the state is sitting there and there is an opportunity that we will get to play them. I know the girls are looking forward to the tournament."

LOU	14	13	15	18 –
60				
SH	11	18	7	13
– 49				

LOUISBURG (5-4): Madisen Simpson 31, Tayler Lancaster 9, Paige Buffington 7, Carson Buffington 4, Emalee Overbay 4, Kennia Hankinson 3, Chloe Renner 2. Totals: 19-49 12-18 60. 3-point field goals: 10, (Simpson 5, Lancaster 3, P. Buffington, Hankinson)

Lady Cats bounce back thanks to hustle plays



Louisburg sophomore Carson Buffington gets on the floor for a loose ball Tuesday in the Lady Cats' home game with Frontenac. Buffington finished with 10 points and 15 rebounds in the 50-27 win.

Following Friday's 30-plus point loss to state-ranked Baldwin, the Louisburg High School girls basketball team walked off the floor with one of the worst feelings possible.

Not only did the Lady Cats lose the game, they were beaten to loose balls, struggled defensively and it was a performance they just wanted to put behind them.

Before they did that, however, they wanted to use that game as motivation. Louisburg didn't want to experience that feeling again – and four days later – the Lady Cats changed all that.

The Lady Cats were on the right end of a blowout game this time around as they downed Frontenac 50-27 on Tuesday at Louisburg High School.

They were on the floor for loose balls, smothered Frontenac on defense and were aggressive on the glass – a total turnaround from Friday.

“We talked at practice that one game, good or bad, doesn't define us,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. ‘I said that is all about how we respond and react. That is who they are, that is their character that showed (Tuesday).

“I was really proud of the defensive effort and we got on the floor immediately. Anything that went on the floor we were battling for. They were disappointed in themselves last week and letting someone beat them to loose balls. That won't be happening with this group and it showed.”



Senior Chloe Renner goes up for a basket Tuesday against Frontenac.

In between all those floor burns, the Lady Cats (4-4) were also efficient offensively, especially in the first half. Louisburg jumped out to a 17-5 lead in the first quarter and outscored Frontenac 16-5 in the second to take a 33-14 halftime lead.

Senior Madisen Simpson provided Louisburg with a big boost

offensively, especially from behind-the-arch as she finished with 22 points, including four 3-pointers.

Sophomore Carson Buffington provided the Lady Cats with a presence down low with a double-double. Buffington scored 10 points and pulled down a team-high 15 rebounds to go along with several tussles on the floor for loose balls.

Senior Chloe Renner came off the bench to finish with nine points and six rebounds.

"We took care of the ball against a defense that we don't see a lot of and only had a couple days to prepare for," Lowry said. "I thought the girls did a nice job with that and understanding what they were supposed to do. We have some girls that are just flat out battling for everything and I can't say that enough. From the seniors, on down the line, everyone was just working hard.

"Carson was playing like a crazy woman out there and she was all over the floor for loose balls and rebounds and that was really fun to see."

Defensively, the Lady Cats frustrated Frontenac and held the Raiders' best post player, Kaylee Harper, to 13 points. Harper scored nine of Frontenac's first 11 points before picking up her second foul and the Lady Cats took advantage.

"She is a good player," Lowry said of Harper. "She is a nice player and we will see some other ones like that here pretty soon. It was a nice challenge for us to get to play someone like that. I thought everyone did a real nice job defensively."

Louisburg forced 14 steals and turned those into easy baskets in transition. Senior Paige Buffington was especially active as she had a team-high eight steals to go along with seven assists offensively.

The Lady Cats also rebounded well as they pulled down 17 offensive boards, which turned into several second chance opportunities.

"It is contagious in that when someone lays out for a play, it feeds, but it can be contagious the other way," Lowry said. "The moping and putting your head down is also contagious. We want to start out that we will battle for everything."

Louisburg will try for its second straight win Friday when it hosts De Soto for homecoming. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

"It is a big game for us and for where the league is at right now," Lowry said. "It is on our home floor and we are excited to play, especially after Tuesday."

LOU	17	16	9	8 –
50				
FRON	9	5	8	5 –
27				

LOUISBURG (4-4): Madisen Simpson 22, Carson Buffington 10, Chloe Renner 9, Kennia Hankinson 3, Haley Cain 2, Tayler Lancaster 2, Paige Buffington 2. Totals: 16-52 13-20 50. 3-point field goals: 5, (Simpson 4, Hankinson)

Baldwin ends Lady Cats'

winning streak



Louisburg sophomore Kennia Hankinson dives on the floor for a loose ball with a Baldwin player Friday at Baldwin High School. The Lady Cats fell to the No. 4 ranked Bulldogs, 65-26.

BALDWIN CITY – Just a month ago, the Louisburg girls basketball team played state-ranked Baldwin to a six-point game.

