

Overtime victory gives Wildcats their first win



Louisburg senior Weston Guetterman drives through the lane for a layup Tuesday at home against Harrisonville.

The Louisburg boys basketball team off to a good start Tuesday in its home game against Harrisonville, but it had an even better finish.

After staking itself an eight point lead after the first quarter, Louisburg found itself down six points early in the fourth quarter. In what was a back and forth contest, the Wildcats were able to force an extra period and eventually win, 67-62, in overtime.

"Harrisonville went on some runs and we answered," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "We came up big at the end of regulation and in overtime when we got down. Something about us, when we realize that we have to make plays, that we find ways to do it. I told them right before overtime that this game was going to be won on the defensive end and that is what sparked us. We got a couple steals there and it was huge for us. It was a fun game."

The Wildcats (1-1) got on a roll to start the fourth when senior Weston Guetterman cut the Harrisonville lead in half as he scored, was fouled and converted the 3-point play. Junior Julian Margrave added six straight points on his own to tie it at 52-all midway through the fourth.

Harrisonville hit a 3-pointer to break the tie, but junior Michael Seuferling knocked down a shot and Weston Guetterman hit two free throws to put Louisburg up one with 2 minutes remaining. Louisburg found itself down two when Ben Guetterman was fouled and hit both free throws to help send it to overtime.

Defense took over for Louisburg as the Wildcats recorded three steals in the extra period. One from Weston Guetterman that led to a runout score, another from Ben Guetterman that led to a layup and the final one from junior Maverick Rockers that led to a Ben Guetterman layup to give Louisburg a four-point lead with 45 seconds left.



Senior Ben Guetterman puts a shot up in the lane Tuesday against Harrisonville.

Margrave had a big night for Louisburg as he finished with a team-high 26 points, with 13 of those coming in the first quarter. He also added a team-high nine rebounds and three blocks

“Julian had a great night,” Pfannenstiel said. “He is a good player that works hard at it. When we can get the ball in his hands, good things usually happen. I am not sure why he wasn’t able to get as many touches as he did in the first quarter, but this is team basketball. When he gets attention from multiple defenders, that opens things up for other guys. It was a big night for Julian and it is something we expect from him every night.”

Weston Guetterman also had a solid outing for Louisburg with 14 points and eight rebounds from the point guard spot, to go along with four steals and three assists. Ben Guetterman added eight points and seven rebounds, most of which came in the fourth quarter and overtime.

Louisburg also got good production from its bench as senior Konnor Vohs finished with seven points off the bench, while Rockers gave the Wildcats good minutes late in the contest and scored five points.

“I thought our bench was huge,” Pfannenstiel said. “Konnor came in early and did a very good job. He shot the ball well and played good defense. Mav is never going to be the biggest kid on the floor, but he always looks comfortable out there. He is our second ball handler and he was big for us late. He played well for us defensively, but he was a lot of the reason why our offense was doing so well at times because other guys are comfortable with him out there.”

Harrisonville’s Brooks Langrehr had a big night for the Wildcats as he scored a game-high 34 points.

Louisburg will try for its second straight win today when it travels to Anderson County for its first road test of the season. Tipoff is set for 7:30 p.m.

LOU	22	10	11
15	9 – 67		
HAR	14	19	13
12	4 – 62		

LOUISBURG (1-1): Julian Margrave 11-16 2-2 26; Weston Guetterman 4-12 6-9 14; Ben Guetterman 3-15 2-2 8; Konnor Vohs 3-5 0-0 7; Maverick Rockers 1-1 2-4 5; Michael Seuferling 2-10 0-0 4; Andy Hupp 1-5 0-0 3. Totals: 25-65 12-17 67. 3-point field goals: 5, (Margrave 2, Rockers, Vohs, Hupp)

Big second half lifts Lady Cats past Burlington



Louisburg's (from left) Delaney Wright, Jordan Mynsted and Megan Foote congratulate Madilyn Melton (20) after a made basket and a foul in the first half of Friday's home game against Burlington.

The Louisburg girls basketball team already had a comfortable lead going into halftime of Tuesday's game against Burlington.

Louisburg took it to a whole other level of comfort in the second half.

The Lady Cats locked down Burlington defensively and gave up just 12 points in the second half and rolled to a 59-26 victory at Louisburg High School. It was the second straight win to start the season for Louisburg.

"I thought they did great in the second half," Louisburg coach Adrienne Lane said. "I told the girls at halftime that we needed to come out hard, because we were a little flat to start. We got a few fouls on us in the first half, but after that I thought our defense was awesome. We played defense without fouling and it was almost perfect."

Burlington turned the ball over 24 times on the night and the Lady Cats scored 18 points off those mistakes, while the Wildcats scored just two points off Louisburg turnovers. Louisburg was active all over the floor with 13 steals and 22 deflections.

