

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.”

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 time 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."

LOUISBURG

6

9

13

10 - 38

PAOLA

17

17

22

6 – 62

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 the 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)

O'Keefe's 18 points lifts Lady Cats



Louisburg senior Kallie O'Keefe scored 18 points and pulled down nine rebounds in the Lady Cats' 52-36 victory over Spring Hill on Friday.

SPRING HILL – The Louisburg girls basketball team picked the right time to flip the switch as it was in danger of losing its second straight game.

The Lady Cats put together a big fourth quarter Friday in Spring Hill as they outscored the Broncos by 14 points in the frame and ended up cruising to a 52-36 victory. Senior Natalie Moore hit a shot at the buzzer to end the third quarter to help set up the final push.

“Natalie’s shot at the buzzer to end the third quarter seemed to give us some good momentum to start the fourth,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “We pushed the tempo more in that final quarter and some of the younger players made some plays for us.”

Spring Hill had a tough time containing forward Kallie O'Keefe

as she made impacts on both ends of the floor. The Louisburg senior finished with a game-high 18 points and nearly had a double-double with nine rebounds. O'Keefe also had two steals to add to her line.

"Kallie was active in the offense and the others did a good job of getting her the ball in good positions," coach Lowry said.

The Lady Cats (10-8) took a 25-20 lead into halftime before Spring Hill made a mini run. The Broncos eventually tied the game at 32-all before Moore's shot at the buzzer gave Louisburg the lead and the momentum back. Louisburg outscored Spring Hill 18-4 in the final quarter.

Moore had another solid game at both ends of the floor for Louisburg as she was second on the team in scoring with 15 points to go along with six assists and five rebounds.

Louisburg also got good production from its underclassmen as junior Megan Lemke was second on the team with seven rebounds and five points. Sophomores Paige Buffington and Emalee Overbay also scored some crucial baskets for the Lady Cats and each had four points.

"It's always good to get wins as we get closer to the end of the regular season," coach Lowry said. It's also a challenge preparing and playing against a team that we could see in a couple of weeks in substate."

Spring Hill, along with Paola and Fort Scott, will join Louisburg in substate action in two weeks and the Lady Cats will see another one of those opponents later this week.

Louisburg will host Paola on Friday for senior night after the Lady Cats nearly knocked off the unbeaten and No. 2-ranked team in Class 4A, Division I earlier this month. It will be the final time Moore, O'Keefe and Kirstin Lowry play in front of their home crowd.

Tonight, the Lady Cats will also try for another revenge victory when they travel to De Soto. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

“This week gives us an opportunity to play two very good teams and obviously Paola that has yet to be beaten and is someone we hope to have a chance to play in substate,” coach Lowry said. “More importantly, this week is the final time that our three seniors will play on their home court. We know De Soto will be another tough game tonight but it’s another opportunity to help prepare us for the postseason.”

LOUISBURG		10	15
9	18 – 52		
SPRING HILL		8	12
12	4 – 36		

LOUISBURG (10-8): Kallie O’Keefe 7-10 4-9 18; Natalie Moore 5-13 5-6 15; Megan Lemke 1-2 3-4 5; Paige Buffington 2-5 0-0 4; Emalee Overbay 2-2 0-0 4; Kirstin Lowry 1-8 0-0 3; Madisen Simpson 1-7 0-0 3. Totals: 19-47 12-19 52. 3-point field goals: 2, (Simpson, Lowry)

Lady Cats lose lead, game to Baldwin



Louisburg sophomore Paige Buffington drives between two Baldwin defender Tuesday during the Lady Cats' home 44-28 loss to the Bulldogs.

For the second time in a month, the Louisburg girls basketball team had its sights set on upsetting the No. 1 team in Class 4A, Division II.

The Lady Cats hosted Baldwin on Tuesday, and for three quarters, positioned themselves for what could have been their biggest win of the season. The fourth quarter, however, was a different story.

Baldwin held Louisburg to just two fourth-quarter points and ended up pulling away for a 44-28 victory. It was a little bit of déjà vu, as earlier in the year the Lady Cats had a 17-point halftime lead at Baldwin and couldn't hold on.

"I know the girls aren't satisfied with playing some the best teams in the league and state like Paola and Baldwin close, but for some reason we have a hard time closing out games," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "For whatever reason, we are just not a good second half team right now and I don't think it is a lack of effort, but we just aren't playing smart and executing like we need to."

