

Lady Cats fall to Pittsburg in opener



Louisburg junior Madisen Simpson drives toward the basket Friday during the Lady Cats' season opener against Pittsburg in Louisburg. The Lady Cats fell 43-20 and will take part in the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic this week.

Shawn Lowry knew it wasn't going to be easy and all he had to do was look at his starting lineup.

The Louisburg girls basketball coach started two freshmen, Carson Buffington and Kennia Hankinson, on Friday against Class 5A Pittsburg and had just three players back who saw significant varsity time from a year ago. Lowry knows this process is going to take time.

Despite the Lady Cats' 43-20 home loss to the Purple Dragons, Lowry saw a lot of positives from his team in their season opener.

"I am just so proud of our effort and our toughness," Lowry said. "These kids right now are in the same spirit and attitude that they were before the game started, which I love. They could be in there with their heads down, but they know they busted their tail out there. I couldn't have asked for more."

The Lady Cats (0-1) were in the game early as they hung around with the Purple Dragons in the first quarter. Louisburg trailed 10-4 before junior Madisen Simpson connected on a 3-pointer, but Pittsburg answered with a basket to take a 12-7 lead into the second quarter.



Freshman Kennia Hankinson drives the lane during Friday's home opener in Louisburg.

In the frame, both teams had problems finding the basket as Pittsburg was responsible for the only five points scored in the second quarter and had a 17-7 halftime lead.

The Purple Dragons used a full-court press most of the night, which made it difficult for the Lady Cats to get in a rhythm. Pittsburg took advantage of that in the third quarter as it outscored Louisburg 19-4 and pulled away for a 32-11 advantage.

Although the Lady Cats faced a large deficit, Lowry didn't see his team give in and watched them compete until the end.

"I think that is part of the way we have worked with them," Lowry said. "We told them this is going to be tough and they challenge each other. When things get tough, we don't react to all the highs and lows and they did that. It is not easy for

young kids to do. They were playing just as hard in the fourth quarter as they were in the first and that is great to see."

Junior Paige Buffington and Simpson each finished with six points to lead the Lady Cats as each connected on a pair of 3-pointers. Freshman Carson Buffington was next on the team with three points.

"It is game one, but some other kids are going to have to step up and play more down the road," Lowry said. "I thought Carson Buffington was really good for her first high school varsity game. I think she will get better and stronger as the year goes on.

"Our growth potential is really high. This group is so coachable. They work their tails off and they give us everything and they will get better as the year goes on."

Louisburg will try for its first win at 5 p.m. tonight when it hosts Iola in the first round of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic. The Lady Cats will also meet Burlington at 5 p.m. on Thursday in the next round before ending the tournament Friday.

PITT	12	5	19	7 -
43				
LOU	7	0	4	9
- 20				

LOUISBURG (0-1): Paige Buffington 6, Madisen Simpson 6, Carson Buffington 3, Megan Lemke 2, Kennia Hankinson 2, Isabelle Holtzen 1. 3-point field goals: 4, (P. Buffington 2, Simpson 2)

Lady Cats remain positive despite inexperience



Louisburg senior Megan Lemke (10) is one of two seniors on the Lady Cats basketball team this season as they will take the floor with a young roster.

Advancing to the substate championship game and finishing the season with 11 wins a year ago, the Louisburg girls basketball team had its fair share of success.

The Lady Cats had a lot of that success due to strong senior leadership and those seniors also provided a bulk of the scoring and rebounding. With that, Louisburg now has to replace an all-state point guard in Natalie Moore, an all-league shooting guard in Kirstin Lowry and the team's leading rebounder in Kallie O'Keefe.

It isn't an easy task for this year's version of the Lady Cats, and they will have to do some things differently on both ends of the floor, but they are looking forward to the challenge.

"We have made changes to some of the things we will do offensively and defensively based on our personnel," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I expect there will be a learning curve with these changes and with some of our inexperience."

However, the upside growth and development of this group can be very good."

