

Lady Cats ready to put in work during summer workouts



Louisburg sophomore Madilyn Melton works on her dribbling during a drill, while being guarded by junior teammate by Erin Lemke, during the team's camp earlier this month.

In what was a transition year that saw the inclusion of several young underclassmen to its lineup throughout the season, the Louisburg High School girls basketball team is still a little young and inexperienced.

After an 8-13 record a year ago, the Lady Cats had just two seniors – Carson Buffington and Kennia Hankinson – at their week-long team camp that ended on June 7. Despite the small senior class, there was still plenty of leadership to go around.

It was on full display during the team camp, not just at the high school level, but the Lady Cat players also showed it during the elementary and middle school camps as well.

“We had a very good week of camps at all levels,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “Our returning players did a great job of setting the tone for us with great energy, effort and leadership. I thought everyone did a good job of competing for everything and several girls have made big improvements in their development. I was impressed with the incoming freshmen group's attitudes, athleticism and their willingness to learn

and compete.”

Lowry had 28 players attend his high school session, while he had 100 total girls attend the high school, middle school and elementary school camps.

Since they last left each other in early March after a sub-state tournament loss to rival Paola, the Lady Cats came back together in hopes of, not only improving their record, but making a longer run in the postseason tournament.



Louisburg head girls coach Shawn Lowry speaks to his team with new assistant coach Leanna Willer during the Lady Cat team camp earlier this month.

To do that, the players all had to get back on the same page, which is where the team camp comes into play.

“Team camp is primarily about the start of shaping our team’s

identity through our work and competition during the week,” Lowry said. “Throughout the week the girls learn about each other and they start to build trust in and respect for each other. It’s also about establishing a mentality within this group to compete and battle for everything.”

There will be enough competition to go around through the summer as the Lady Cats will compete in several summer league games and tournaments, not to mention the usual summer workouts.



Louisburg junior Sydni Keagle goes up for a basket during the Lady Cats’ team camp.

“The girls have strength training and basketball open gyms three days a week,” Lowry said. “The girls understand the importance of their commitment to getting stronger and

improving their fundamental skills this offseason.

“We will be participating in several scrimmages with schools we don’t have on our schedule along with some of our league schools. In addition, we have or will be participating in several games played at one of the Missouri universities and in a local tournament.”

It is that work over the summer, along with what they learned last year, is what Lowry hopes can help his team take another step forward this coming season.

“We have several girls returning that gained some very good experience last season,” Lowry said. “As part of that experience they already know what kind of effort they have to give, what kind of teammate they have to be and they have a lot of confidence and trust in each other. We have some great upperclassmen that will provide our team with strong leadership and we really like how the girls are embracing the opportunities and challenges ahead of them.”

Shooting a main focus over summer for Wildcat basketball



Louisburg senior Brayden Gage pulls up for a jumper in a drill, while teammate Kohl Vogel looks on during the team camp on June 6 at Louisburg High School. Shooting has been a focus

for the Wildcats in their early summer workouts.

It wasn't the year the Louisburg High School boys basketball team was hoping for last season.

The Wildcats finished with just three wins and are now in the process of trying to replace five seniors that saw a majority of the minutes. Although there were areas for the Wildcats to improve, one stood out among the rest.

"Our No. 1 goal going into the off-season is to develop shooters," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "We really struggled to shoot the ball consistently last season so we knew that we needed to place an emphasis on that this summer. Our kids are going through daily shooting workouts in which they get up 200 shots per day. We do these workouts five days a week, so we are hoping by the end of the summer that each player take 8,000-10,000 shots over the summer.

"The kids have really bought into it. They understand that in order to develop as a shooter that it is going to take quite an investment in time and effort. We consistently have 18 to 20 doing these workouts every day. Our first week, we totaled 18,660 shots as a program."

Shooting is one area of emphasis that Pfannenstiel plans to work on with his players throughout the summer, including during his week-long team camp that concluded on June 7. He held a freshman only session, and then another for sophomore through senior.

Even after a difficult 2017-18 season, the players were ready to see what they could get accomplished to prepare for the upcoming year.