The Lady Cats (2-0) also had to deal with foul trouble in the second half as starters Brianne Kuhlman and Jordan Mynsted had to play with four fouls, but the Louisburg bench came to rescue.

"It is really encouraging to see," Lane said. "I have 12 on the bench right now and I felt like we played 10 pretty consistently and they all did a great job. We didn't seem to miss a beat when we would sub and we just kept playing hard and our defense was great."

Mynsted, a junior, led Louisburg in scoring for the second straight game as she finished with 14 points to go along with eight rebounds. Seniors Brooklyn Diederich and Madilyn Melton also finished in double figures with 10, while Melton added five rebounds, five deflections and three steals and Diederich led the way with three blocks.



Senior Brooklyn Diederich puts up a 3-pointer Friday against Burlington.

Senior guard Megan Foote added eight points in the win to go along with six deflections, four assists and three steals.

"It was good to see them run some offense in that second half," Lane said. "I thought we were very patient and they found the open person. They did a good job of running the floor and getting to their spots. We passed the ball well and we got open shots. I was very pleased with that.

"I like that the posts did a good job of getting steals in the passing lane, something that maybe we normally wouldn't have gotten. I really like that we ran some good offense. We ran some pick and rolls, some high-low and that was fun to see."

Louisburg took a 7-5 lead after the first quarter, but from then on, the Lady Cats had control of the game. The Lady Cats

took a 22-14 lead at halftime and then outscored Burlington 37-12 in the second half to pull away.

The Lady Cats will try for their third consecutive win tonight when they travel to Anderson County for their first road contest of the season. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

LOU	7	15	16	21 –
59				
BUR	5	9	6	6
– 26				

LOUISBURG (2-0): Jordan Mynsted 7-14 0-0 14; Brooklyn Diederich 4-6 0-0 10; Madilyn Melton 5-6 0-1 10; Megan Foote 2-5 4-4 8; Alyse Moore 2-6 1-2; Brianne Kuhlman 2-5 0-0 5; Adyson Ross 1-2 0-0 2; Emma Prettyman 1-1 0-0 2; Delaney Wright 0-4 1-2 1; Sierra Hahn 0-0 1-2 1. Totals: 24-49 8-12 59. 3-point field goals: 4, (Diederich 2, Kuhlman, Moore)

Week 1 Athlete of the Week: Jordan Mynsted



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week one of the winter sports season, sponsored by Vohs Pharmacy.

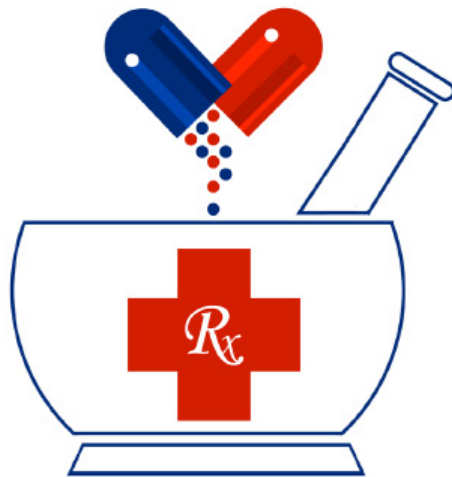
JORDAN MYNSTED, JUNIOR, GIRLS BASKETBALL

Louisburg junior Jordan Mynsted gave her Lady Cat team the spark they were looking for in their season opening win Friday against Tonganoxie. Mynsted scored a game-high 22 points and seven rebounds in the Lady Cats' 49-37 win over the Chieftains.

Mynsted came up big for Louisburg in the fourth quarter as she scored 12 straight points to help the Lady Cats build a double-digit lead and sealed the win for Louisburg.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the winter season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

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Wildcats' rally falls short in season opener



Junior Julian Margrave goes up for a dunk Friday during the Wildcats' season opener against Tonganoxie.

There was no easy game out of the gate for the Louisburg boys basketball team as the Wildcats squared off with No. 5 Tonganoxie in their season opener.

The challenge was a difficult one and the Chieftains lived up to their preseason ranking.

Tonganoxie racked up nearly 40 points in the first half, and despite a late rally from Louisburg, handed the Wildcats their first loss of the season, 63-56.

"You never really know what you are going to get in these first games," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "Sometimes you get some real ugly ones or get some really up-tempo games, and Tonganoxie came out pretty hot. Our guys battled back, and even though there were a couple times there were a deer in the headlights look, they hung in there. They battled back possession by possession and we were a different team in the fourth quarter. Tonganoxie played really well, and we weren't bad by any means, they were just better this time."

Louisburg found itself down 51-38 heading into the fourth

quarter, but used its defense to get back in the game. The Wildcats ramped up their full-court pressure and it helped lead to an 11-2 run that cut the Tonganoxie lead to 53-52.