The execution was good early as the Lady Cats (9-8) jumped out to a 10-0 lead in the first quarter, including six points from Natalie Moore. The Bulldogs hit a 3-pointer with 45 seconds

left to make it 10-3, but the Lady Cats still had control.

A pair of Kallie O'Keefe free throws made it 12-3 in the second quarter, but Baldwin went on a 10-0 run to take the lead back. A 3-pointer from Madisen Simpson gave the Lady Cats the lead back and Moore hit a runner to make it 19-16 at halftime.

"We have had good first half efforts, and we did again in this one, but we just aren't finishing strong," coach Lowry said. "The girls have to be able to dig down and finish when they don't have a lot left. They are capable of doing that and have seen them do that."

Baldwin eventually took a six-point lead in the third quarter, but the Lady Cats cut it to two with under a minute left after a basket from O'Keefe. However, Baldwin hit a 3-pointer to end the quarter and then hit another to start the fourth to build a 10-point lead and eventually pulled away.

The Bulldogs outscored the Lady Cats 13-2 in the final period.



Louisburg's Kallie O'Keefe (left) dives on the floor for a loose ball Tuesday in Louisburg. O'Keefe finished with seven points and seven rebounds.

"I am not sure what was different about the second half because I don't think Baldwin did anything different than they did in the first half, we just didn't execute," coach Lowry said. "We got sloppy in the fourth quarter and did things that aren't like us."

Moore led the Lady Cats in scoring with 16 points, while O'Keefe finished with seven points and a team-high seven rebounds.

"I thought Kallie played really aggressive out there and played smart," coach Lowry said. "She was diving after loose balls and that sort of stuff is contagious and I think the rest of the team feeds off that."

Before the game, the Lady Cats came out dressed in pink for

the 'Pink Out Night' in honor of breast cancer awareness. Players also wore pink head bands during the game.

Louisburg will try and snap its two-game losing skid Friday when it travels to Spring Hill. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOUISBURG	10	9	7	2 –
28				
BALDWIN	3	13	15	13
– 44				

LOUISBURG (9-8): Natalie Moore 5-13 6-6 16; Kallie O'Keefe 1-9 5-6 7; Madisen Simpson 1-5 0-0 3; Kirstin Lowry 1-4 0-0 2. Totals: 8-36 11-12 28. 3-point field goals: 1, (Simpson)

Rally comes up short for Lady Cats



Louisburg sophomore Madisen Simpson drives around an Ottawa player in the Lady Cats' 60-51 loss Friday on homecoming.

For the first 23 minutes, the Louisburg girls basketball team

couldn't seem to get in any kind of rhythm during Friday's homecoming contest against Ottawa.

The Lady Cats eventually found it, and for the final nine minutes, turned a 21-point deficit to just five, but couldn't get over the hump in a 60-51 loss to the Cyclones. Louisburg came close to pulling off an improbable comeback.

"It was good to see the girls battle back, especially being down 21, but we have to be smarter at this point in the season," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "We had four days to prepare for Ottawa and defensively we were just out of position. The homecoming game is always filled with distractions and other things, so I am sure that was part of it, but we have to be more focused."

The game started to slip away from the Lady Cats (9-7) in the third quarter as Ottawa went on a 14-3 run to build a 47-26 lead with just under a minute left. Louisburg built some momentum when Natalie Moore hit two free throws and then a 3-pointer at the buzzer to make it a 15-point deficit.



Louisburg junior Natalie Moore drives past an Ottawa player to the basket Friday in Louisburg. Moore finished with 27 points in the 60-51 loss

Moore, who finished with a game-high 27 points, scored 14 of those points in the fourth quarter to help bring Louisburg back. She hit a runner in the lane to cut it to 53-48 with 1 minute and 28 seconds left in the game.

Louisburg couldn't get the stops it needed in the final minute and was forced to foul. Ottawa's Corie Fischer hit the final seven free throws to keep the Lady Cats at bay.

Lady Cat senior Kirstin Lowry also hit a big 3-pointer during the run and finished in double figures with 12 points.

To get the rally started, Louisburg junior Megan Lemke dove on the floor late in the third quarter for a loose ball and forced an Ottawa turnover which seemed to give the Lady Cats

new life.

"I think Megan's play there really woke us up a little bit," coach Lowry said. "It was a great hustle play and was a springboard into getting that rally going. It is those plays that can change a game and it did in our case."

