

Lady Cats complete season sweep of Paola



Louisburg freshman Alyse Moore brings down a rebound against Paola during a game between the two teams in January. The Lady Cats ventured to Paola on Friday and left with a 47-40 win.

PAOLA – It has been years, or perhaps more than a decade, since the Louisburg girls basketball team got a season sweep over Paola.

That streak came to an end Friday.

Louisburg put together a complete game effort on the road as it downed Paola, 47-40, to end the regular season on a good note at Paola High School. The Lady Cats picked up their eighth win of the season and this was a big confidence booster going into this week's sub-state tournament.

"I thought the girls played very unselfish in the effort and toughness they gave," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "It would have been easy for them to give less knowing that we had beaten them once and that we were going to play them again in less than a week but the girls were focused and disciplined."

The Lady Cats will see Panthers again shortly as they will return to Paola for the sub-state tournament Thursday. Louisburg (8-12) earned the No. 3 seed and will face No. 2 Paola (9-11) at 7:30 p.m.

With an even bigger game looming on the horizon, the Lady Cats kept their focus and got a big win over their rival thanks to their defensive effort and their work on the glass.

Louisburg pulled down 42 rebounds in the contest, including 20 offensive boards, that led to many second chance opportunities.

Defensively, the Lady Cats turned up the pressure and recorded 12 steals on the night and were able to get some baskets in transition.

“The girls have worked hard at, and taken pride in how they defend and rebound,” Lowry said. “I think these two things were probably the biggest difference for us in this game.”

The Lady Cats jumped out to a 13-8 lead in the first quarter and never looked back. Louisburg used a 16-point fourth quarter to help put the game away. It also went on a 9-0 run late to push the lead to 40-26 after 3-point plays from senior Isabelle Holtzen and freshman Madilyn Melton.

Senior Bailey Belcher gave the Lady Cats a boost offensively as she finished with a team-high 11 points, including six rebounds and three steals. Nine of her 11 points came in the first quarter as she helped Louisburg rally from an early 7-4 deficit.

Junior Carson Buffington also had a big night with eight points and team-high 10 rebounds and four steals. Melton also flirted with a double-double as she finished with seven points and eight rebounds to go along with three steals.

Fellow freshman Brooklyn Diederich came off the bench to score eight points, including a pair of 3-pointers, that helped erase a Paola lead late in the second quarter. Sophomore Haley Cain also did some work on the glass with seven rebounds on the night.

Ady Edwards led Paola in scoring with 13 points and Skylar Williams finished with 11 points for the Panthers.

The Lady Cats hope they can continue that success Thursday when they see Paola again in sub-state. If they advance past Paola, the Lady Cats will meet the winner of No. 1 Spring Hill (13-6) and No. 4 Ottawa (2-18) in the championship game at 6 p.m. on Saturday at Paola High School.

“We have talked a lot this season about having many young and inexperienced players and that we hoped we could just keep improving and learning so that we would be playing our best basketball at this point in the season,” Lowry said. “All the girls have embraced the process, worked their tails off and have a great mentality coming into this week.

“It’s always good to win a basketball game but we understand that nothing is guaranteed and that we have to prepare with great focus, discipline, effort and heart this week if we want to be successful. That’s what makes this time of year so exciting in that anyone can do something special if they all believe and all are willing to give everything that it will take.”

LOU	13	8	10	16	-
47					
PAO	8	9	9	14	
- 40					

LOUISBURG (8-12): Bailey Belcher 11, Carson Buffington 8, Brooklyn Diederich 8, Madilyn Melton 7, Isabelle Holtzen 5, Haley Cain 4, Carlee Gassman 2, Alyse Moore 2. Totals: 15-54 12-25 47. 3-point field goals: 5, (Diederich 2, Buffington, Holtzen, Cain)

Wildcats fall just short of upset bid against Paola



Louisburg senior Ben Minster gets to the basket during the Wildcats' game with Paola in January. On Friday, the Wildcats traveled to Paola for its final regular season game of the season, and came up just short in a 45-43 loss.

PAOLA – The Louisburg boys basketball team laid it all out on the line in its regular season finale against its rival Friday.