"I thought camp was great," Pfannenstiel said. "There is a lot of excitement with this group and it has shown with the

commitment they have shown so far this summer. We had 15 freshmen and 22 to 23 sophomores, juniors and seniors. The numbers were just right. We were able to get a lot done in those four days.”



Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel looks on during the Wildcats’ team camp on June 6.

Before the camp started, Pfannenstiel also brought in his players for a 2-day shooting clinic that worked with his players on form and the importance of repetition. That clinic also helped set them with workouts to use throughout the summer.

The Wildcats also opened the summer when the varsity and junior varsity teams participated in the Mid-America Nazarene team camp and those same groups will also be traveling to the K-State team camp on June 23.

All three levels of the Wildcat program will also be participating in a Eudora tournament in early July.

“The boys are doing all that, plus doing weights three days a week and our shooting workouts five days a week,” Pfannenstiel said. “We are keeping them busy.”



Dane Dixon makes a move to the basket during a drill with assistant coach Drew Harding.

With the departure of five seniors, there will be a lot of voids to fill in the Louisburg lineup and Pfannenstiel is looking forward to watching his players improve and seizing those open spots on the varsity lineup.

“I’m just really excited for how much the kids have bought into the process,” he said. “They understand that in order to develop as a player, they are going to have to invest some time and effort. It’s not just a couple of players taking

advantage of the opportunities, it's the whole team.

"Like I said before, the kids are excited. We are just hoping to build off of this momentum from the summer and keep it going into the school year."

Holtzen earns Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Isabelle Holtzen had a senior year to remember when it came to the athletic stage at Louisburg High School.

For starters, Holtzen was a member of the first cross country team in Louisburg history to qualify for the Class 4A state meet. She was also a starting guard and team captain for the Lady Cat girls basketball team.

Holtzen topped it all off this past spring when she medaled sixth in the pole vault at Class 4A state track championships in May.

Those were just one of the many reasons why she was chosen as the 2018 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

The award, which is in its first year, is to recognize an outstanding Louisburg High School student athlete. Louisburg

Sports Zone asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the winner.

Holtzen finished her high school career on a high note as she racked up 12 varsity letters during her time as a Wildcat and did all that while earning a 4.0 GPA, which was the top in her class.



Pictured (from left) is Louisburg track coach Andy Wright, cross country and track coach John Reece, Isabelle Holtzen and Lady Cat basketball coach Shawn Lowry.

“Her hard work attitude once again helped her to succeed in all events and rewarded her with a school record in the pole vault and state medals,” Louisburg cross country and track coach John Reece said. “It would be cliché to say she is a

hard worker as all of her teammates are hard workers and they really compete to do their best in any sport in Louisburg, but she has been a pleasure to coach.”

She made her biggest impact in track and field as she had a record-breaking year in the pole vault this past season for the Lady Cats. She broke her own school record in the event with a vault of 11 feet, 6 inches early in the year and went on to earn her second state medal at the Class 4A state track meet with a clearance of 11-0 and took sixth overall.

Holtzen was also a league and regional runner-up in the pole vault, while also running on legs of the 4×100 and 4×400-meter relay teams.

She also spent a lot of time on the Louisburg cross country and basketball teams, where she was a key part in both of their successes.

“From Isabelle’s first day of basketball at LHS she had a great work ethic, competed hard every day and never gave less,” Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry said. “She embodies those things that are at the core of our program and leaves it so much better because of her involvement.”

Holtzen, who graduated in May, will continue her pole vault career at the University of Northern Iowa.

2018 Male Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the past two years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and highlight them a little bit. So this year, I wanted to take it a step further.

This year Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an “athlete.”

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. In the next couple of weeks, I will announce this year recipient.

Below are the male nominees for this year’s award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!

2018 LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Blue Caplinger – Junior – Football, Wrestling, Track and Field

Caplinger played a big role for the Wildcat football team as he shared quarterback duties to start the year and then moved over to the tight end spot, but his biggest impact came on defense where he earned honorable mention all-Frontier League honors. He finished the season with 32 tackles and two interceptions from his secondary spot.

On the wrestling mat, Caplinger was a state qualifier for the Wildcats at 160 pounds and finished his season with a 34-14 record. He won titles at two different tournaments and holds the team record with most career reversals with 71.