At the time, it was a step in the right direction for the Lady Cats.

The two teams saw each other again Friday when Louisburg traveled to Baldwin in its first game back from the holiday break.

It was a totally different contest.

Baldwin, the No. 4 team in Class 4A-Division I, jumped on the Lady Cats early and handed Louisburg a 65-26 loss. It was the first Frontier League loss for the Lady Cats and ended a three-game winning streak.

“It was a different Louisburg team this time around,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “It was that as much as anything. We have some things we need to work on. We are going to get back at it in practice. We have two home games this week and we are going to get back to work. We know this is a

process and journey. Baldwin is a really good team, but they didn't get our best shot."

Baldwin asserted itself early as it used a full-court press to force several first half turnovers and quick shots. The Lady Cats (3-4) also dealt with foul problems as they were never able to get in any kind of rhythm.

Following a Madisen Simpson 3-pointer that tied the game early in the first quarter, the Bulldogs went on a 19-4 run to take 17-point lead and the Lady Cats were unable to get much closer.

"I think a lot of it was just confidence for us," Lowry said. "It was mentally more than anything. We had a hard time with their press and our defense wasn't that great. We just need to get back at it in practice and get better."

Simpson led Louisburg in scoring with eight points, while senior Paige Buffington and sophomore Kennia Hankinson scored six and five points, respectively. Sophomore Carson Buffington finished with a team-high eight rebounds.

Baldwin's Abby Ogle led all scorers with 23 points.

Louisburg returns to action Tuesday when it hosts Frontenac and then will play its second home game Friday when it faces off with De Soto for homecoming. Tipoff for both games is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOU	7	8	7	4
- 26				
BAL	22	18	23	2 -
65				

LOUISBURG (3-4): Madisen Simpson 8, Paige Buffington 6, Kennia Hankinson 5, Isabelle Holtzen 3, Chloe Renner 3, Emalee

Overbay 1. Totals: 7-32 9-21 26. 3-point field goals: 3, (Simpson 2, Hankinson)

Lady Cats down Ottawa for third straight win



Louisburg senior Tayler Lancaster tries to drive around an Ottawa defender during the Lady Cats' game Monday in Ottawa. The Lady Cats defeated the Cyclones 55-40.

OTTAWA — Madisen Simpson had the type of scoring night only a handful players in Louisburg girls basketball history can relate to.

During Monday's game in Ottawa, Simpson exploded for a career-high 28 points, including 6-for-8 from 3-point range and the Cyclones didn't have an answer for the Louisburg senior guard.

More importantly, Simpson's scoring output helped give the Lady Cats a big boost in their 55-40 win over Ottawa. It was the third straight victory for Louisburg as it heads into the holiday break with a 3-3 record and a 2-0 mark in the Frontier League.

As big as Simpson was for the Lady Cats, it was their defense

that propelled them to a fast start as they finished with 15 steals on the night as they kept Ottawa at arm's length, despite a slow second quarter.

"I challenged some of the seniors at halftime and their response was great," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They responded like you would have hoped they would. I am really proud of them. I think the thing you are seeing too is that it is a collective effort. Madisen had a great night, obviously, but other girls did good things defensively and rebounding so it was a good team win."

Louisburg jumped out to a quick start as it took a 21-11 lead into the second quarter, and from there, the Lady Cats had a tough time keeping that same momentum going to finish the half as Ottawa outscored them 9-6.



Louisburg senior Madisen Simpson goes up for two of her game-high 28 points Monday in Ottawa.

The Lady Cats still took a 27-20 lead into halftime, but Lowry wanted to see more and the team responded to his challenge.

“We really came out strong,” Simpson said. “Our defense was high-intensity to start the game, but once the second quarter started we dropped a little bit. We got into a little bit of foul trouble, but we were able to pick it back up and worked

hard as a team. Even when the younger players came in at the end, they finished it for us and it really was a good win.”

The players seemed to take to heart whatever their coach said as Louisburg went on to outscore Ottawa 16-8 in the third quarter to go up by double digits and all but seal the win over the Cyclones.

As much as Simpson helped the Lady Cats in the scoring department, she also performed on the defensive end. Simpson, along with sophomore Carson Buffington and senior Tayler Lancaster, led the team with four steals each.

Senior Paige Buffington and junior Isabelle Holtzen also provided a lot of defensive pressure on the perimeter.

“Madisen has taken that point guard role on for us this year and she has not missed a beat there for us,” Lowry said. “However for her, it all starts defensively. When she came in as a freshman, I challenged her a lot. I knew she wanted to be an offensive player, but I am so proud of the defensive player that she is. Yes, she had 28, but her defense is what I am most proud of.

