

# 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.”

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## 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.

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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.”

<b>LOUISBURG</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>10 – 39</b>	
<b>PAOLA</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>



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)

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## 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.

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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.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>2 - 30</b>		
<b>PAOLA</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>7 - 74</b>		

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)

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## 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.

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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.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>7 - 31</b>		
<b>DE SOTO</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>10 - 55</b>		

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)

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## **Comeback falls short for Lady Cats**



**Louisburg junior Madisen Simpson puts up a shot in the lane during Friday's home contest against Spring Hill. The Lady Cats rallied from 14 points down in the third quarter, but came up just short in a 49-44 loss.**

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For the first 24 minutes, things looked bleak for the Louisburg girls basketball team.

During Friday's home contest against Spring Hill, the Lady Cats scored just 23 points through three quarters and were down 14 points going into the final eight minutes of the game.

Nothing foretold what was going to happen next.

Louisburg's offense came to life in the final period as it scored 21 points in the frame and cut a double-digit deficit to just two with under two minutes remaining. Despite the

furious comeback, the Lady Cats couldn't quite get over the hump in the 49-44 loss.

Still, the comeback left a positive impression in the Louisburg locker room.

"This was probably one of our most unselfish efforts on offense and defense," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "Everyone was doing their job and it was fun to watch."

A lot of things came together in the fourth quarter for Louisburg. Defensively, the Lady Cats held the Broncos to just one field goal, and offensively they saw shots start to fall thanks to work on the offensive glass.

The Lady Cats (3-15) pulled down 15 offensive rebounds on the night, including several in the fourth. Freshman Carson Buffington led the Lady Cats with 15 total rebounds for the game and senior Megan Lemke added seven.



**Louisburg junior Emalee Overbay stretches out for a rebound during Friday's home game against Spring Hill.**

Louisburg also shot well from the outside, which started the Lady Cats' comeback. Junior Madisen Simpson hit two 3-pointers in the first three minutes of the quarter and sophomore Isabelle Holtzen also made key shots late in the game.

"We had some big boards," Lowry said. "Carson having 15 rebounds and Megan had seven and all of those were big for us and keeping balls alive. Isabelle really made some key shots for us there toward the end. She has been struggling with her shot recently, so to see her hit those was great. She has worked a lot on that. Emalee (Overbay) also did some great things defensively and did a better job rebounding as well."

Three minutes into the fourth quarter, the Lady Cats trimmed a 14-point deficit to six after Simpson's two 3-pointers and a jumper from Holtzen.

Down eight points, Overbay went to the free-throw line for Louisburg and made the first. The second attempt rolled off, but Buffington pulled down the offensive rebound and Lemke hit a shot to make it 42-36, Spring Hill.

Holtzen hit another jumper at the 2 minute and 40 second mark, then Buffington followed with a putback with 1:47 left to cut it to two. The Lady Cats could get no closer as they sent the Broncos to the line and they converted free throws down the stretch.

Louisburg had to play from behind from the start as Spring Hill opened the game with a 12-3 run to take a 16-7 lead after the first quarter. The Lady Cats were able to stay with the Broncos for the final three quarters, which set up the fourth quarter comeback.

"After the first quarter, I think we were able to settle down and figure some things out defensively," Lowry said. "We talked a lot more and we were helping each other out in getting people where they were supposed to be. Once they did that, they started to click. It was good to see."

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 13 points, including three 3-pointers. Lemke was next with nine points to go along with her seven rebounds and Holtzen finished with eight.



Louisburg will play in its final regular season home game Tuesday when it hosts De Soto. The Lady Cats will also honor seniors Megan Lemke and Megan Roy during senior night ceremonies.

Tipoff for the game is set for 6 p.m., and Lowry hopes his team can show the same kind of fight to finish out the year.

“That is what this group is – they don’t ever quit,” Lowry said. “They are going to keep playing and battling. Especially at this point in the season, games are getting fewer and they are going to make it count.”

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>21 – 44</b>		
<b>SPRING HILL</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>12 – 49</b>		

LOUISBURG (3-15): Madisen Simpson 4-16 2-2 13; Megan Lemke 3-8 2-2 9; Isabelle Holtzen 4-11 0-0 8; Emalee Overbay 2-7 2-6 6; Carson Buffington 1-6 2-3 4; Paige Buffington 1-4 2-2 4. Totals: 15-59 8-15 44. 3-point field goals: 4, (Simpson 3, Lemke)

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## **Baldwin girls too much for Lady Cats**



**Louisburg sophomore Isabelle Holtzen dribbles past a Baldwin defender during Tuesday's contest at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats fell to No. 5 ranked Baldwin 62-34.**

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The Louisburg girls basketball team knew Baldwin was one of the better teams in the state coming into Tuesday's contest.