This group includes just two seniors, one of which is new to the team this season. Senior Megan Lemke, a returning starter, brings a veteran presence to the team underneath the basket as she saw a lot of playing time a season ago. New to the team is senior Megan Roy, who also hopes to give the team a lift at forward.



Junior Paige Buffington (right) is one of five Lady Cats who saw significant varsity time a season ago.

Louisburg also returns a pair of junior guards in Madisen Simpson and Paige Buffington, who each started at different times a season ago and are both threats to score from the outside.

Fellow junior Emalee Overbay, who saw time at both the varsity and junior varsity level last year, hopes to give the Lady Cats some depth at the forward spot.

"It's great to see the continuing evolution of the program's

culture," coach Lowry said. "The upperclassmen have learned from the previous year's captains how to lead through encouragement and motivation, how to be great teammates, how to be unselfish and the work ethic they must have. "

The Lady Cats will also ask sophomores Isabelle Holtzen and Sarah Wilson to contribute from the guard and forward spot, respectively. Louisburg might also have some freshmen see varsity time this season as its numbers are down.

Louisburg has 19 players out for basketball this season, six of those players are in the junior and senior class, combined. The Lady Cats have seven freshmen and six sophomores on the roster.

"The girls have worked hard in preparing for the upcoming season," coach Lowry said. "Our team leaders 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 play and every rep. The development of our mentality to always out-work and out-hustle will be key for our team this year. Many of the younger players will have the opportunity to gain valuable game experience this season."

The Lady Cats will also play a difficult schedule in the Frontier League. Louisburg will face league favorites Paola and Baldwin a combined four times, if not more.

Paola is ranked No. 9 in the preseason in Class 4A Division I, while Baldwin is No. 1 in Class 4A Division II.

Louisburg will also no longer hold its annual tournament in January and will instead participate in the Top Gun Tournament in Wellsville. One bonus, however, is the Lady Cats will host the substate tournament.

"The Frontier League is always very strong and has some of the

best coaches in the state," coach Lowry said. "The girls understand what they must all give in order to be successful. Most important for me is the way in which we play – with great effort, unselfish play and with character."

The Lady Cats will get their season started Friday when they host Pittsburg. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

Next week, Louisburg will host the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic and will play Iola and Burlington on Tuesday and Thursday, respectively.

2015-16 LOUISBURG GIRLS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Dec. 4

Pittsburg

6 p.m.

Dec. 8

Classic)

Iola (Wildcat-Bulldog

5 p.m.

Dec. 10

Classic)

Burlington (Wildcat-Bulldog

5 p.m.

Dec. 11

Classic

Wildcat-Bulldog

TBA

Dec. 15

Eudora

6 p.m.

at

Jan. 5

Ottawa

6 p.m.

Jan. 8

Baldwin

6 p.m.

at

Jan. 12	at
Frontenac	6
p.m.	
Jan. 15	at De Soto
	6 p.m.
Jan. 20	at Spring
Hill	7:30
p.m.	
Jan. 26	at Wellsville Top
Gun	TBA
Jan. 28	at Wellsville Top
Gun	TBA
Jan. 30	at Wellsville Top
Gun	TBA
Feb. 2	
Paola	
	6 p.m.
Feb. 5	
Eudora	
	6 p.m.
Feb. 12	at
Ottawa	
6 p.m.	
Feb. 16	Baldwin
	6 p.m.
Feb. 19	Spring
Hill	6
p.m.	
Feb. 23	De

Soto

6 p.m.

Opinion: Rough patch leads to new beginning



I am just going to come right out and say it, "I'm scared."

Yeah, it is an unusual way to start out an opinion piece, but there is no two ways around it – I am petrified. But believe it or not, it is what keeps me going.

We have all had at least one point in our existence where our lives changed for better or worse. I have had more than a few of those in my life, but the latest one came on Jan. 9.

It started out like all the other Fridays over the last seven years. I reported to work, spent a few hours in the office getting ready for what was a busy weekend of prep coverage ahead. It was the first action after Christmas break and I was ready to get back into the swing of things.

That never took place.