Caplinger also fared well on the track where he ran sprints and relays for Louisburg. Caplinger was a member of the 4x400-meter relay team that finished seventh in the state in Class

4A, and also ran on the 4×100-meter relay team that qualified for the Kansas Relays.



Cade Holtzen – Freshman – Cross Country, Wrestling, Track and Field

Holtzen thrived on the wrestling mat this past season as he earned the Wildcats' lone state medal. He finished sixth overall at 113 pounds and became the second freshman in school history to place at state with a 45-6 record.

He also broke two team records in the process. Holtzen currently holds the mark for most wins in a season (45), most nearfall-2 (23). He also led the Wildcats in five other statistical categories.

Holtzen was a Frontier League and regional runner-up and won tournament titles at four different competitions.

He also ran on the Louisburg varsity cross country team and ran distance races for the Wildcat track team.



Austin Moore – junior – football, wrestling, track and field

On the football team, Moore was named a team captain and had success on both sides of the ball. As a running back, he recorded 1,215 yards and 15 touchdowns. Defensively, he tallied more than 70 tackles from the linebacker spot.

Moore was named to the all-Frontier League first team on both sides of the ball and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the Topeka-Capital Journal and Wichita Eagle. He was also named an all-state, all-purpose player by K-Preps. Moore was also selected as the team's Offensive Player of the Year and recipient of the BAC Award.

On the wrestling mat, he was also a team captain and recorded a 43-7 record. Moore was a state qualifier at 195 pounds and was a regional runner-up. He won the team's Workhorse Award and set a program record with 38 pins. Moore also had the highest GPA on the team.

Moore threw the javelin for the Wildcat track and field team as recorded a season best throw of 151 feet in the regional meet and finished eighth.



John Wyatt Reece – Senior – Cross Country, Track and Field

Reece became the first state cross country medalist in several years for Louisburg High School. He finished 11th overall at the Class 4A meet in Wamego to earn a medal and also earned

all-state honors for his effort.

He also finished runner-up in the Frontier League meet and currently holds the third fastest time in school history. He earned first-team all-league honors. Reece also competed at the CCCNC National Race where he medaled individually and was a part of the second place team.

In track, Reece qualified for state in the 1,600 and 3,200-meter runs and finished ninth at state in the 3,200. He was also a regional runner-up in both events.

Reece was a Kansas Relays qualifier and medalist in the 2,000-meter steeplechase and currently holds the school record.

Reece has signed with Southwest Minnesota State next season and will run for the Mustangs starting next fall.



Madden Rutherford – Sophomore – Football, Basketball, Baseball

Rutherford took over the starting quarterback role as a sophomore for the Wildcat football team and became a dual-threat athlete at that position. He finished with 670 yards through the air and had eight touchdowns. On the ground, he racked up 318 yards and two more touchdowns. His performance helped him to a second-team honor on the all-Frontier League team.

On the baseball diamond, Rutherford was the Wildcats' top pitcher on the season and also did his job out on in the field as he earned second team all-Frontier League honors as an outfielder. Rutherford started six games this season and pitched 28 innings with a 5.12 earned run average and struck out 23 batters. At the plate, he finished the season with a .408 average, three doubles, a triple, a home run and had 10 RBIs. He also ended the year with only three errors in 19 games.

Rutherford also saw a lot of varsity time for the Wildcat basketball team as he played in 17 games.



Grant Ryals – Senior – Soccer, Golf

Ryals led the Louisburg boys soccer team as he garnered first team all-league and all-state honors this past season. He served as team captain the past two seasons and scored seven goals and had 11 assists from the midfield spot.

His 11 assists put him fourth in the all-time Louisburg single season record and his 23 career assists place him second all-time.

Ryals will continue his soccer career at William Jewell College next season.

Ryals was also a member of the Louisburg varsity golf team and was a part of several runner-up team finishes with the Wildcats.

2018 Female Athlete of the Year Nominees



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Below are the female nominees for this year’s award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!