Weston Guetterman opened the quarter with seven straight points, including a 3-pointer, a steal and a layup and a drive to the basket in which he was fouled. Ben Guetterman ended the run with a 3-pointer to give the Wildcats all the momentum.



Seniors Andy Hupp (23) and Weston Guetterman converge to force a Tonganoxie turnover Friday.

Unfortunately, the Chieftains were able to hold off Louisville as they went on a mini 7-2 run of their own and hit their free

throws down the stretch to seal the win.

"That is how we started off the game," Pfannenstiel said of the press. "We were running the same things, we were just better at it in the fourth quarter. We were a little more desperate and so our energy was better. The issue in the first half is we weren't as aggressive. Tongie's guards were comfortable throwing the ball ahead. The way we looked in the fourth quarter is how we want to look all the time out of our press. I'm glad we were able to see it be successful because we know now that if we play like that we can do some good things."

Turnovers hurt the Wildcats as the Chieftains forced 16 Louisburg turnovers and turned those into 17 points.

It was a back and forth game to begin the night as the two teams traded baskets and Tonganoxie held 20-17 lead after the first quarter. It was the second quarter where the Chieftains did their damage as they outscored Louisburg 19-11 in the frame and took an 11-point halftime lead.

"We played pretty well defensively, but we gave up almost 40 in the first half," Pfannenstiel said. "Offensively, I think we just got sped up a little bit and there are some footwork issues that can be fixed. Had a lot of mental errors, but we will get better."

Only four players scored on the night for Louisburg. Weston Guetterman led the Wildcats offensively with 20 points to go along with a team-high four assists and four steals.

Junior Julian Margrave also had a big night as he recorded a double-double with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Ben Guetterman also scored in double figures with 13 and junior Michael Seufferling added six points, five rebounds and three assists.

Louisburg will try and bounce back tonight as it hosts Harrisonville (Mo.) at 7:30 p.m. The Wildcats were supposed to

host Burlington, but it was recently forced to quarantine.

LOU	17	11	10	18 –
56				

TON	20	19	12	12 –
63				

LOUISBURG (0-1): Weston Guetterman 7-11 4-5 20; Julian Margrave 7-15 1-2 17; Ben Guetterman 5-11 1-2 13; Michael Seuferling 2-6 0-0 6. Totals: 21-49 6-9 56. 3-point field goals: 8, (Seuferling 2, W. Guetterman 2, B. Guetterman 2, Margrave 2).

Mynsted's big fourth quarter lifts Louisburg past Tonganoxie



Louisburg junior Jordan Mynsted scored 12 of her game-high 22 points in the fourth quarter and helped the Lady Cats to a 49-37 victory.

For the first time all season, the entire Louisburg girls basketball team found themselves on the court at the same time.

The Lady Cats couldn't have picked a better occasion for it.

Due to a couple different quarantines that affected several players on the Louisburg team, the Lady Cats have been unable to work as a group since practice started in the middle of November.

However, all of the players were finally cleared Friday and it led to a season opening win.

The Lady Cats used a 20-point fourth quarter that helped them to a 49-37 victory over Tonganoxie on Friday. In the process, Adrienne Lane earned her first win as the team's head coach.

"Considering this is the first time that we have actually gotten a chance to play together, it is super exciting," Lane said. "I think this win will definitely help the girls' morale as we move forward. I am really excited for them because they have deserved it, especially after everything we have been through to get to this point."

After a tough third quarter that helped Tonganoxie cut an 11-point halftime deficit to just four, junior Jordan Mynsted gave Louisburg the lift it need in the final period.

Mynsted scored a game-high 22 points, including 12 straight points in the fourth quarter as the Chieftains didn't have an answer for the Lady Cat forward. Mynsted also pulled down seven rebounds.

"Jordan did awesome," Lane said. "She really hadn't gotten a chance to play many minutes because she was sitting with foul trouble, so that was huge that she came out and scored those 12 in a row. We really needed that spark to come in and get us going."

"At the same time, I think our defense was great. So between Jordan's performance, and the defense, I think that really set us apart."



Louisburg senior Alyse Moore blocks a Tonganoxie shot early in the fourth quarter Friday in the Lady Cats' season opener in Louisburg.

The Lady Cat defense frustrated the Chieftains at times as they held Tonganoxie to just nine first half points and put together several crucial stops in the fourth quarter.

Louisburg turned Tonganoxie over 20 times thanks to its pressure defense and senior guard Megan Foote led the way with five steals. Foote also finished with seven points to go along with nine rebounds.

Senior forward Alyse Moore was big for Louisburg on the glass as she recorded a team-high 15 rebounds and also had two steals. Junior Delaney Wright had a team-high four deflections and three assists.