My bosses came into my office early that afternoon to inform me I was being let go. The job of covering Louisburg athletics was no longer mine. I packed up my things, turned in my key,

went home, punched the wall a couple times and cried.

I was scared.

After all the tears came the questions. How was I going to support my family? What am I going to do for a job? The list went on and on and I couldn't come up with many answers.

As it turned out, one of the worst experiences of my life turned into one of the best.

Thanks to a lot of prayers, and support from family and friends, I decided to start Louisburg Sports Zone. Yep, that's right, I went from being unemployed to starting my own business for the first time in my life.

Not exactly the best way to alleviate fears.

However, when I kicked off the site just a month later, I was overwhelmed with the amount of support from students at Louisburg High School, employees throughout the district, parents and several others who offered encouragement and supported my new venture.

I finished the last half of the winter season and all of the spring doing what I took for granted the previous seven years. I got the chance to cover Louisburg athletics again.

You know, this whole starting your own business thing might not have been a bad idea after all. I would have never had the courage to go out on my own had I not been pushed in that direction.

Fast forward to the present and I am still alive and kicking, ready to start my eighth season of roaming the Wildcat sidelines with camera in hand, waiting to tell that next story.

This fall brings a lot of story lines to the Wildcat programs. The football team is looking to improve off its 3-win season a

year ago and find its way back to the playoffs with a veteran group returning.

Volleyball is primed and ready to make its fourth consecutive state tournament this year after placing in the top four in the last three years. The Lady Cats return five seniors that have a lot of state experience and that bodes well for another trip to Salina.

The Wildcat soccer team returns an experienced group from a year ago as they try to crack the top of the Frontier League standings. The cross country team also has several returning runners who will try and qualify for the state meet.

There is a lot to be excited about when it comes to Louisburg sports, but for me personally, I am just fortunate enough to still be a part of it in a small way.

I take a lot of pride in what I do and I hope that it shows when you read stories or look at pictures on this site. I started this business knowing that I will never be rich, but it gives me an opportunity to continue to do what I love.

Thanks to all those who have supported me and for the more than 23,000 views on the site in the last six months. I have said it before, but I am extremely blessed to live in a community that supports each other through good times and bad.

Every day I am fortunate enough to be able to go to work and support my family doing what I know how to do. That is all I have ever wanted, so thank you Louisburg for allowing me to do it.

I am still scared, though.

It is that fear that drives me to do the best I can in what I do in my job and in life. I don't want what happened on that day in January to happen again and I will do everything to make sure it doesn't.

Right now I am living the good life. I have the opportunity to work for myself, support my family and do what I enjoy. I can't ask for any more.

I am living the American dream.

I just don't want to wake up.

Lady Cats get summer work started



Louisburg High School girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry speaks to his team Friday at the conclusion of their week-long team camp. Lowry hopes this summer will help build leadership and team chemistry.

The season may be more than six months away, but the Louisburg High School girls basketball team is already preparing for what lies ahead.

Just two weeks after school was let out, the Lady Cats hit the hardwood for a week-long team camp last week in an effort to get better fundamentally and get their competition level back up to where it needs to be.

The Lady Cats were ready to get back to work and will try and replace three senior starters from a season ago. Louisburg had to say goodbye to all-Frontier League players Natalie Moore and Kirstin Lowry, along with the team's best post player in Kallie O'Keefe.

Although they will have to make up for the production of those three players, Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry believes his team has gotten off to a good start.

"It has been a good week," Lowry said. "We have had some good leadership. We lost some really good leadership last year and that was one of the things those three seniors that we lost left behind. They showed these guys how to be leaders."

Senior Megan Lemke returns as one of the team leaders, along with juniors Madisen Simpson, Paige Buffington and Emalee Overbay. All four players saw significant varsity time last season and coach Lowry also had a new addition to the camp in senior Megan Roy, who also provided leadership.

It was those players who helped the incoming freshmen and underclassmen understand what their coach is looking for.