Baldwin didn't do anything that changed the Lady Cats' mind.

The Bulldogs, the No. 5 team in Class 4A Division II, showed why they had the high ranking as they defeated Louisburg 62-34 at Louisburg High School.

"They are a good team," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They have some really nice players, but they work really hard and give a lot of effort. It is hard to not watch them and like how they play the game. Hats off to (Baldwin coach) Bob (Martin) and those guys, they do a really nice job."

Louisburg (3-14) had a tough time breaking Baldwin's full-court press, and in turn, the Bulldogs were able to score several points off Lady Cat turnovers. Baldwin jumped out to a 13-3 lead after the first quarter and scored 24 points in the second to build a 37-12 halftime.

Baldwin was also able to connect from the outside as it hit eight 3-pointers on the night.

"We weren't very strong with the ball and you have to give credit to Baldwin," Lowry said. "They made some adjustments to

their press since the first time that we played, so that flustered us early on a little.”

The Lady Cats offense was able to get going in the third quarter as they scored more points in the one frame than they did the entire first half. Louisburg put up 14 points in the third to finish out the game with some positives.

Junior Madisen Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 12 points and sophomore Isabelle Holtzen added seven in the loss. Freshman forward Carson Buffington led Louisburg with 11 rebounds on the night to go along with six points.

Louisburg will try and get back on track Friday when it hosts Spring Hill in its next-to-last home game. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

“We are going to keep working hard and come back to practice and work on some things,” Lowry said. “I need some of our leaders to step up and set the tone for the rest of this season, which they will do. I believe in these girls.”

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>8 – 34</b>		
<b>BALDWIN</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>8 – 62</b>		

LOUISBURG (3-14): Madisen Simpson 3-13 4-4 12; Isabelle Holtzen 2-3 1-2 7; Carson Buffington 3-5 0-2 6; Emalee Overbay 2-2 0-0 4; Julianne Finley 1-1 0-0 2; Bailey Kern 0-3 2-3 2; Paige Buffington 0-4 1-2 1. Totals: 12-38 7-11 34. 3-point field goals: 3, (Simpson 2, Holtzen)

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# Offensive outburst not enough for Lady Cats



Louisburg freshman Kennia Hankinson drives to the basket during Friday's road contest in Ottawa. Hankinson led the Lady Cats with 16 points, but Louisburg fell to the Cyclones despite a season-high 54 points.

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OTTAWA – It was the highest scoring output the Louisburg girls basketball team had posted all year.

The Lady Cats connected on 18 field goals Friday against Ottawa, including 12 3-pointers, which was 10 more points than it had scored all season. As impressive as those numbers were, Ottawa had the stat of the night.

The Cyclones converted on 26 of 35 free-throw attempts, which was good enough to get past Louisburg in a 64-54 victory as the Lady Cats nearly pulled off the road upset at Ottawa High School.

“It was a really good free-throw shooting night for them,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “I can’t say anything about the officiating, but it is what it is. A lot of credit to Ottawa to step up and hit those free throws like that. We put them on the line, but they made them. It made it really tough for us to get back in the game.”

Ottawa hit a bulk of its free throws in the fourth quarter as Louisburg tried to make a run to get back in it. The Cyclones made 16 of 21 free throws in the final period, which all but sealed the win.

It was the Lady Cats' long range game that kept them in it. The 12 3-pointers were a season-high for Louisburg and it helped them take a lead in the second quarter.

Freshman Kennia Hankinson opened the second with back-to-back 3-pointers, and after a pair of free throws from senior Megan Lemke and a 3-pointer from Paige Buffington, the Lady Cats had a 22-16 lead with five minutes left in the first half.

However, Ottawa would go on a 9-2 run to end the quarter and take a 25-24 advantage into halftime. Five of those nine points came from the free-throw line.

The Cyclones kept the momentum to start the third quarter as it built a double-digit lead. Junior Madisen Simpson kept the Lady Cats close as she scored all seven of the team's point in the frame, but Ottawa took a 40-31 lead into the fourth.



**Isabelle Holtzen rises up for a shot Friday during the Lady Cats'**

## league game in Ottawa.

The Lady Cats (3-13) made one final run at it as Hankinson and Simpson hit back-to-back 3-pointers to start the quarter and cut the Cyclone lead to five. However, Ottawa went on an 8-0 run and Louisburg could get no closer.