Senior Brooklyn Diederich also knocked in a pair of 3-

pointers, while senior Madilyn Melton had five points and eight rebounds.



Louisburg head coach Adrienne Lane instructs her team during a timeout Friday. Lane got her first victory as the Lady Cat head coach.

Louisburg got out to a good start and took a 20-9 halftime lead thanks to a Diederich 3-pointer at the buzzer. The players started to get more comfortable with each other as the game went along and it led to the big fourth quarter, including those 12 straight points from Mynsted.

"It was kind of iffy at times, but once we got into the game a little further, I feel that we read each other better," Lane said. "This win really makes me excited for the future because the girls were starting to gel a little bit and we were getting better as we went. Once we got into the flow, it continued to get better and obviously it will get better once we can actually practice together with everyone."

“It was a super physical game. I felt that our fouls in the first half were more because of how excited we were and we just needed to calm down a little bit. We were reaching a lot when we didn’t need to and I feel like we were kind of bailing them out a little bit. The second half was very physical and I am glad that the girls played that way. I preach that to them all the time that we need to be physical.”

Louisburg will try for its second consecutive win Tuesday when it hosts Burlington. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

LOU	6	14	9	20
– 49				
TON	3	6	16	12 –
37				

LOUISBURG (1-0): Jordan Mynsted 9-15 4-4 22; Megan Foote 1-5 4-6 7; Brooklyn Diederich 2-8 0-0 6; Alyse Moore 1-8 3-5 5; Madilyn Melton 2-8 1-2 5; Brianne Kuhlman 0-1 2-2 2; Adyson Ross 0-1 2-2 2. Totals: 15-53 16-21 49. 3-point field goals: 3, (Diederich 2, Moore)

Wildcats hope to make big jump from last season



Louisburg’s leading scorer from a year ago, Julian Margrave,

returns to lead the Wildcats after a first-team all-league performance last season.

It may have happened more than nine months ago, but the final loss of last season has stuck in the minds of several members of the Louisburg boys basketball program.

The Wildcats rallied from 20 points down in the fourth quarter of their first round playoff game against Iola to force overtime, and scored 32 points in the frame. Louisburg didn't have enough and eventually fell in the extra period.

It was lesson that was realized the hard way – a lesson to play the game hard from start to finish.

"We definitely learned from that loss at the end of the year," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "What really hurt us that game was our inability to get stops in the first three quarters, which led to the big deficit. Once we realized our season was on the line and we started playing with more energy and aggressiveness, that sparked our run.

"That's our goal this year is to play with relentless energy each game. We have no idea what this season is going to bring this year, so we have to play each game like it might be our last. If we can play with that fourth quarter desperation for all four quarters, I like our chances in every game we play this year. Now it's time to put it to the test."

That first test comes today when the Wildcats host Tonganoxie, which is currently ranked No. 5 in Class 4A, for 7:30 p.m. tipoff.

Louisburg seems well-prepared for that first test as the Wildcats return all but two starters from a season ago, in which they finished with an 8-13 record. The Wildcats also return six seniors in Weston Guetterman, Ben Guetterman, Konnor Vohs, Charlie Peters, Andy Hupp and Dawson Barnes, and with first-team all-league player Julian Margrave in the mix,

they are an experienced group.

"We return 80 percent of our scoring from last year, and I think we've added more depth this year as well," Pfannenstiel said. "Our practices have been very competitive so I think the competition for varsity minutes will elevate our play, not only in games, but in practice. It's been fun watching this senior class develop over the years.

"We return three starters, (who were all All-League players) from last year, and lots of other guys that saw significant court time as well. We lost a starting guard and post player, but I think we have guys ready to fill those voids. We definitely like what we have returning and look forward to making a jump this year."

One player who hopes to take another big step forward this year is Margrave. The Louisburg junior was among the Frontier League's best last season as he was a unanimous first team selection as he averaged 16 points and seven rebounds a contest.

The 6-foot-9 forward will be the focus of a lot of opposition most nights, but Pfannenstiel is looking forward to seeing how much he has improved.

"Julian had a great sophomore season," Pfannenstiel said. "He was a unanimous 1st Team All-League player, which is hard to do as a sophomore in the Frontier League. As good as he was last year, I've already seen improvement this year. He's still growing into his body and he's much more explosive this year. His continued effort and work in the weight room is evident by that. Julian works hard on his game. He's always the first one to arrive and the last one to leave the gym each day. He has a chance to have a special year."



Ben Guetterman is one of six returning seniors for the Wildcat basketball team this season.

Also returning are guards Weston and Ben Guetterman. Both players were honorable mention all-league players last season.