2018 LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE

FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Bailey Belcher, Senior, Basketball and Girls Soccer

Belcher led the Wildcat girls soccer team to a state runner-up finish this past season as she was among the leading scorers on the team with 28 goals and 14 assists, which included five hat tricks. She is a three-time all-Frontier League and all-state first teamer, and has been a team captain for the last two seasons.

She holds the Louisburg record for most goals in a season with 33 and in a career with 91. She is will continue her soccer career at Missouri Southern next season.

Belcher was also a starter on the Lady Cats' basketball team and earned honorable mention all-league honors after averaging eight points, four rebounds and two steals a game.



Carson Buffington – Junior – Volleyball, Basketball and Girls Soccer

Buffington helped the Louisburg volleyball team to a state runner-up performance in the Class 4A-Division I state tournament as the team's setter. She finished the season with more than 1,100 assists and had 30 aces. She also helped out defensively with 244 digs.

She earned second team all-Frontier League honors and was also placed on the Kansas Volleyball Association's (KVA) all-state second team. Buffington was also selected to the KVA all-state tournament team.

On the basketball court, Buffington earned second team all-Frontier League honors and led the league in rebounding for the third straight season. She averaged 11.6 rebounds a game

to go along with 9.2 points and 2.7 steals from the forward spot.

Buffington also served as the back-up goalie for the Wildcat soccer team and saw action in several varsity games.



Anna Dixon – Junior – Volleyball

Dixon played a big role in the Lady Cats' state runner-up volleyball team this past season. As an all-around player, Dixon led Louisburg with 613 kills and 61 blocks on the season. She was also third on the team with 58 aces and 329 digs.

She earned first team all-Frontier League and all-state honors. Dixon was named as the Kansas Volleyball Association's Class 4A-D1 Co-Player of the Year and was selected to the KVA

all-state tournament team.

Dixon also earned Best of Kansas Preps selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal, which is a new award this season. She has committed to Kansas State University to play volleyball in the fall of 2019.



Carlee Gassman – Sophomore – Cross Country, Basketball, Track and Field

Gassman had a record-breaking season for the Louisburg track team. She broke a 29-year old school record in the 300-meter hurdles in early April and then broke her own school record several more times this season, including at the Class 4A state meet where she ran a time of 45.68 to finish second in the state.

It was her first of two state medals on the season as she also finished fifth in the state in the long jump with a mark of just more than 17 feet. She also won a regional title in the 300-meter hurdles.

Gassman was also a consistent runner on the Wildcat cross country team that qualified for the state meet for the first time in school history. She served as the No. 2 runner for most of the season.

On the basketball court, Gassman saw a lot of varsity time for the Lady Cats as well as one of the team's point guards.



Isabelle Holtzen – Senior – Cross Country, Basketball, Track and Field

Holtzen had a record-breaking season in the pole vault this past season for the Lady Cats' track and field team. She broke her own school in the event with a vault of 11 feet, 6 inches

and went on to finish sixth at the Class 4A state track meet with a clearance of 11-0.

She was also a league and regional runner-up, while also running on legs of the 4×100 and 4×400-meter relay teams.

On the cross country team, Holtzen was a consistent runner on a varsity team that qualified for state for the first time in school history.

On the basketball court, Holtzen served as a team captain and was a full-time starter for the Lady Cats at the guard spot.

At the end of the school year, Holtzen became the first Lady Cat in several decades to earn 12 varsity athletic letters and did so while earning a 4.0 GPA, which is first in her class.



Sophie McMullen – Senior – Volleyball

McMullen was another key piece to the Lady Cats' success this past season on the volleyball court. She made the switch from setter to outside hitter and defensive player to help Louisburg to a state runner-up campaign.

She was first on the team with 114 aces to go along with 437 digs defensively. As an outside hitter, McMullen added 381 kills.

McMullen was selected to the all-Frontier League and all-state first team and was named to the Kansas Volleyball Association all-state tournament team. She was also selected to the Greater Kansas City Coaches Volleyball Association all-star team.

McMullen signed to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State this coming fall.

Perentis ready to fulfill basketball dream at Ottawa



Louisburg senior Parker Perentis recently signed his letter of intent to play basketball at Ottawa University next season. Perentis was one of five seniors on the Wildcat basketball team last year.