"Scoring wise, I thought it was pretty good," Lowry said. "They have some nice players and we had some breakdowns defensively. We also have some kids that aren't 100 percent right now, and everyone is dealing with this, not just our team. I liked a lot of stuff that the girls did, though."

Hankinson, who had missed several games with an illness, quickly regained her shooting form in her first game back. She connected on five 3-pointers and tied a team-high with 16 points to go along with six rebounds.

Simpson made four 3-pointers and also finished with 16 points for the Lady Cats. Lemke added nine points and seven rebounds, while freshman Carson Buffington had seven points and a team-high 10 rebounds.

"We had four days to prepare for this one and we got a lot of shooting in this week," Lowry said. "I was glad to see the girls step up and hit those shots."

Louisburg will have another tough test Tuesday when it hosts Baldwin, the No. 5 team in Class 4A, Division II, for its first of three consecutive home games. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>23 - 54</b>		
<b>OTTAWA</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>24 - 64</b>		

LOUISBURG (3-13): Madisen Simpson 6-21 0-2 16; Kennia Hankinson 5-11 1-2 16; Megan Lemke 2-7 4-4 9; Carson Buffington 3-4 1-1 7; Paige Buffington 2-11 0-0 6. Totals: 18-59 6-9 54. 3-point field goals: 12, (Hankinson 5, Simpson 4, P. Buffington 2, Lemke)

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## **LHS girls basketball gives back to community**



Louisburg junior coaches (from left) Sienna Finch, Kenna Cooley, Jenna Cauthon and Megan Quinn pose with the Louisburg girls basketball team in the locker room Friday following their homecoming victory over Eudora.

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In the life of a high school athlete, there never seems to be enough time to do everything.

After a full day of school, there is practice, then back home for dinner and homework – or in some cases it is off to a part-time job. Then you get up and start it all over again.

It is a vicious cycle.

But for the Louisburg High School girls basketball team, the

players have given up some of that precious time to give back to the Louisburg community.

Whether it was a trip to a skilled nursing facility to help put up Christmas decorations or talking to a group of elementary school girls, the Lady Cat players and coaches want to make sure they are seen more than in just a gymnasium.

“What’s great about the kids in our program, school and community is that they genuinely care about helping others and take a great deal of pride in doing it together,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said.

The Lady Cats’ most recent activity was on Feb. 2 when they met with the fourth-grade girls at Broadmoor Elementary School. Lowry asked his players to prepare presentations to give to the students.



**Lady Cat players (from left) Megan Roy, Paige Buffington and Mikayla Quinn teach a group of fourth-graders the LHS fight song on Feb. 2 at Broadmoor Elementary School.**

The presentations included what their game days are like and what it means to be a part of a team. Lowry wanted his players to tell the girls what playing basketball meant to them and what it was like to be a Lady Cat.



They also taught the fourth-graders the school fight song and signed autographs as the players handed out their own playing cards.

“It was such an eye opening day because I realized how badly I want to go back and do it all over again as a fourth grader looking to the future,” senior Megan Lemke said. “I loved visiting with them, answering their questions and giving them motivation to commit to basketball. I love the legacy Lady Cat basketball has built.”

The day wasn't done as the players picked a student from each fourth-grade class to serve as a junior coach for last Friday's homecoming game against Eudora. Jenna Cauthon, Sienna Finch, Kenna Cooley and Megan Quinn were selected to sit behind the bench during the game.

Life as a junior coach was a busy one as all four girls went into the locker room before the game and they stood with the team captains during the official's meeting. They were then introduced before the game and stood in the team circle as the starters were announced.

As luck would have it, the junior coaches also got to go into the locker room following the contest and celebrate after the Lady Cats' 27-25 win. The final step was to go out with Lowry for the post-game interview with the media.

“The best part was watching them come together as a team and get a win,” Quinn said.

“I really liked that they showed a lot of teamwork,” Cooley added.

Although everyone was happy about the win, the team will always remember the celebration in the locker room.

“Having the junior coaches with us was very special and I don't think any of us will soon forget the smiles on their

faces in our locker room after the game,” Lowry said.

“This was a really great experience for our girls and they had a blast doing it. I was impressed with how attentive and interactive the fourth-grade girls were and what a great job our girls did with them. This process also helped our girls better understand my comments about those young girls that watch them to see how they act because they want to be them when they get to high school.”

Speaking to elementary students was just one of a few different things the Lady Cats have done this past two months.