Weston averaged 11.2 points, to go along with four assists and a four rebounds a game. Ben finished the year as he averaged 11.1 points a contest and 5.5 rebounds. Weston is the team's returning point guard and Pfannenstiel knows that leadership will be valuable on and off the court.

"Weston has been solid for us," Pfannenstiel said. "This will be his third year as a starter, so we will rely on his consistency and ability to lead on the floor. Weston sets the tempo for us, so we expect big things out of him this year."

Vohs and juniors Maverick Rockers, Michael Seuferling and Isaac Guetterman will also be called upon to play plenty of

varsity minutes at the guard spots as each contributed a season ago. Peters, Barnes and Hupp will also be a presence down low for the Wildcats.

To add on to what is already a difficult league schedule, the Wildcats also have to try and plan for an impossible opponent – COVID-19. Louisburg has already faced challenges on how to work around all the guidelines, but the players are excited to just be able to play.

“We were fortunate to be able to have a camp this summer, but that was about it,” Pfannenstiel said. “We usually play 20-25 games in the summer and that was not allowed, so we lost all of that summer prep. Already this season, we were missing four players from practice due to quarantines, but we have everyone back now.

“The biggest change this year is how we practice. We have to cohort our JV and varsity guys for practice so we’ve really had to adjust our practice routine to allow for that. Coach (Drew) Harding and myself are going to be in better shape now because we have to be an extra body in 5 on 5 situations. All of the changes do make it difficult, but we all feel fortunate that we are getting the opportunity to play, so we will do whatever is necessary for that to happen.”

Four seniors to guide Lady Cats basketball



Alyse Moore is one of four Louisburg seniors to guide the Lady Cats this season.

The season hasn't quite started for the Louisburg girls basketball team, but COVID-19 is already making its presence known in the program.

In its close to three weeks of practice, the Lady Cats have yet to be able to practice as a full group. It is just one of the many challenges for first-year head coach Adrienne Lane, as Louisburg preps for its season opener this Friday.

"We have had a rough start with COVID, as we have had to quarantine two different groups at different times so far this season," Lane said. "It is hard to prepare for quarantines, but we are conditioning and trying to be in good shape so if we only have a few girls for games we will be able to still compete. We also have had a couple walk through practices to help the girls learn the plays and we will continue to do this throughout the season. I feel them being mentally strong is as important as physically strong."

Louisburg is coming off an 8-13 season, which included a close first round loss to Baldwin in the playoffs. It was one of the better games the Lady Cats had played all season and they are hoping to use that and get off to a good start this season.

Even with all the quarantine problems, Louisburg has a good base on which to build off of, starting with four seniors.

Megan Foote, Alyse Moore, Madilyn Melton and Brooklyn Diederich all started last season for Louisburg and three of them were all-Frontier League players a year ago. All four

figure to play big roles for the Lady Cats this season.

Melton was the team's leading scorer from a season ago and earned second team all-league honors. She averaged 13 points and seven rebounds a year ago from the forward spot.



Senior Madilyn Melton returns as the Lady Cats' leading scorer as she averaged more than 13 points a game last season.

Moore and Diederich both earned honorable mention all-league honors and Diederich was the team's best 3-pointer shooter, along with being strong defensively with six deflections and two steals a contest.

Moore, one of the team's post players, led Louisburg with eight rebounds a game a season ago to go along with nine points and three steals.

Foote served as the team's point guard last season and looks

to guide the Lady Cat offense. The players have made Lane's first year as seamless as possible

"This has been an easy transition for me and that is because of the girls and how they have made me feel welcome," Lane said "The girls have great attitudes and are willing to put in the work to learn and get better daily. Having four returning seniors has been a blessing. These four girls are great leaders and they have set the tone for this year's team."

Louisburg also returns several underclassmen that are prepared to play vital roles as well, starting with Delaney Wright. The Louisburg junior guard started several games a season ago, while junior Jordan Mynsted will see a lot of time under the basket. Sophomore guards Brianne Kuhlman and Adyson Ross will see varsity time as well.

Although the Lady Cats return experience from a season ago, they are not resting on their laurels and are looking forward to having a winning season.

With all the absences from practice, Lane is currently putting together her varsity players that are available, with the junior varsity to help create as strong of a lineup as possible early in the season.

The Lady Cats open the year Friday at home against Tonganoxie.

"This team has many strengths, but I feel our greatest strength is our work ethic," Lane said. "The girls work very hard and practice hard every day and they are not afraid to battle against each other. They make each other better every day."

Diederich excited to join Neosho basketball program



Softball has always been a big part of Brooklyn Diederich's life and she has spent many of her early years playing the sport she has grown to love.

However earlier this month, Diederich officially said goodbye to that love and moved on to a new chapter in her life. The Louisburg senior found a new avenue to achieve one of her life long dreams – to play sports at the next level.