Surrounded by family, friends and coaches, Parker Perentis made his dream come true with one swipe of a pen.

During a signing ceremony at Louisburg High School on May 2, Perentis made it official as he signed his letter of intent to play basketball at Ottawa University. As easy as it was to write his name on the dotted line, it was the amount of hard work he put in years earlier that made it possible for the Wildcat senior to live out his goal.

“I am super excited,” Perentis said. “It has been my dream my whole life to play college basketball. I was blessed to have heard from a friend’s dad to apply at Ottawa and tell the coach that I was interested, and I did. They were gracious enough to contact me, I went out and visited and it was perfect. It is time to fulfill a dream and go to Ottawa.”

Perentis, who played significant minutes for the Louisburg basketball team this past season, liked what he saw when he took his campus visit to Ottawa and it turned out to be a perfect fit.

“The coaching staff was amazing,” Perentis said. “It had a feel like it was more of a family there. The campus there was great. Plus, Ottawa just felt like a small town, kind of like Louisburg. It felt like home, and it was close enough that I can go back home if I need to and my family can come watch me play. Plus I have friends that go there, so it just seemed like the perfect fit.”

Basketball has engulfed much of Perentis’ life since he was in elementary school and his love for the game continued to grow with him. Whether it was on his middle and high school teams, or playing summer ball, Perentis realized many people helped him along the way – many of whom were at his signing.



LHS senior Parker Perentis signed his letter of intent on May 2 to play basketball at Ottawa. Sitting next to Parker are his parents Kim and Ron Perentis. Standing (from left) is Louisburg boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel and Ottawa head coach Aaron Siebenthall.

“I have been playing since first grade,” he said. “Shawn Lowry (current LHS girls head coach) coached me a lot through fifth grade and I have just been playing summer ball and school ball ever since.

“It is the greatest feeling ever to see that everyone that has been there for you since day one wanted to come and see an important time in my life. It means a lot that my family, friends and coaches took time out of their day to support me in this. It is really cool to see.”

As much hard work as it was for Perentis to reach this point

in his life, he also knows it is only going to get tougher in the coming years. Playing time at Ottawa will be hard to come by and he is going to have start from the bottom and work his way up.

Perentis, who is planning on majoring in management information systems and economics, wouldn't have it any other way.

"I just want to go there and see what happens," Perentis said. "I don't expect much my freshman and sophomore years, but hopefully by the time I am a junior or senior, I can make the varsity team. My goal is to be an Academic All-American, so I need to make sure to keep my grades in line. I need to work hard and put in the time. I am just ready to finish out high school and see what happens in the next chapter of my life."

Buffington, Belcher garner all-league basketball honors



Louisburg junior Carson Buffington led the Frontier League in rebounding for the third consecutive season as she averaged 11.6 rebounds to go along with 9.2 points per game. That effort earned her a second-team all-Frontier League selection.

The Frontier League has always been considered one of the tougher leagues in the state when it comes to girls basketball and this year was no exception.

The league had two teams advance to their respective state tournaments in Baldwin (4A-DII) and Paola (4A-DI), and Baldwin won a state title. It was a competitive league all season and Louisburg was a part of it.

Louisburg finished its season with an 8-13 record, but the league coaches awarded the Lady Cats with two selections on the all-league team that was released Monday.

Junior Carson Buffington and senior Bailey Belcher garnered all-league honors as both finished with strong seasons. Buffington was selected to the second team and Belcher earned a spot on the honorable mention squad.

Buffington earned her third consecutive all-league honor as she led the Frontier League in rebounding for third straight season. She averaged 11.6 rebounds a game to go along with 9.2 points and 2.7 steals a contest.

“It’s hard to express just how good Carson was this year for us,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “She led the Frontier league for a third consecutive year in rebounding and finished in the top of the state rankings for all classes. What’s most impressive about her rebounding this year is that she played positions away from the basket. She does all of those things I ask of players when it comes to effort, hustle, character, being unselfish and she does it all with great pride. Carson was voted team captain by her teammates and was a great leader for us.”



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher was named as an all-league honorable mention when the list was released Monday.

