

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 than 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.