In front of family and friends at Louisburg High School on Nov. 11, Diederich signed her letter of intent to play basketball and Neosho County Community College. She will suit up for the Chanute program next season.

I always thought I was going to play softball in college, but then I went down to visit Neosho for basketball and I absolutely just fell in love with the coach, the campus and all the players I met," Diederich said. "They made it to where I knew I wanted to play basketball for at least two more years.

It was the coaches who struck a chord with Diederich, as they felt she would be a good addition to their program. Head coach JJ Davis, who is in his eighth season with the Panthers, convinced Diederich she would be the perfect fit.



Louisburg senior Brooklyn Diederich signed her letter of intent on Nov. 11 to play basketball at Neosho Community College. Sitting next to Brooklyn are her parents Jenny and Derek Diederich. Standing is Louisburg assistant coach Leanna Willer, head coach Adrienne Lane and assistant Nick Chapman.

"They were really welcoming," Diederich said. "The head coach is a motivational speaker, so he is really super positive, which is what I really like. He is also not afraid to get on to you if he needs to. Those also do grade checks every day and want to make sure you are do well."

"Their program really likes to shoot the 3-pointer and that is one of the things that I specialize in, so I think it will be a great fit for me."

Diederich had a successful season for the Lady Cats last season as she was named as an honorable mention all-league player and made on a difference on both sides of the floor.

She finished the season with an average of six points a game

and a team-high 29 3-pointers, but she also led the Lady Cats on defense. She recorded a team-high 5.7 deflections and 1.7 steals a game.

Diederich's love for basketball grew even more as she played with Pride basketball coach, Mario Washington, in the offseason.

"My competitive basketball coach, Mario Washington, he really impacted me a lot," Diederich said. "He helped me get out my game film to a lot of area colleges and he was just a big help for me. I couldn't be more thankful."

Although the fit with Neosho was a good one for Diederich, it was a bittersweet moment for her to give up the love of her life – softball.

"I have always wanted to play a sport in college, and it has always been a dream of mine," Diederich said. "Softball has been a main thing in my life, especially with my dad being my coach. Just knowing that I won't be playing that any more, it is going to be really sad, but I am really happy with my decision.

"I just want to work hard 24-7 and focus on my grades. Just keep working as hard as you can and make sure I have some fun along the way."

KSHSAA votes to start winter sports on time, will not

allow spectators



The 2020-21 winter sports season may have a little different look than in the past, but there is one thing that will remain the same – the student athletes will be out competing.

During the Kansas High School Activities Association Board of Directors meeting Tuesday, the board voted in favor to have winter sports continue as scheduled by a 53-22 decision. The meeting was in response to the Executive Board's proposal last week to delay winter sport till Jan. 15.

Instead, schools around the state will be able to kick off their seasons in early December, and then after a moratorium for Christmas Break, can resume competition on Jan. 8. The basketball, wrestling and swim teams will also be able to have a full schedule of events, barring cancellations due to the spread of COVID-19.

"I'm extremely happy and relieved on how KSHSAA voted regarding winter sports being able to happen," Louisburg senior Megan Foote said. "Sports are extremely important to students as it not only helps with physical health, but also provides a release for mental health. Athletes can depend on sports to be an outlet for the troubling feelings they may have. As someone who struggles with mental health, I can vouch for how important sports are. Sports provide some of the best memories and times a kid can have and I believe they're essential in today's world."

During the meeting, eight different people – from parents to

physicians – spoke on behalf of letting competition resume and two of those were Louisburg parents Craig Holtzen and Jenny Diederich.

Holtzen, whose son Cade is a senior on the Wildcat wrestling team, gave opening remarks in which he tried to convey the importance of extracurricular activities, even during COVID-19 times.

“There is no evidence to suggest that kids are either super-spreaders or very susceptible to this virus to begin with,” Holtzen said during the meeting. “I would dare go far enough to say that kids are practicing better virus protocol when they are in school or activities than when they are locked down.

“Fall activities were largely successful because of our ability to be flexible and adaptive to the many changing things that happened over that season.”

The vote to let them play was a sigh of relief to many players and coaches around the state, who were already in the process of prepping for their season.

“This is great news for our kids,” Louisburg boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “Our students and athletes have been so resilient this year with all the new protocols, so I’m happy for them to get their opportunity because they’ve been through a lot. There was a lot of concern among our kids, so I’m sure they’re relieved now that the uncertainty has been resolved. We are definitely not out of the woods yet when it comes to setbacks, so we have to continue to do our part to stay safe and healthy throughout this season.”

Following the decision by the executive board last week to delay the start of winter sports, Diederich started a Facebook group called “Rally the Troops to Fight for Winter School Sports.”

The page attracted more than 4,000 followers and advocated for parents and players to email and call the board of directors to let them know how important the winter season was for all of them. It seemed to work as the measure to allow them to play passed easily.