Belcher, who is in her first year with the program, made strides as the season went along and became one of the Lady Cats' leading scorers. She ended her season with 7.8 points, 4.3 rebounds and 2.0 steals a game from the guard spot.

"With this being Bailey's first year playing basketball in high school there was a learning curve for her most of the season," Lowry said. "However, Bailey made up for that with how coachable she was, what a great teammate she was and in how determined she was to compete. She was definitely one of the girls that set the tone for us in the way she battled for everything in practices and games. She was named a team captain that she earned through her hard work, leadership and unselfishness throughout the season."

The Frontier League provided the Lady Cats with a lot of competition throughout the season, and although they would have liked to have more selections, they also realize the league is full of talent.

“I think like most coaches, I would like to have had more of our players recognized and for higher positions,” Lowry said. “I thought we had some kids that deserved recognition based on the scope of their work and all the intangible things they did for our team, but I also understand that there are a lot of really good players in our league.”

Baldwin, the league and state champion, led the way with four all-league selections and two on the first team, while Spring Hill finished with three overall.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS BASKETBALL

FIRST TEAM

Abby Ogle, Baldwin, senior

Lauren Delker, Spring Hill, junior

Kayla Kurtz, Baldwin, junior

Mackenzie Shupe, De Soto, sophomore

Skyler Williams, Paola, senior

SECOND TEAM

Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, senior

Meghan Goff, Spring Hill, junior

Ady Edwards, Paola, senior

Catherine Grosdidier, Eudora, senior

Carson Buffington, Louisburg, junior

HONORABLE MENTION

Hailey Lovetinsky, Spring Hill, senior

Reilly Stewart, Baldwin, senior

Bailey Belcher, Louisburg, senior

Carly Lindenmeyer, Baldwin, junior

Minster named to all-league basketball team



Louisburg senior Ben Minster averaged 11 points a game this past season for the Wildcats and he was rewarded for his efforts Monday when he was named to the All-Frontier League Boys Basketball Team as an honorable mention selection.

The Louisburg High School boys basketball team didn't find a lot of success on the court this past season as the Wildcats finished with just a pair of wins.

That didn't mean the coaches in the Frontier League didn't take notice of some of the talent on the Wildcat roster and one of those players was able to garner all-league honors.

Ben Minster was named to the All-Frontier League boys basketball team when the list was released Monday. The Louisburg senior was selected to the honorable mention squad after a good season for the Wildcats.

"I think Ben had a really good year for us," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "Especially toward the end of the year, he was playing to his strengths and was a force on both ends of the court. Ben is an explosive player and a great athlete.

"One thing you can say about Ben is that no matter what the score was, he was still going hard. He made a lot of improvement over the course of the season, and I was glad to see him get recognized by the coaches of the Frontier League."

Minster was the lone Wildcat to average in double figures in scoring with nearly 11 points a game. He also finished the season with 4.5 rebounds and two steals a contest.

Although the Wildcats were only to get one player on the all-league team, Pfannenstiel believes Louisburg could have gotten more, but the Frontier League produced a lot of talent this season.

"I think we had quite a few more kids that could have made the list this year, but this league was so deep, and it was just tough to get the necessary votes that are needed to get recognized," he said. "Individual honors usually break down about how the league standings go, so with us finishing last in the league it made it really tough to get more kids on the list. I do feel like we had quite a few other kids who were deserving, but I think the coaches were very fair with their selections."

De Soto, who won the Frontier League title, tied with Spring

Hill, Paola and Eudora with three all-league selections each.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BOYS BASKETBALL

FIRST TEAM

Brandon Wilkes, Paola, senior

Brennen Feedback, Spring Hill, junior

Rock Jerome, Eudora, junior

Jared Baruth, De Soto, senior

Kobe Johnson, Ottawa, sophomore

SECOND TEAM

Jayce Dighans, Baldwin, senior

Brannon Bell, De Soto, senior

Krys Johnson, Ottawa, senior

Jayden Pierce, Eudora, junior

Kale Clark, Paola, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

Levi Hansen, De Soto, senior

Justin Weber, Spring Hill, senior

Ben Minster, Louisburg, senior

Noah Katzenmeier, Eudora, senior

Brock LaPlante, Spring Hill, senior

Kurt Golubski, Paola, senior

Louisburg's rally falls short in sub-state loss to Spring Hill



Louisburg senior Desmond Doles goes up for a shot fake during the Wildcats' Class 4A sub-state semifinal game against Spring Hill on Friday in Paola. The Wildcats saw their season come to an end with a 41-33 loss to the Broncos.