Louisburg had to deal with foul problems early as forward Kallie O'Keefe picked up two fouls with three minutes left in the first quarter and Moore picked up two fouls in the second.

Ottawa gave the Lady Cats fits in the first three quarters from all over the floor. Fischer and Brette Moore each finished with 16 points for the game.

However, Cyclone freshman Kamryn Shaffer provided the biggest impact as she scored 18 points, including four 3-pointers.

"The fact was Ottawa was on fire for a while and just made shots," coach Lowry said. "For the freshman to come in and hit four 3s was big for them plus Fischer and Moore are always good players. I talked to those two before the game and I just wanted to let them know how much I appreciated them because I have watched them the last six or seven years and watched them grow. I try to do that with a lot of the seniors in the league."

Louisburg will try and rebound from the loss Tuesday when it hosts Baldwin. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOUISBURG		8	9
15	19 - 51		
OTTAWA		14	12
21	13 - 60		

LOUISBURG (9-7): Natalie Moore 27, Kirstin Lowry 12, Megan Lemke 6, Madisen Simpson 5, Kallie O'Keefe 1. Totals 19 8-13

51. 3-point field goals: 5, (Moore 2, Lowry 2, Simpson)

Lady Cats pull away from Eudora



Louisburg guard Kirstin Lowry was one of three Lady Cat players in double figures Friday in Eudora. Lowry scored 16 points in the 59-40 victory.

EUDORA – There was some worry about how the Louisburg girls basketball team would react to a tough loss earlier in the week to rival Paola.

After a shaky first half Friday at Eudora, the Lady Cats shot down any doubt about how they would bounce back. Louisburg took control against Eudora in the second half on its way to a 59-40 victory.

It was the fifth victory in the last six games for Louisburg after it started its season with a 4-5 record in its first nine games. The Lady Cats are now 9-6 overall.

“I am always a little concerned about a game following one in which the kids gave so much,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said

of the Paola game earlier in the week. "However, our seniors did a good job of leading and setting the tone for us in the second half against Eudora."

The three seniors certainly did their part as they combined for 50 of the 59 points as each player made an impact on different parts of the floor.

Point guard Natalie Moore had her way with the Eudora defense as she finished with a game-high 24 points to go along with eight rebounds, three assists and three steals. Moore did a lot of damage from the free-throw line as she knocked down 12-of-15 attempts.

Guard Kirstin Lowry made an impact from beyond the arch as she totaled 16 points, including two 3-pointers. Forward Kallie O'Keefe worked hard underneath the basket as she nearly ended up with a double-double with 10 points and nine rebounds and also added two steals.

Offensively, the Lady Cats got off to a strong start as they scored 17 first-quarter points, but went into a lull in the second quarter and took just a 28-22 lead into halftime.

"Our level of energy and intensity wasn't what it has been at the beginning of the game," coach Lowry said. "In the first half we seemed to be doing just enough to compete and weren't as disciplined as we needed to be."

The Lady Cats got the message in the second half as they outscored Eudora 31-18 in the final two quarters. Louisburg did so because of its work at the free-throw line as it converted 19-of-25 attempts.

Free throws have been up and down for the Lady Cats this season and is a vital part to their success.

"We continue to put a lot of work in on getting better at the free-throw line," coach Lowry said. "Because of how we play,

we expect to get to the line a lot and it's crucial that we finish."

Next up for Louisburg is a home matchup with Ottawa at 6 p.m. this Friday and it will try to avenge a loss earlier in the season. It is also homecoming for the Lady Cats.

"Homecoming week is a fun and exciting week for the kids," coach Lowry said. "However, when it comes to preparing there are a lot of distractions so it will be important that we have good practices as we make our final push."

LOUISBURG		17	11
15	16 – 59		
EUDORA		10	12
8	10 – 40		

LOUISBURG (9-6): Natalie Moore 6-14 12-15 24; Kirstin Lowry 7-13 0-1 16; Kallie O'Keefe 4-7 2-2 10; Madisen Simpson 0-4 4-4 4; Emalee Overbay 2-3 0-0 4; Paige Buffington 0-3 1-2 1. Totals: 19-45 19-25 59. 3-point field goals: 2, (Lowry 2)

Upset-minded Lady Cats come up short



PAOLA – Scoring just two points in a quarter against the No. 2 ranked team in Class 4A-Division I, on its home floor no less, usually means blowout city.