Savannah Reinhart tries to dribble past Megan Roy

**during the final day of the
team camp Friday at
Louisburg High School.**

"Team camp week is really about an indoctrination of culture and mentality," Lowry said. "That is what is most important. It is important to learn how to compete hard every day, especially for the younger kids and the older kids setting that example and shaping our team identity. That is the main thing we want to accomplish.

"This week also gives me a chance to see which kids have done some work before the summer and which ones haven't. There have been quite a few kids that have done some work and that is really great to see coming in to start."

Lowry likes what he has seen out of his returning players so far, but he has also been impressed with the nine freshmen that took part in the team camp.

"There are some kids that fit in pretty well," he said. "There are some, that if they put in more work in the offseason, who knows where they can be at the start of the season. They are learning that the speed of this game is way different than where they have been. What I do like is they haven't backed down when going up against some of these older kids and that is nice to see."

Along with the team camp, the Lady Cats will have a busy summer. They have a weights session twice a week and also have open gym workouts two days a week.

The varsity players will also compete in tournaments throughout the summer at Piper in Kansas City, along with stops in Girard and Emporia. The younger players will participate in a league throughout the summer that will be held at Baker University in Baldwin City.

"When you have to work hard together, it brings you together,"

Lowry said. "We don't want to win games this summer necessarily, we want to prepare to win games this summer for when it counts."

Girls basketball announces awards



Louisburg seniors (from left) Kallie O'Keefe, Natalie Moore and Kirstin Lowry were all smiles Wednesday during the team's postseason awards banquet at Louisburg High School. All three players were recognized for their postseason honors

It was a bittersweet moment for the Louisburg girls basketball team Wednesday when it held its annual postseason banquet at Louisburg High School.

The team came together to relive some good memories from its 11-11 season and talk about the improvement the Lady Cats made from the start of the season till the end. However, it also meant saying goodbye to a few players.

Seniors Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O'Keefe were recognized for their achievements, not only this season, but

for what they have accomplished in their four years. This season, the Lady Cats won their home invitational and advanced to the substate championship game for the second straight year.

"They have shown these younger kids what the expectations of this program are," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They have shown them how to lead, the character we expect and how to play. They will all three be missed."

Coach Lowry revealed all of the postseason honors to his team, in which all of them went to the three seniors.

Moore was named first team all-Frontier League, was second team all-state in Class 4A by Sports I Kansas. She also received honorable mention all-state honors from The Wichita Eagle and The Topeka Capital-Journal.

She was also the Co-Player of the Year and first team on the Tri-County Spotlight squad. She finished her career with 898 points.

Moore averaged 17.4 points a game and also made a living at the free-throw line. Moore had 204 free-throw attempts on the season and made 73 percent.

She also averaged 5.5 rebounds a game to go along with 4.6 assists. She had 27 steals on the year and shot 44 percent from the floor.

Kirstin Lowry was also honored as she was a second team all-Frontier League and was also second team Tri-County Spotlight. Lowry was second on the team in scoring at nine points a game and shot better than 40 percent from behind the 3-point line.

O'Keefe, who averaged eight points and seven rebounds a game, also earned second team all-Tri County Spotlight.

Members of the Lady Cats who earned varsity letters are:

Seniors: Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O'Keefe

Juniors: Megan Lemke

Sophomores: Zoie Gilliland, Paige Buffington, Emalee Overbay and Madisen Simpson

Freshman: Isabelle Holtzen and Sarah Wilson

Moore, Lowry named to all-league team



Louisburg senior Natalie Moore was named to the all-Frontier League first team for the second year in a row. Moore was joined by teammate Kirstin Lowry, who earned second team honors.

According to the Frontier League coaches, the Louisburg girls basketball team has two of the best players in a league that featured two state runner-up teams.

Louisburg senior Natalie Moore was one of the league's top scorers and she was recognized for it. For the second year in a row, Moore was named to the all-league first team and was

joined by one of her senior teammates.

Kirstin Lowry was named to the all-Frontier League second team as she was one of the top 3-point threats in the league. Lowry was an honorable mention a season ago.