PAOLA – The Louisburg boys basketball team made one final rally at Spring Hill during the Class 4A sub-state semifinals.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, they just ran out of time.

The Wildcats found themselves down double digits early in the fourth quarter, and it appeared that their season was over, but they battled back to cut the Spring Hill lead to four. It was as close as Louisburg could get in its 41-33 loss Friday in Paola that brought its season to a close.

Spring Hill would go on to defeat Paola in the sub-state championship game and will compete in the state tournament starting tomorrow.

Louisburg (2-19) suffered two close losses to Spring Hill, and another to Paola, in recent weeks and Wildcat coach Ty Pfannenstiel believes his team was putting it together at the right time.

“We were playing as well as anyone at the end of the year,” he said. “Paola was as hot as anyone at the time we played them and we played them close and almost won. Spring Hill has been very good all year. Record-wise, everyone kind of beat up on each other in the league and got a win here or there, but we weren’t able to do that this year, but I don’t think anyone was really comfortable in playing us at the end of the year. Coach Book from Spring Hill wasn’t real excited to play us because he knew we had so much room for growth and improvement.”

The Wildcats turned up the pressure offensively and made it a close game in the fourth quarter. At one point, Louisburg trailed 31-21 early in the fourth quarter, but the Wildcats went on a 7-1 run thanks to baskets from seniors Dalton Ribordy and Ben Minster and a 3-pointer from junior Kohl Vogel.



Senior Dalton Ribordy puts up a shot in the lane Friday against Spring Hill.

That run cut the Spring Hill advantage to 34-30 with 1 minute and 50 seconds left in the contest, but the Broncos knocked down their free throws to secure the eight-point win.

“We went through our normal third quarter issue that we normally have, and lost our energy there for a bit,” Pfannenstiel said. “We were able to hit some shots and get back in it. We just ran out of time and weren’t able to make enough plays. We just started too late and we needed to have that spark in the third quarter. Once that happened, our energy on the defensive end was better.”

Defense was able to keep Louisburg in the game as the Wildcats held Spring Hill to just 37 percent from the field and forced 19 turnovers. Louisburg also recorded 13 steals and 15 points

off Bronco turnovers.

Louisburg just wasn't able to stay with Spring Hill on the glass as the bigger Bronco squad outrebounded the Wildcats 32-19, including 12 offensive boards.



Junior Brayden Gage drives to the basket on a Spring Hill defender Friday in Paola.

“Our kids have been really good defensively all year, minus the Baldwin game earlier in the year,” Pfannenstiel said. “We knew that is what will keep us in games, and the effort there. That is tough to do when we struggle to score the way we do and try to find that energy on the defensive end. Our kids played tough with starting out in a zone and then switching it up and going man. We were effective in both of those.

“We just talked that we were going to have to play with high energy and make plays. We just didn't put the ball in the

basket enough times. You can't fault our effort though and that is what we ask for out of our kids, which is to play hard all the time."

Minster led Louisburg in scoring with eight points, while senior Desmond Doles added seven points to go along with a team-high five rebounds and four steals. Ribordy added five points and five rebounds and Vogel also finished with five points.

"I was really proud of the way we played toward the end of the season," Pfannenstiel said. "I would have liked to hit that level earlier in the year, but you want to play your best basketball at the end of the year and I think we can sit back and say that."

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LOUISBURG (2-19): Ben Minster 8, Desmond Doles 7, Kohl Vogel 5, Dalton Ribordy 5, Brayden Gage 3, Dylan DeShazer 2, Justin Sievert 2, Madden Rutherford 1. Totals: 12-34 6-13 33. 3-point field goals: 3, (Vogel, Doles, Ribordy)

Lady Cats' season comes to a close with loss to Paola



Louisburg freshman Madilyn Melton goes up for a basket against Paola on Thursday during the Class 4A sub-state semifinals at Paola High School. The Lady Cats fell to the Panthers, 51-35, to end their season with an 8-13 record.