**The LHS girls basketball team poses together after they helped decorate Louisburg Healthcare and Rehab for Christmas in December.**

Around the holidays, the team made the trip to Louisburg Healthcare and Rehab to put up Christmas decorations and visit with residents. In January, the Lady Cats also helped run the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest.

“Giving back to the community brings us closer to each other

and closer to the people who live in Louisburg,” Lemke said. “When we put up decorations at the nursing home we get to bond as teammates and visit with the residents. It makes us all grateful to be able to help.”

Although the Lady Cats didn’t realize it at the time, they would get rewarded for their efforts later. On Thursday, the team was informed that it was chosen as the KCTV5 and Hy-Vee Team of the Week.

The Kansas City television station taped the short award ceremony later that afternoon to the excitement of everyone on the team.



**The LHS girls basketball team lets out a scream Thursday when they were presented with the Hy-Vee Team of the Week award.**

It was quite the week for the Lady Cats. One that started talking with a gym full of fourth-grade girls, then received an award, picked up a big win Friday with the help of their four junior coaches and then watched as their teammate, Megan Roy, was crowned as homecoming queen.

Even if they didn’t get the team honor earlier in the week, the Lady Cats realized they have already been rewarded – and then some.

“I think it’s very important to give back because it shows

that being a team player goes beyond the court,” Lemke said. “We get to apply our hard work and dedication by giving back to others. Then we get to share those memories together.”

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## Lady Cats end busy week with big win



Louisburg freshman Carson Buffington gets on the floor for a loose ball Friday during the Lady Cats’ homecoming game against Eudora at Louisburg High School. Buffington pulled down a team-high 14 rebounds in the 27-25 win.

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Homecoming week always presents its fair share of distractions for coaches and players alike.

For the Louisburg High School girls basketball team, however, most of those distractions turned out to be good ones. Whether it was teaching a group of fourth-graders, winning an award or supporting teammate Megan Roy for homecoming queen, it was a week full of positives.

Those positives continued Friday night as the Lady Cats ended a memorable few days with a 27-25 victory over Eudora at

Louisburg High School. The win also provided the Lady Cats with their second win in a week.

“It has been a great week,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “Just everything that the girls have done and gone through this week, and with it being homecoming, it was great to see them get a win. You could definitely tell it was homecoming this week with the way the game started out, but it is not always how you script it out to be. The girls played well, different girls stepped up and they are excited about the win.”

It was a rocky start for both teams, at least offensively. The two teams combined for six points in the first quarter and Louisburg took a two-point lead into the second.

In fact, the Lady Cats (3-12) held a two-point advantage for much of the contest and had the lead for all but one possession. Louisburg extended its lead on different occasions, but Eudora always narrowed the gap.



**The Louisburg bench leaps into the air with excitement as the buzzer sounds in the Lady Cats' 27-25 win over Eudora.**

Louisburg played with a bend, but don't break mentality.

“We stepped up defensively when we needed to and we took care

of the ball when we needed to,” Lowry said. “That was good to see us close out a game like that.”

The Lady Cats opened the second quarter on an 8-2 run thanks to back-to-back 3-pointers from Madisen Simpson and Paige Buffington, and Carson Buffington added another basket to push the lead to 12-4.

Eudora went on a 6-0 run of its own to end the half and the Lady Cats took a 12-10 lead at halftime.

Paige Buffington began the second half with a 3-pointer, but the Cardinals went on another mini 5-0 run to tie the game. Simpson broke the tie with a 3-pointer and Megan Lemke added a basket to widen the lead out to four points.

In times when shots weren’t falling, the Lady Cats got a boost of energy from forward Carson Buffington. The Louisburg freshman racked up a lot of hustle points as she pulled down a team-high 14 rebounds and kept several possessions alive.

“It feels really good because we put a lot of hard work and effort into it and it feels awesome to get a win,” Carson said. “We came out in the second half and gave it our all. We really pushed and it worked out for us.”



**Louisburg junior Emalee**

**Overbay leaps for a rebound during Friday's homecoming game against Eudora.**

Lowry saw a lot of good things out of Carson, who has racked up double-digit rebound totals in nearly every game this season.

"I thought a spark for us was Carson," Lowry said. "Some of the things that she does is just amazing. She got several offensive rebounds and that was all from effort. She just comes flying out of nowhere to get those and she has been doing that all year."

The fourth quarter was much of the same as the two teams traded baskets before the Lady Cats held off a late charge from the Cardinals to seal the win.