Louisburg squared off against Paola in its last tune-up before the sub-state tournament and the Wildcats nearly pulled off the road upset. The Wildcat held a one-point lead with 13 seconds left in the contest, but Paola knocked down a pair of free throws and Louisburg couldn't get its last attempt to fall in a 45-43 loss.

Although it was a painful defeat, there were a lot of positives to take from it according to Louisburg head coach Ty Pfannenstiel.

"I thought we played really well," Pfannenstiel said. "Paola is the hottest team in our league the past two weeks, knocking off Desoto, Eudora and Ottawa. For us to play at that level

was very encouraging moving forward. I was really proud of the way that we played.”

Wildcat senior Desmond Doles hit a couple big shots late as he tied the game at 42-all with a runner in the lane with just under two minutes left in the game. Louisburg later forced a turnover and Doles was fouled on the ensuing possession and made 1 of 2 free throws to put Louisburg up 43-42 with under a minute remaining.

Paola’s Kale Clark hit a pair of free throws with 13 seconds left to give the Panthers a one point lead, but the Wildcats had one final opportunity. A 3-point shot from Justin Sievert wouldn’t go down, but Louisburg grabbed an offensive rebound for a second chance, but turned the ball over.

The Panthers would add another free throw to ice the game with two seconds left.

It was a close contest throughout as Louisburg hit a basket at the buzzer to give it a 16-14 lead at the end of the first quarter and took that two-point lead into the locker room at halftime.

Paola outscored Louisburg 10-7 in the third quarter to grab a one-point lead and then expanded it to six midway through the fourth quarter, only to see Louisburg battle back and take the one-point lead late.

Doles led Louisburg in scoring with 12 points to go along with seven rebounds and four assists. Seniors Ben Minster and Dalton Ribordy also finished in double figures with 10 points each, while Minster added six rebounds and three assists.

Clark and Brandon Wilkes each scored 15 points to lead the Panthers.

“When we play with energy, play smart, and communicate with each other, we can play with anybody in this league and we

proved that (Friday)," Pfannenstiel said. "We were able to be consistent on both offense and defense for four quarters."

The regular season might not have gone the way the Wildcats had hoped it would, but they are looking for a fresh start when postseason action begins this week.

Louisburg (2-18) will try for its second straight trip to the state tournament Friday as they will face off with No. 1 Spring Hill (12-7) at 6 p.m. at Paola High School in the first round of the sub-state tournament. The winner of that game will meet the winner between No. 2 Ottawa (11-8) and No. 3 Paola (11-8) at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday in the championship game.

"I think our competitiveness against Ottawa, Spring Hill and Paola the last few weeks has definitely given us confidence for sub-state," Pfannenstiel said. "Anything can happen in a win or go home game. We played a good game against Paola and we will have to play even better on Friday against Spring Hill. If we can play with energy and play with confidence, I really like our chances."

LOU	16	11	7	9 -
43				
PAO	14	11	10	10 -
45				

LOUISBURG (2-18): Desmond Doles 12, Ben Minster 10, Dalton Ribordy 10, Justin Sievert 6, Dylan DeShazer 3, Kohl Vogel 2. Totals: 19-42 3-9 43. 3-point field goals: 2, (Doles, DeShazer).

Wildcats come up short on Senior Night to De Soto



Louisburg senior Dalton Ribordy puts up a shot in the lane during Wednesday's home game against De Soto. Ribordy was one of five seniors honored during Senior Night.

The Louisburg boys basketball team had hoped to make its Senior Night a little more special by pulling off an upset of De Soto on Wednesday.

It was already a memorable one as the Wildcats honored its five seniors – Ben Minster, Justin Sievert, Dalton Ribordy, Parker Perentis and Desmond Doles – following the contest. Unfortunately, Louisburg wasn't able to a win in its final home game of the season in a 57-40 defeat.

With the victory, De Soto earned a share of the Frontier League title as it improved its record to 11-7 on the season.

"We didn't get out to a very good start," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "De Soto has some very good guards and they shot it really well. We have to do a better job of contesting shooters and making them work for their shots.

"I thought our guys off the bench came in and gave us a good spark with their energy and intensity. We are getting some decent looks offensively, but we have to be more consistent with getting them to go in."

The difference of the game proved to be on the perimeter.