PAOLA – Earlier in the season, the Louisburg girls basketball team accomplished something they hadn't done in several years when the Lady Cats swept rival Paola.

They just weren't able to make it three in a row.

With their postseason lives on the line Thursday, Louisburg traveled to Paola to face off with the Panthers in the Class 4A sub-state semifinal but came up short in a 51-35 loss, despite having a 3-point halftime lead.

The defeat ended the Lady Cats' season with an 8-13 record and with a tearful locker room, but they accomplished much more than what their record showed according to coach Shawn Lowry.

"I was really extremely proud of this group in particular just because of their growth and development over the season," Lowry said. "I wasn't sure what we were going to have coming in with young and experienced players just mixing together, but they are as tight as tight can be right now. They are as tight as any team we have had. They battle for each other, and it may not be pretty all the time, but they scrap and fight and care about each other. They care about playing hard for each other and that is why it is painful for them right now. They care about their team and their program."

Louisburg faced many different obstacles in the second half, but none bigger than foul issues, as they had four starters with four fouls in the third quarter.

Senior Isabelle Holtzen, junior Carson Buffington, sophomore Haley Cain and freshman Madilyn Melton were all saddled with foul trouble and the Lady Cats were forced to use different personnel. Their bench got even shorter when reserve guard Brooklyn Diederich had to leave with an injury in the third quarter.

Those foul problems worked into Paola's favor. The Panthers converted 25 of 34 free throws for the game, with 32 of those attempts coming in the second half as they outscored Louisburg 32-13 in the third and fourth quarters.

The Lady Cats were unable to get to the foul stripe as they converted just 2 of 9 attempts from the free-throw line and that disparity was a big impact on the game.

"It was a factor, but this is a crazy game (basketball) where things get called," Lowry said. "Our girls were playing hard, and they were hustling, and some of those were hustle fouls, which we will take."

Both teams contributed to a frantic first half that consisted of 19 combined first half turnovers. Paola took an 11-9 lead after the Panthers' Ady Edwards knocked down a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Paola extended its lead to five to start the second quarter before the Lady Cats went on an 11-0 run to take the lead back. Melton scored six points during the run, Holtzen hit a 3-pointer and senior Bailer Belcher added a basket to give Louisburg a 20-14 lead.

Another Belcher basket made it 22-16 late in the first half before Paola's Trinity McDow connected on another 3-pointer at the buzzer and Louisburg led by three at half.



Senior Bailey Belcher puts up a shot in the lane Thursday against Paola.

Paola turned up its defensive pressure after halftime and forced the Lady Cats into 12 second half turnovers. The Panthers also converted on 9 of 12 free throws in the third quarter as they outscored Louisburg 15-7 in the frame.

“To lose the way that we did, and to play as poorly as we did, and to go out that way was probably the hardest thing for them,” Lowry said of his team. “They know didn’t play their best and we put in some good work leading up to this, but it is the way it goes. It is the kind of game where it can happen like that sometimes.

“I think we just hurt ourselves and it wasn’t as much as what they did to us. It was a lot of mental stuff on our part and just breakdowns.”

Belcher finished the game with 10 points and seven rebounds to lead Louisburg and was the only Lady Cat to finish in double figures.



Louisburg senior Isabelle Holtzen dribbles into the lane Thursday against Paola.

Buffington was also close to another double-double with eight points and a team-high 10 rebounds and Melton also finished with eight points. Cain was second on the team with eight rebounds and freshman Alyse Moore added six of her own.

Paola advanced to the sub-state championship game where it met Spring Hill and the Panthers pulled off the upset of the No. 1 seed, 38-29, on Saturday in Paola.

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LOUISBURG (8-13): Bailey Belcher 10, Carson Buffington 8, Madilyn Melton 8, Isabelle Holtzen 3, Alyse Moore 3, Haley Cain 2, Mikayla Quinn 1. Totals: 15-46 2-9 35. 3-point field goals: 3, (Buffington 2, Holtzen)