Instead, the Louisburg girls basketball team nearly put together the upset of the season. The Lady Cats had undefeated Paola down with 5 minutes left in the contest, but couldn't hold on in a 51-39 loss Tuesday in Paola.

The Lady Cats took the lead with 5 minutes and 29 seconds left in the contest on a pair of Natalie Moore free throws, but Paola answered with a 17-4 run to end the game, with many of those points coming at the free-throw line late.

Even with the loss, Louisburg (8-6) knows it will get a chance to see Paola one, if not two more times before the end of the season.

"To be honest, yes it was a loss and we don't like to lose, but at the same time this was big for our girls," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They needed to get the confidence that we can play with teams like Paola and we did. It really helps us take that next step and hopefully we can keep building on this."

It was a sluggish start for both teams as the first four minutes of the game was scoreless and was littered with turnovers on both sides. Paola found a little rhythm to take a 7-0 lead and Louisburg just missed getting shutout of the frame but Moore hit a runner with 20 seconds left.

The basket seemed to carry over into the second quarter as the Lady Cats outscored Paola 17-9 and took a 19-16 lead into halftime. Louisburg took advantage of some Paola foul problems and charged back.



Andy Brown /
louisburgsportszone@gmail.com

Louisburg sophomore guard Madisen Simpson drives to the basket on Feb. 3 against Paola. The Lady Cats fell to No. 2 Paola 51-39. (Top) Louisburg junior Megan Lemke battles for a rebound in Paola.

Senior Kirstin Lowry connected on two 3-pointers, including one that tied the game, while senior Kallie O'Keefe tied the game again on a basket with 1:33 left in the game. Moore and O'Keefe each hit free throws down the stretch to give the Lady Cats the halftime lead.

"I think both teams were playing hard at first, even though it was a little sloppy, but I think both were just feeling each other out," coach Lowry said. "We made a nice run in the second quarter and felt pretty good at halftime. Even when we were down early, it was good to see the girls battle back and feel like they can play with Paola."

The third quarter went back and forth, but the Lady Cats seemed to seize the momentum heading into the fourth when Kirstin Lowry knocked down another 3-pointer to put Louisburg

up 31-29 with under 10 seconds left.

However, Paola's Taylor Williams took the ball down the floor, scored, was fouled and converted the 3-point play with 1 second left to put the Panthers back up by one.

Moore hit four straight free throws in the fourth quarter to give the Lady Cats the lead at 35-34, but Paola would take control after that. Moore led the Lady Cats in scoring with 16 points to go along with six rebounds and was 8-for-10 from the free-throw line.

Kirstin Lowry also finished in double figures for the Lady Cats with 13 points. O'Keefe added six points, but also pulled down a team-high 12 rebounds against a big Panther front line.

"I thought Kallie really battled in there and played smart," coach Lowry said. "She was going up against some big girls and she did well. She was very aggressive, which was good to see."

LOUISBURG	2	17	12	8 – 39
-----------	---	----	----	--------

PAOLA	7	9	16	19 – 51
-------	---	---	----	---------

LOUISBURG (8-6): Natalie Moore 4-13 8-10 16; Kirstin Lowry 4-11 2-2 13; Kallie O'Keefe 3-14 2-5 6; Megan Lemke 2-3 0-0 4. Totals: 12-35 12-21 39. 3-point field goals: 3, (Lowry 3)

Lady Cats capture tourney

title



Seniors Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O'Keefe have been putting the Louisburg girls basketball team on their backs for most of the season.

Friday's championship game of the Louisburg Invitational was no different as each player came through at the right time. All three seniors played vital roles in the 47-41 victory over St. James Academy to win back-to-back tournament titles. The Lady Cats have now won their home tournament championship three of the last four seasons.

"It is really big for this group of girls," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They stepped up when they needed to and the whole team really did some good things. We knew St. James was a good team and we are going to have to play hard and smart and I thought we did that for the most part."

Moore got things started in the first quarter as she scored 12 of her team-high 21 points in the frame.

Sophomore Madisen Simpson opened the quarter with a 3-pointer that banked in, then Moore followed with 12 straight points, 10 of which came from the free-throw line. She finished the game 13-for-18 from the charity stripe.

The Lady Cats (8-5) took a 15-6 lead into the second quarter and were able to overcome a taller and bigger St. James team in the process.