"Natalie and Kirstin were really great leaders for our team in the offseason and during the season," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They always set the tone with how hard they worked and the positive, encouraging attitudes they brought every day.

"I think most coaches would always like more representation, particularly with players that may not fill up a stat sheet but are really good defensively or play unselfish. However, our league had an exceptional senior class this year."



**Louisburg senior
Kirstin Lowry was
recently selected to
the all-Frontier
League second team.**

Baldwin, the Class 4A-Division II state runner-up, led the

league with five selections. Paola, the Class 4A-Division I state runner-up, finished with four.

Joining Moore on the first team was Ottawa's Corie Fischer, De Soto's Megan Bonar, Paola's Morgan Laudan and Baldwin's Maddie Ogle.

Teams had a hard time keeping Moore, the Lady Cats' point guard, out of the lane as she averaged 17.4 points a game and also made a living at the free-throw line. Moore had 204 free-throw attempts on the season and made 73 percent.

Moore also averaged 5.5 rebounds a game to go along with 4.6 assists. She also had 27 steals on the year and shot 44 percent from the floor.

"It's hard to express just how good Natalie was this year in arguably one of the toughest leagues in a 4A class with so many exceptional players," coach Lowry said. "This season was the culmination of so many years of hard work for Nat and we were very fortunate to get to share in this journey."

Kirstin Lowry was second on the Lady Cats in scoring. She averaged nine points a game and shot over 40 percent from behind the 3-point line.

The Louisburg senior was one of the team's better defenders and also had the opportunity to have her dad as the head coach the last two seasons.

"Kirstin had a very good year shooting the ball from behind the 3-point line, but I'm most proud of her defensive effort and the passion she played with," coach Lowry said.

"You'd be hard pressed to find one player that would want to have traded places with Kirstin all these years with me as her coach. I am amazed how she handled everything and I am so proud of the strong young lady she has grown into and the great values she has."

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS BASKETBALL

FIRST TEAM

Corie Fischer, Ottawa, senior

Megan Bonar, De Soto, senior

Morgan Laudan, Paola, junior

Natalie Moore, Louisburg, senior

Maddie Ogle, Baldwin, senior

SECOND TEAM

Brette Moore, Ottawa, senior

Tiana Moala, Paola, senior

Lyndsee Johnson, Paola, senior

Kirstin Lowry, Louisburg, senior

Tori Marshall, De Soto, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

Corey Valentine, Baldwin, senior

Madeline Neufeld, Baldwin, junior

Makaila Garcia, Eudora, senior

Taylor Williams, Paola, junior

Alexia Stein, Baldwin, senior

Kyna Smith, Baldwin, junior

Lady Cats' season comes to a close



Louisburg senior Kallie O'Keefe dives on the floor for a loose ball with Paola's Morgan Laudan during the Class 4A Division I substate championship game Saturday at Paola High School. The Lady Cats fell 62-28.

PAOLA – The Louisburg girls basketball team had the tough task of trying to end undefeated Paola's season on its home floor, in the substate finals, no less.

It was as difficult as it sounded for the Lady Cats as they couldn't stay with the bigger, deeper Panther team. Louisburg fell 62-28 on Saturday in the Class 4A Division I substate championship game in Paola.

As much as the end of the season hurt, the Lady Cats also had to say goodbye to three senior starters. Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O'Keefe all suited up for Louisburg for the final time.

"They are hurting, there is no doubt about that," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I think that finality is starting to set in. Those three players have meant so much to this program. They all left it out on the floor, and they may be leaving, but they put so much into the program that the returning players can learn from for years to come."

Against an athletic and deep Paola team, the Lady Cats tried to slow the game down early. Louisburg worked the clock in the first quarter and were able to get shots off, but they didn't fall.

On the other end, Paola went on an 11-0 run to take a 14-2 lead going into the second quarter and the Lady Cats (11-11) were forced to play faster. Paola took a 36-13 lead at halftime and didn't look back.