“Yesterday was a victory,” Diederich said. “It was exactly what we were fighting for – a full season with 20 games that starts on time. I am as passionate as they come and would love to be in the stands but my main goal was to get my daughter and her teammates on the court. With all the uncertainty they need something to focus on and to look forward to. It is just as important mentally as it is physically. I was proud to be part of a group of families across the state that fought for all our student athletes and scholars. I think it taught our kids to use their voice.”

Although many of the teams were already gearing up for the season, there has always been a cloud hanging over the programs whether the season was going to happen or not. Now, those players and coaches can resume with more confidence.

“I’m very grateful for the chance to get the kids back on the mat,” Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird said. “All year I’ve been wondering about the unknowns, whether we’ll get a season or not. But we’ve been practicing for a week and a half, and things are feeling more like normal than they have all year.

“This season, we’ve got the theme ‘Relentless,’ and that’s the mindset we’re trying to implement. Things like the KSHSAA ruling, the potential to get quarantined, and more are the obstacles in the way of our success. We’ve got to be relentless and work together to find ways around them.”

The meeting was bittersweet for most parents as the board of directors voted that the athletic events will be held without spectators on both the high school and middle school levels.

The measure passed by a 50-26 vote and spectators will not be allowed from Dec. 1 to Jan. 28.

Following that time, fan attendance will be limited in accordance with local attendance policies.

"I believe we had a solid plan to allow fans to attend our games in a safe manner," USD 416 superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann said. "We had already had indoor sports for middle school girls' basketball and middle school wrestling and it was working well. Now, that fans are not allowed, we will strive to provide our fans a quality livestream option to allow them to cheer on our Wildcats.

"I am glad that the board of directors decided to allow our kids to participate in sports. Our coaches and student-athletes have adhered to every possible safety measure. I know our kids are excited to represent the Wildcats on the mat, court and swimming pool in the upcoming weeks.

From some players' point of view, while getting to play their season was the most important outcome from Tuesday's meeting, the fact of not having their parents there is tough to comprehend.

"Basketball is a momentum sport and fans are a huge part of that," Foote said. "I believe we have one of the best student sections for girls' basketball. When we get into a rough patch, our student section gets louder and helps us out of that. I also have a lot of family that is extremely supportive and loves to watch me play. Not having them there is gut wrenching, especially my dad. Having my parents and family there is huge to me.

"Sadly, this is what it has come to. Right now all we can do is work together as a team and be each other's support system. We have to depend on each other to be loud and hype each other up. I still hold hope that this unreasonable ruling will be turned around, but I'm incredibly grateful that I can have one

last season with my best friends.”

Not only players, but coaches having to instruct their players in an empty gymnasium will take some getting used to as well.

“I am so happy for the student athletes who get to play winter sports and I am super excited to see what this season brings,” Louisburg girls basketball coach Adrienne Lane said. “Basketball is an extracurricular activity, but it is also a chance for these students to come together and be a team. Playing in an empty gym will be a change, but I think the athletes will mainly be grateful for their opportunity to play.”

Even though some parents will have to get used to watching their child on the computer or television, instead of in-person, they are hoping they will be able to back in the gym sooner rather than later.

“I was a little surprised with the no fan policy as I think blanket policies are not good for Kansas,” Diederich said. “We have districts of so many sizes and local decision making is best. Districts know what they can and cannot handle. Hopefully we can convince KSHSAA to loosen the policy to allow for 1-2 immediate family members, but for now just be happy with the fact that they are playing at all.”

KSHSAA proposes delay for winter sports



The 2020-21 winter sports season in Kansas could be delayed or reduced depending on the vote at the Nov. 24 Kansas State High School Activities Association Board of Directors meeting

During the KSHSAA Executive Board meeting Wednesday the board reviewed data on the impact of COVID-19 on activity programs around the state due to the rising number of positive cases and impact on the health care system.

The board unanimously approved a proposal from the KSHSAA staff to suspend competitions until Jan. 15, 2021 and extend the winter moratorium. That proposal is now in front of the KSHSAA Board of Directors, who will vote on the issue at 1 p.m. on Nov. 24. The board of directors has members from every league across the state.

One of those board of directors, Paola High School principal Jeff Hines, was caught off-guard by the news.

"I consider myself pretty up to date when it comes to issues with KSHSAA, but I had no idea this was happening yesterday," Hines said. "I was in an administrator meeting that started at 10 a.m. and at 10:01 I received an email from KSHSAA with the executive board agenda for a meeting that had already started. This is a pretty important issue and I wanted to speak at the board meeting, but was told I couldn't because the meeting had already started.