Louisburg seniors (from left) Dalton Ribordy, Justin Sievert, Ben Minster, Desmond Doles and Parker Perentis were honored Wednesday during Senior Night.

De Soto connected on 11 3-pointers as it jumped out to a 15-2 lead to start the game and the Wildcats struggled to climb out of that hole. As good as De Soto shot it, the Wildcats struggled from behind the arch as they went 0-for-12.

Despite those struggles, the Wildcats still worked to get in the ball inside and got several good looks. Louisburg's offense came to life in the second quarter as it scored 16 points in the frame, but De Soto stayed sharp offensively itself and led 34-23 at halftime.

Minster led Louisburg in scoring with 11 points and four rebounds, while Doles finished with eight points. Ribordy and junior Dylan DeShazer each scored seven points in the loss.

Although the game ended in a loss, the team honored its five seniors following the game and Pfannenstiel knows how much

they have meant to the program.

"I have been very proud of our seniors," Pfannenstiel said. "They are hard workers and most importantly, they are good kids. Our motto is we preach making a commitment to the program and having good character. These seniors have done everything we have asked of them.

"I know all five of them will go on to be successful in life because of the characteristics that they have. We hope that the experiences they have learned while playing basketball for Louisburg High School can be used to help them in their journey. I just want to thank our seniors for representing our school and community the right way."

Louisburg will try to end its regular season on a good note Friday when it travels to Paola for its final game before sub-state. Tipoff is set for 7:30 p.m.

LOU	7	16	8	9 –
40				
DES	17	17	9	14
– 57				

LOUISBURG (2-17): Ben Minster 11, Desmond Doles 8, Dalton Ribordy 7, Dylan DeShazer 7, Madden Rutherford 4, Kohl Vogel 2, Justin Sievert 1. Totals: 14-40 12-19 40. 3-point field goals: none

Belcher, Quinn, Holtzen play final home game for Lady Cats



Louisburg seniors Bailey Belcher (left) and Isabelle Holtzen get on the floor for a loose ball Wednesday against De Soto. The Lady Cats fell to De Soto on Senior Night, 55-38.

It was a scene full of mixed emotions Wednesday afternoon at Louisburg High School.

The Louisburg girls basketball team got a chance to honor its three seniors – Bailey Belcher, Isabelle Holtzen and Mikayla Quinn – during the Lady Cats' Senior Night game against De Soto, but before that could happen, they had a game to play.

Not only did it have reschedule its game to a Wednesday afternoon due to inclement weather, but De Soto came into Louisburg with 11 wins on the season. Despite a couple different runs by the Lady Cats, Louisburg couldn't overtake the Wildcats in a 55-38 loss.

"We wanted to recognize our seniors by playing with everything we have to show our respect and appreciation for what they have given to each of us and our program," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I thought the girls battled for each other with this in mind from start to finish. I'm very proud of the effort, toughness and unselfishness this group continues to play with.

“We talk often about not taking any of this time for granted because of how fast it goes. I’m glad we do because it reminds all of us around the program how special it is to share in this journey with these girls.”

Louisburg (7-12) stayed with De Soto (12-7) for much of the first half as the Lady Cats trailed just 14-9 after the first quarter and made a run at the Wildcats. Louisburg made it a one possession game late in the second quarter, before De Soto pushed back its lead to five points at halftime.

The third quarter proved to be the biggest difference in the contest as De Soto outscored Louisburg 18-11 and held off the Lady Cats in the final period to pull away.

Belcher and junior Carson Buffington provided a bulk of the offense for the Lady Cats as they each scored in double figures.

Belcher scored a game-high 14 points and had six rebounds in her final home game, while Buffington recorded a double-double with 11 points and 13 rebounds. Sophomore Haley Cain was also active on the glass with eight rebounds.



Seniors (from left) Bailey Belcher, Mikayla Quinn and Isabelle Holtzen were honored during Senior Night following Wednesday's game.

Despite the loss, the team still took the time to honor Belcher, Quinn and Holtzen for their time they have spent with the program.

"This group of seniors has each contributed so much to our program in their own special way," Lowry said. "Bailey is one of the strongest competitors and flat out battles for everything all the time. That toughness and drive elevates the play of her teammates and you can't help but love playing with her.