"We tried a bunch of different things," coach Lowry said. "We slowed it down early and then we even tried some zone a little later and that didn't really work. They are just a great team with a lot of weapons. They are one of the best teams in the state for a reason."

Moore led the Lady Cats with 14 points and Lowry finished with eight in the loss. Megan Lemke, O'Keefe and Paige Buffington also scored in the loss.

Coach Lowry has seen his team progress throughout the season, a team that is filled with underclassmen to go along with three senior leaders.

"You could tell the chemistry wasn't where it needed to be to start the season, but this team is so close right now," he said. "The seniors did a good job of leading those underclassmen and they have really come together. Before the game, they basically just hung out all day, not because they had to, but because they wanted to."

"I am just as proud of this 11-11 team as I am of the 17-5

team that made it this far last year. They really have improved a great deal and have worked hard at it."

LOUISBURG 2

11 **11** **4 – 28**

PAOLA **14**

22 **16** **10 – 62**

LOUISBURG (11-11): Natalie Moore 3-11 6-9 14; Kirstin Lowry 3-8 2-2 8; Megan Lemke 1-4 1-2 3; Kallie O'Keefe 1-2 0-0 2; Paige Buffington 1-4 0-0 2. **Totals:** 9-36 9-13 28. **3-point field goals:** 2, (Moore 2)

Lady Cats advance to substate title game



Louisburg senior Kirstin Lowry drives the lane on a Fort Scott defender during Friday's substate Class 4A Division I semifinal game at Paola High School. Lowry and the Lady Cats rolled to a 71-42 victory.

PAOLA – The first step to a state tournament berth was an easy one for the Louisburg girls basketball team.

The No. 2 seed Lady Cats faced off with No. 3 Fort Scott in the semifinals of the Class 4A Division I substate tournament and ran away with a 71-42 victory Friday at Paola High School. Louisburg opened the game on a 24-5 run and never looked back.

"It was probably the most fun game we have played all year," Louisburg senior Natalie Moore said. "It is definitely exciting to get this win because we all played well. It was a good win."

Moore definitely had a lot of fun as she made the Fort Scott defense pay on countless occasions as the Tigers couldn't keep her out of the lane and she eventually finished with a game-high 24 points. Most of those points came from the free-throw line as she connected on 16 of 20 attempts.

When she wasn't putting up runners or going to the free-throw line, Moore had no problems finding her open teammates, including Kallie O'Keefe. Her drives left O'Keefe open several times as she finished with 17 points to go along with several rebounds and second-chance points.

"When teams don't play us often or don't know what we like to run, our style of play can make it pretty difficult on them and that is what happened," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I thought we played well. We had different kids step up and not just one or two girls. All the girls made some big contributions."

The Lady Cats (11-10) also got a big boost from the outside as senior Kirstin Lowry and sophomore Paige Buffington all hit big shots. Buffington finished with 13 points and Lowry added 11 as each connected on three 3-pointers.

Louisburg and Fort Scott went back and forth through the first part of the opening quarter, but the Lady Cats pulled away as they went on a 19-0 run that went into the second quarter. Louisburg went into halftime with a 42-15 lead.

"Getting off to a good start was very important to us," O'Keefe said. "We aren't exactly the best third quarter team so to get out to a big lead was nice and really got some confidence going."

That next step to a possible state tournament berth is going to be a little tougher. The Lady Cats will go up against undefeated Paola on the Panthers' home court at 6 p.m. tonight. Paola defeated Spring Hill 50-23 on Friday.

"They are excited for the opportunity, there is no doubt," coach Lowry said. "We are going to have our hands full but the girls have worked hard all week in practice and all season for this. This team, especially these seniors, are not ready to see this come to an end."

O'Keefe couldn't agree more.

"This game is why we have been going to summer weights since the sixth-grade for," she said. "All the work we have put in over the years is to prepare us for this game. We want to go to state and we are excited for the opportunity."