With wins over Osawatomie and Shawnee Mission North to start

the tournament, the Lady Cats have now won three straight and are hoping they are turning the corner on their season.

“Our team chemistry is so much better now that what it was,” Moore said. “It was good before, but we are working a lot better as a team. The underclassmen are feeding off what the seniors are doing right now and it was a really good week for us.”



Andy Brown /
louisburgsportszone@gmail.com

Louisburg senior Natalie Moore drives to the basket for two points during the Jan 30 championship game of the Louisburg Invitational.

St. James made things interesting in the second quarter as it outscored Louisburg 16-7 to tie the game at 22-all at halftime. It left a nasty taste in the Lady Cats' mouth.

So when the team ventured to the locker room, they got a nice talking to from the coach.

“We basically got our (rear end) chewed and we needed it, especially me,” Kirstin Lowry said. “We basically gave away our momentum in that second quarter and we weren't playing

hard. I know I took it to heart and we played a lot harder in the second half."

Coach Lowry just had a simple message for the team.

"I just asked them how they wanted to be remembered," coach Lowry said. "We gave them the game back in the second quarter and we weren't playing well. I challenged them and they responded like good teams do and I couldn't be prouder of them."

Kirstin definitely responded as she scored all 10 of her points in the third quarter to help give Louisburg a slim 35-30 lead going into the fourth quarter. It also opened the door for O'Keefe to shine at the most crucial time.

The game, which was tied at 37-all with under five minutes remaining, turned when O'Keefe scored five straight points. The biggest play came when she drove the length of the floor after a rebound, made the basket, was fouled and converted the three-point play.

That five-point lead was enough and St. James wasn't able to recover. O'Keefe finished with seven points, but also added nine rebounds in the winning effort. Junior Megan Lemke also had six rebounds.

"I am just ecstatic," O'Keefe said. "It is great to be able to win this in our senior year and we are playing well right now. It is a good feeling that is for sure."

LOUISBURG	15	7	13
12 - 44			

ST. JAMES	6 16	8	11 -
41			

LOUISBURG (8-5): Natalie Moore 4-12 13-18 21; Kirstin Lowry

4-10 0-1 10; Kallie O'Keefe 3-7 1-2 7; Madisen Simpson 1-9 0-0 3; Paige Buffington 0-2 3-4 3; Megan Lemke 1-2 0-0 2. Totals: 13-42 18-27 47. 3-point field goals: 3, (Lowry 2, Simpson)

Louisburg downs Shawnee Mission North

On Jan. 29, Louisburg faced off with Shawnee Mission North in the second game of pool play in the Louisburg Invitational and came away with an easy 55-33 victory.

Natalie Moore came up big for the Lady Cats again as she finished with a game-high 26 points to go along with five rebounds. Sophomore Paige Buffington finished just outside of double figures with nine points and had four assists.

Kallie O'Keefe added eight points and seven rebounds and Kirstin Lowry added six rebounds in the win.

The game was tied at 9-all in the first quarter and the Lady Cats took a 23-17 lead at halftime. Louisburg pulled away even further as it outscored Shawnee Mission North 13-6 in the third quarter to pull away.

LOUISBURG	9	14	13
19	—	55	

SM NORTH	9	8	6	10	—	33
----------	---	---	---	----	---	----

LOUISBURG: Natalie Moore 8-12 9-11 26; Paige Buffington 2-6 4-5 9; Kallie O'Keefe 3-5 2-4 8; Madisen Simpson 2-7 0-0 6; Megan Lemke 0-2 2-2 2; Kirstin Lowry 1-9 0-0 2; Emalee Overbay 1-3 0-2 2. Totals: 17-44 17-24 55. 3-point field goals: 4, (Simpson 2, Moore, Buffington)

Lady Cats roll Osawatomie

The first game of the Louisburg Invitational didn't provide much drama for the Lady Cats as they cruised to a 60-23 victory over Osawatomie to open pool play.

Junior Megan Lemke had one of her best games of the season as she finished with a team-high 12 points and Kirstin Lowry added 11 points in the victory.

"I will tell you what, Megan Lemke really played hard in that win over St. James and really the whole tournament," coach Lowry said. "We asked her to guard some bigger girls in the post and she did a great job with that. She was relentless in there."

Sophomore Madisen Simpson finished with eight points.