Simpson and Paige Buffington led the Lady Cats in scoring with eight points each and Carson added five points in the win. Junior Emalee Overbay pulled down five rebounds, while sophomore Isabelle Holtzen had a team-high three steals to help the Lady Cat defense.

The victory capped off what was as busy week for the Lady Cats, one that included a special award. On Thursday, the Lady Cats were honored with the KCTV5, Hy-Vee Team of the Week Award.

"I have enjoyed this group as much as any other group I have been around because of how hard they work together," Lowry said. "They do it in practice and then they come out and do it in the game. This week was really great because of the character of these kids and they do everything that is asked of them. Coaches only hope they can coach a group of girls like what I have. I am very proud of them."

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>5 – 27</b>		
<b>EUDORA</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>7 – 25</b>		

LOUISBURG (3-12): Madisen Simpson 2-9 2-3 8; Paige Buffington 3-6 0-1 8; Carson Buffington 2-4 1-2 5; Megan Lemke 1-5 0-0 2; Isabelle Holtzen 1-7 0-0 2; Emalee Overbay 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 10-34 3-6 27. 3-point field goals: 4, (Simpson 2, P. Buffington 2)

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## State-ranked Paola tops Lady Cats



Louisburg junior Paige Buffington drives past three Paola defenders to go up for a shot during Tuesday's home contest against the Panthers. The Lady Cats fell 62-34 to the No. 5 ranked Panthers.

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For the second time in a week, the Louisburg girls basketball team found itself against a top five team in the state.

The Lady Cats faced off with rival Paola, the No. 5 team in



Class 4A-Division I, on Tuesday at Louisburg High School and decided to hang around for a while. Louisburg stayed within striking distance for the first three quarters, but the final one turned out to be too much to handle for the Lady Cats.

Paola held Louisburg to four points in the fourth quarter and the Lady Cats fell 62-34.

“We have been playing even-keeled or with no pressure for most of the season,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “We played a ranked team in Piper last week, and some other tough teams throughout the season, so we knew what to expect from Paola.

“I thought we rebounded the ball fairly well, but Paola hit some big shots in the fourth quarter and really widened that gap.”

Louisburg (2-12) tried to keep pace with Paola and did so through three quarters. Paola built a 10-2 lead early, but Louisburg junior Madisen Simpson hit a 3-pointer and freshman Carson Buffington hit two free throws to make it 10-7.



**Louisburg senior Megan Lemke (right) dives for a loose ball Tuesday against Paola.**

Paola got those points right back as Panther senior Morgan Laudan scored five points on back-to-back possessions to put

them up 15-7.

Louisburg again cut the lead to six early in the second quarter on a basket from junior Emalee Overbay and two free throws from senior Megan Lemke. Paola answered with a 14-5 run to end the first half and take a 31-16 lead.

The Lady Cats came out with a vengeance to start the second half as they went on an 8-0 run. Simpson hit two 3-pointers in a minute and a half and Buffington added a basket to make it 31-24.

“At halftime, we just told the girls to take their shots and believe in them,” Lowry said. “We put the work in for those to start falling. I think it is just a mentality thing for the most part. The first three minutes of the third quarter for us is the most important part of the game so we want to get out and get after it.”

Like the two quarters before, however, Paola had an answer for every run with one of its own. The Panthers went on a 12-6 spurt to take a 13-point lead into the fourth quarter.

The run didn't stop there.

Paola saw its outside shots start to fall and outscored the Lady Cats 19-4 in the final period to shore up the win. The Panthers connected on nine 3-pointers for the game.

“There are some really good shooters in that group,” Lowry said. “We tried to extend the zone a little bit to at least contest them, but eventually they were going to hit some of those and they did.”

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 14 points, including four 3-pointers. Buffington added six points to go along with a team-high eight rebounds and junior Paige Buffington added five points in the loss.

Louisburg will try for a win today when it hosts Eudora for

homecoming. The Lady Cats defeated Eudora earlier in the year for one of their two wins as they hope to sweep the series. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>4 - 34</b>		
<b>PAOLA</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>19 - 62</b>		

LOUISBURG (2-12): Madisen Simpson 4-17 2-3 14; Carson Buffington 2-4 2-2 6; Paige Buffington 2-10 0-1 5; Megan Lemke 1-6 2-2 4; Emalee Overbay 2-3 0-0 4; Ryan Caldwell 0-1 1-2 1. Totals: 11-50 7-12 34. 3-point field goals: 5, (Simpson 4, P. Buffington 1)