LOUISBURG	24	18
22	7 - 71	

FORT SCOTT	5	10
18	9 - 42	

LOUISBURG (11-10): Natalie Moore 24, Kallie O'Keefe 17, Paige Buffington 13, Kirstin Lowry 11, Isabelle Holtzen 4, Megan Lemke 2. **Totals:** 22 21-27 42. **3-point field goals:** 6, (Lowry 3, Buffington 3)

Lady Cats fall to Paola on senior night



It wasn't the senior night the Louisburg girls basketball team had hoped for when it hosted rival Paola.

The Lady Cats took the Panthers to the wire in their first match up, but Friday was a different story. Paola shot well from the field and took control early as it downed Louisburg 62-38.

Paola, the No. 2 team in Class 4A-Division I, also ended its regular season with a 20-0 record – an unbeaten streak the Lady Cats had hoped to break.

"Paola is just a really good team," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They have really good players. They are athletic, they have size and they can shoot the ball really well. We just didn't play well enough to stay with them."

Following the game, the Lady Cats (10-10) and their fans honored their three seniors and their families. Natalie Moore, Kallie O'Keefe and Kirstin Lowry all said their final goodbyes to their home crowd.



Kallie O'Keefe skips into her senior night ceremony Friday with her parents Angie and Mike O'Keefe.



Louisburg senior Kirstin Lowry holds hands with her parents Kristine and Shawn Lowry as she was honored Friday during senior night.



Natalie Moore walks onto the floor for the senior night ceremony Friday with her brother Nathan and her parents Lynne and Doug Moore.

The three Louisburg seniors have led the team throughout the season and provided a lot of highs in a season that brought 10 wins.

"They have been in the program for four years and have given a lot to this team," coach Lowry said. "For me personally, I have been around them for most of their lives and I have watched them grow. I have probably coached them since the third grade and my relationship with them is pretty special, and not just because Kirstin is my daughter."

"All three have provided good leadership for the younger kids playing and they have been a big part of the team. They will definitely be missed."

After the last meeting went down to the final minutes, the

Lady Cats couldn't keep up with Paola this time as the Panthers connected on eight 3-pointers and controlled the glass. Paola took a 17-6 lead into second quarter after scoring the first nine points of the game.

Kirstin Lowry ended the scoring drought with a 3-pointer and O'Keefe followed with a basket to make it a 9-5 deficit, but the Lady Cats would get no closer.

Paola scored 22 more points in the third quarter to grow its lead to 56-28 and all but sealed the win for the Panthers.

O'Keefe led the Lady Cats scoring wise with a team-high 10 points, while Kirstin Lowry and Moore each finished with eight points. Sophomores Madisen Simpson and Paige Buffington each added five.

Paola's Tiana Moala was one of four Panthers to score in double figures as she scored a team-high 16 points and Lyndsee Johnson added 13.

The two teams could see each other again this weekend as Paola hosts the four-team substate tournament. Louisburg, the No. 2 seed, will play No. 3 Fort Scott (4-16) at 6 p.m. on Friday

If the Lady Cats advance, they will play in the championship game at 6 p.m. Saturday against the winner of No. 1 Paola and No. 4 Spring Hill.

"I guess we just need to try different things," coach Lowry said. "I hope to play Paola again because that means we will be in the championship game. I think the girls are ready for substate and they know what it means. If you lose, it is over and the girls aren't ready to be done."

PAOLA

22

6 – 62

17

17

LOUISBURG (10-10): Kallie O'Keefe 10; Kirstin Lowry 8; Natalie Moore 8; Madisen Simpson 5; Paige Buffington 5; Emalee Overbay 2. Totals 11 12-22 38. 3-point field goals: 4, (Lowry 2, Simpson, Buffington)

Wildcats pull upset of De Soto on road



The Louisburg boys' basketball team defeated De Soto 46-41 on Tuesday in De Soto to get its second win in three games. The Louisburg girls had a little more difficult time as it fell 51-14.

DE SOTO – The fourth quarter hasn't always been so kind to the Louisburg boys' basketball team.

Before Tuesday's game with De Soto, the Wildcats have had six leads going into the fourth quarter only to come out on the losing end. Louisburg made sure that streak stopped at six.