"I asked someone at KSHSAA why the agenda was posted sooner, and they said it was posted last week. I have searched the internet and I couldn't find it. I have no doubt that they did post somewhere, but they need to make it more accessible so

there can be more discussion on the issue. I was surprised the issue came up.”

The proposal which will be put up for a vote is as follows:

- Delay competitions for all winter activities until Friday, January 15.
- Allow virtual competition only in Debate and Scholars Bowl.
- Winter activity practice may continue where appropriate to do so through December 22. All KSHSAA risk mitigation protocols strictly enforced.
- Extend Winter Moratorium. Dec. 23 – Jan. 3; practices to resume Jan. 4; restrictions eliminate contact between coach/athlete/school and no school facility use.
- Tentative resumption of competition on January 15.
- No fans for competition, January 15-28.
- Limited fans Jan. 29 through remainder of winter competitions.
- Mandatory universal masking with exception to athletes in competition and officials during live action.
- No invitational tournaments.

High School Competition Limits:

- Basketball maximum 13 games per team.
- Bowling maximum 8 days per team/individual.
- Swimming and Diving maximum 6 competitions per athlete.
- Wrestling maximum 12 events, 20 competition point max.

Middle School Restrictions:

- No competition in December, practice only.
- No competition Jan. 1 – Jan. 14
- No events with more than three schools participating.
- Strongly encourage skill development.
- Strongly encourage intramural play only.
- Limit two fans per player starting Jan. 15.

As far as how the board of directors will vote on the issue, Hines isn't quite sure how it will go, but he doesn't believe the executive board was trying to sneak the issue past anyone.

"You can have two thoughts on the issue," Hines said. "One, all of the executive board members think delaying winter sports is a great idea. That is an option, I guess. Or two, all of the members thought this issue was too big for them to decide on and wanted to make sure to get input from all its members and allowing them to make that decision. I tend to think that is what they are doing here.

"Will there be some people that vote yes to delay sports? Yeah I think there will be, just because of the situation their districts are in, but I tend to think a majority of them will vote no. Just as far as how I will be voting, I will vote no because I think that each school board should be able to decide whether or not to have winter sports. They know their district better than anyone. That is what we did for the fall and I believe the same thing should happen here."

Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird understands the concern with the rising number of COVID-19 cases across the state, but he knows there will also be an impact on the student athletes if these activities are delayed.

"I totally understand why KSHSAA is considering taking action, but it worries me because a delay in starting competition

could put us on the path to canceling the winter season altogether,” Bovaird said. “There have been wrestling tournaments happening across the nation since mid-July, and there have been very few cases traced back to the tournaments themselves. Coaches, wrestlers, officials, and tournament directors are taking precautions, and I hope that we’re able to continue doing what they’ve been doing.

“I’m afraid that a reduction in the number of competitions allowed would only further harm the kids in the sport. I get it, though. Covid-19 is real and we’re constantly reacting to it and rethinking how we can best protect our kids’ health. While we may be protecting kids and their families from the potential of infection, we would also be taking away opportunities where kids can learn invaluable lessons and come together as a team to bond in ways that you can’t get through the classroom, and we would be doing some considerable harm to their mental health.”

KSHSAA’s decision to potentially delay winter sports came on the same day Gov. Laura Kelly issued a new executive order on face masks after Kansas reported more than 5,800 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday.

Since the news broke, Hines has been hearing from people all over the area, who are voicing their concerns.

“There are a lot of people who are worried that their kids’ season might not happen, and I get that, but I would say that people need to temper their venom at the state association,” Hines said. “I think it’s is great that people are contacting their board of directors and letting people know their feelings, and we want to hear from those who are concerned. At the end of the day, I believe they will do the right thing for these kids.”

As for Louisburg High School itself, administrators will be ready to implement any rules necessary as they hope the

students get to play a full season.

"My reaction was to the kids and coaches it would affect who look forward to sports and saw their peers and themselves play in the fall with accommodations, only to be potentially denied their opportunity for a full season," Louisburg activities director Michael Pickman said. "I understand the reasoning of the KSHSAA board, but I also understand the views of those who don't want to see any changes. Luckily it is in the discussion phase and perhaps they will find a way for the kids to play while implementing some guidelines for keeping it safe, such as no fans.

"Whether Dec. 4 or Jan. 15 as proposed for starting competitions, we are still going to work to make it a safe environment for all and to limit risk. I am not in the medical field, so I won't pretend to know if the delay will help lower the numbers. If it passes, then I hope that it does. Still, we won't have a cure and will have the same need to implement safety protocol Jan. 15 as we would Dec. 4."

"I want our students to have the opportunity to play and play safely, so my main concern right now is that the policies the district and athletic department have put in place are well thought out and followed," Pickman added. "I think if we commit to following safety practices, we can still slow the spread regardless of the results of next week's discussion and decisions by the KSHSAA board."