“I thought Paige was really solid too, and she wasn’t feeling really well, but that is why she is a captain for us. She will give whatever her team needs her to give, even when she is not feeling great. Proud of her for that.”

Lancaster almost reached double digits in scoring with nine points, while Carson Buffington led the Lady Cats with eight rebounds and senior Chloe Renner added five.

The win provided the Lady Cats with a big boost heading into the holiday break. They have already matched their win total from a season ago and are looking for several more wins in the season’s final two months.

“I knew that we were going to be better than last year with

all the hard work we put in during the preseason and commitment week,” Simpson said. “I didn’t think that our defensive intensity would be this high, this soon. Our defense is absolutely amazing right now, and as we go further into the season, I can’t imagine what it is going to be like later on.”

Louisburg returns to action on Jan. 6 when it travels to Baldwin. Tipoff for the girls game is set for 6 p.m.

LOU	21	6	16	12 –
55				
OTT	11	9	8	12
– 40				

LOUISBURG (3-3): Madisen Simpson 28, Tayler Lancaster 9, Haley Cain 6, Paige Buffington 4, Isabelle Holtzen 3, Chloe Renner 3, Carson Buffington 2. Totals: 22-48 4-10 55. 3-point field goals: 7, (Simpson 6, Lancaster)

Lady Cats roll Eudora for back-to-back wins



Louisburg senior Madisen Simpson puts up a shot in the lane during Tuesday’s home opener against Eudora. The Lady Cats

scored 19 unanswered points to open the game and ran away for 43-23 win.

It was a rough fourth quarter Tuesday as the Louisburg girls basketball team failed to score in the game's final eight minutes.

For most teams that would spell doom and gloom, but not Louisburg. Even after that rough patch, the Lady Cats still won – and they did it comfortably.

That should tell you about all you need to know as Louisburg dominated Eudora 43-23 in its home opener at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats scored 19 unanswered points to jump out to a big lead to start the game and captured their second consecutive win in the process.

“Defense really set the tone for the game and our offense kind of fed off that, especially early,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “The girls have challenged each other hard at practice and we played well.

“It was just a great effort. We were on the floor getting all the loose balls and I think that is our identity. We found that out early on and we are going to have to be a team that fights for every loose ball. We are going to have to be disciplined about how we rebound the ball and how we defend.”



Louisburg senior Chloe Renner goes up for two points Tuesday against Eudora.

Defensively, the Lady Cats (2-3) smothered the Eudora offense as they held the Cardinals scoreless for more than eight minutes and Eudora didn't score its first field goal until 47 seconds left in the first half.

Louisburg was active defensively most of the night and tallied 12 steals as a team. Five of those steals came from guard Isabelle Holtzen as the Lady Cat junior was one of several players to turn up the pressure on the perimeter.

"They really responded," Lowry said of his team "After the tournament last week, they responded about some of the things

I talked to them about defensively. I think they saw some sparks of that in some of the games that we played in before, and our practices since then have been preparing to do this kind of defensive work and they really embraced that. It is another step for us to become the team that we know we can be later this year.

"I thought Isabelle really sparked us defensively. "She is such a scrappy kid and she is one of the kids that you love to have around because she is going to battle for everything."

Senior Tayler Lancaster opened the game with five consecutive points to help build a 7-0 lead and senior Madisen Simpson finished the first quarter with seven points to put Louisburg up 19-0.

Free throws from senior Chloe Renner and a basket from senior Paige Buffington gave Louisburg a 20-point advantage to start the second quarter. Holtzen had a steal and a score and Simpson followed with five straight points to put the Lady Cats up 29-2 right before halftime.

Louisburg put together a 43-12 lead going into the fourth quarter and eventually forced a running clock. The Lady Cats also performed well from the free-throw line as they converted 15 of 20 opportunities.

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 14 points and Holtzen was next on the team with seven points to go along with her five steals. Buffington, Renner and Lancaster all finished with six points.

Sophomore Carson Buffington led Louisburg with seven rebounds and freshman Haley Cain added five.

"We have kids that are growing up and doing more," Lowry said. "Chloe is starting to feel more comfortable and more confident. You can see that in her play and defensively is where it started for her. Haley is a freshman, and she is

still trying to figure out the high school game, but she is getting things as well.”

Louisburg will try for its third consecutive win today when it travels to Ottawa for its final game before the holiday break. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOU	19	10	14	0 –
		43		
EUD	0	5	7	11
		– 23		

LOUISBURG (2-3): Madisen Simpson 14, Isabelle Holtzen 7, Tayler Lancaster 6, Paige Buffington 6, Chloe Renner 6, Carson Buffington 4. Totals: 12-33 15-20 43. 3-point field goals: 4, (Simpson 2, Holtzen, Lancaster)

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 of 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.”