The Wildcats came through in a big way as they knocked off De Soto on the road with a 46-41 victory despite several runs by

De Soto to take the lead back in the fourth quarter. Louisburg didn't let this one get away.

"We played well, but not great," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "However, the best thing about the win is that we had the mentality necessary to win games when we're not our best. Our defensive rotations went into a few lapses, and our offensive sets were a bit stagnant at times.

"To the credit of our boys, however, we found a way to not let this one get away. They were determined not to let that happen again and I couldn't be more proud of that fact."

Louisburg (6-13) took an early 14-9 lead after the first quarter and held that lead as it had a 27-22 halftime lead. De Soto made a mini-run in the third quarter to tie the game going into the fourth quarter.

It was then the Wildcats took a small lead and were able to hold it. The Louisburg defense came through in the final minute as it held De Soto empty in its final possession with Louisburg up three points.

The victory was the second in three games for the Wildcats, and had it not been for a bad fourth quarter last week against Spring Hill, it could have been three in a row. Looking at that, Louisburg seems to be trending upward at the right time of the season with the substate tournament a week away.

"Our boys work as hard as any I've been around," Nelson said. "Be it finishing moves, defense, shooting, offense, or the like, our boys put in the work through high energy and intense practices and I like we're beginning to reap the benefits of this, especially with the six sophomores that suit up on varsity. We've tasked these young men with a great deal of pressure, especially given that they're in 10th grade and they're starting to figure out how to play."

Louisburg senior point guard Corbin Wertz made his return to

the Wildcat lineup and made an immediate impact. Wertz had a double-double as he led the team with 15 points and 12 rebounds in the victory.

Another senior, Nathan Moore, also had a strong game as he finished in double figures with 14 points, while sophomore Grant Harding added six rebounds.

Wertz, Moore and teammate Brady Lambeth will play their final home contest tonight when they Wildcats host rival Paola on senior night. Senior night ceremonies will be held in-between the varsity girls and boys game.

Tipoff for the boys game is set for approximately 7:30 p.m. Nelson hopes it is a memorable night for his three seniors.

"More than anything, I want our seniors to experience success (tonight)," Nelson said. "They truly deserve it and have worked hard towards it. Paola is a fantastic team with a great coach that we may face in substate, so we'll definitely be looking to assert ourselves and let them know that we're a capable and competent group of young men. "

LOUISBURG	14	13
7	12 – 46	
DE SOTO	9	13
12	7 – 41	

LOUISBURG (6-13): Corbin Wertz 4-9 6-9 15; Nathan Moore 5-8 3-4 14; T.J. Dover 3-7 0-0 6; Grant Harding 2-7 0-1 4; Brady Lambeth 2-3 0-0 4; Jacob Welsh 1-1 0-0 2; Sam Guetterman 0-0 1-2 1. **Totals:** 17-36 10-16 46. **3-point field goals:** 2, (Moore, Wertz)

LADY CATS STRUGGLE ON ROAD

DE SOTO – The Louisburg girls basketball team wanted to quickly forget Tuesday's game with De Soto before it even finished.

The Lady Cats struggled offensively as they scored on seven points in each half and fell 51-14 as they enter their final regular season game tonight against Paola. De Soto jumped out to an 11-5 lead in the first quarter and jumped out to a 22-7 halftime lead.

De Soto put the game away in the third quarter as it outscored Louisburg 23-5 in the frame to seal the win.

Senior Kirstin Lowry led the Lady Cats (10-9) in scoring with six points, while Madisen Simpson and Paige Buffington each had three points.

Lowry, along with fellow seniors Natalie Moore and Kallie O'Keefe, will play their final home game tonight against Paola for senior night. Tipoff for tonight's game is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOUISBURG	5	2
5	2 – 14	
DE SOTO	11	11
23	6 – 51	

LOUISBURG (10-9): Kirstin Lowry 6, Madisen Simpson 3; Paige Buffington 3; Kallie O'Keefe 2. **Totals:** 3 5-8 14. **3-point field goals:** 1, (Buffington)