"Mikayla has been a great teammate and one of the most unselfish players. She is always encouraging and motivating with her teammates and has always been ready to do whatever

she can to help her team.

“Isabelle has always embraced the process and has grown into a great leader for our team. She exemplifies so many of those things that are at the core of our program. She is also a great example for all the younger players about the level of commitment and determination that’s required to be successful.”

Louisburg has one more game before the Lady Cats head into sub-state action. The Lady Cats will travel to Paola on Friday as they try to sweep the Panthers on the season. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m.

LOU	9	11	11	7 –
38				
DES	14	11	18	12 –
55				

LOUISBURG (7-12): Bailey Belcher 14, Carson Buffington 11, Haley Cain 5, Sydni Keagle 4, Alyse Moore 2, Madilyn Melton 2. Totals: 12-55 13-24 38. 3-point field goals: 1, (Buffington)

Wildcats’ defense improves in loss to Spring Hill



Louisburg seniors Parker Perentis (left) and Justin Sievert trap a Spring Hill defender during Friday's game at Louisburg High School. The Wildcats return to action Wednesday when they host De Soto for Senior Night.

Just three days prior to Louisburg's home contest with Spring Hill, the Wildcats had one of their worst defensive performances of the season as they lost by 33 points on the road to Baldwin.

It was a defense that Wildcat head coach Ty Pfannenstiel didn't even recognize.

In Friday's game with Spring Hill, Louisburg got back to what it does best.

The Wildcats held the Broncos to under 50 points and stayed in the game up until the final minutes in a 49-39 loss. Louisburg used a zone defense for much of the game, which slowed down the Bronco offense.

"We weren't good defensively on Tuesday and that is something we have been pretty good at all year," Pfannenstiel said. "I was pretty proud of our defensive effort (Friday), and just overall we played the game the right way. We were communicating on defense, we were active, especially in our zone defense. It was nice changeup for us because this is the first time we have started out a game in a zone."

Louisburg (2-16) took advantage of a slow-paced game as both teams employed a zone defense. The Wildcats were patient

offensively and took a 9-6 lead into the second quarter and trailed just 18-16 going into halftime.

However, the Wildcats weren't able to get much going offensively in the third quarter as Spring Hill outscored them 12-2 and took a double-digit lead.

The Broncos ended the third quarter on a made half-court shot that gave Spring Hill even more momentum going into the final period.

"That happens and it is basketball," Pfannenstiel said. "We were playing passive in the third quarter and then it was a gut punch there in the end with the halfcourt shot. I challenged our kids in the huddle and told them there was a lot of basketball to be played."

The Wildcats listened to their coach as they battled back and got 3-pointers from seniors Parker Perentis and Justin Sievert, along with baskets from Desmond Doles and Dylan DeShazer to help get the deficit to seven.



Senior Dalton Ribordy goes up for a basket Friday against Spring Hill.

Then late in the fourth quarter, junior Brayden Gage drove the lane for a basket and was fouled to cut the Spring Hill lead to four. It would be as close as the Wildcats would get as the Spring Hill made six straight free throws to end the game and stop their rally. Louisburg scored 21 points in the final quarter to try and get back in it.

“We competed well on the offensive end,” Pfannenstiel said. “We just struggled to score. The third quarter was the biggest difference in the game and that has been our biggest issue all year, and I am not sure what it is exactly. We just went away from what we were doing well and didn’t play with as much energy. But for us to come back in the fourth quarter and battle, was good to see. Parker hit some big shots and we found some ways to get him the ball. We can definitely build off this.”

Perentis led the Wildcats in scoring with 12 points, including four 3-pointers. Doles was next on the team with six points, while DeShazer and senior Dalton Ribordy each pulled down six rebounds to lead Louisburg.

The Wildcats will play its final home game at 7 p.m. on Wednesday when they host De Soto for Senior Night. Louisburg will honor its seniors, Parker Perentis, Justin Sievert, Dalton Ribordy, Ben Minster and Desmond Doles, prior to their game.

LOU	9	7	2	21
- 39				
SH	6	12	12	19
- 49				

LOUISBURG (2-16): Parker Perentis 12, Desmond Doles 6, Brayden Gage 5, Kohl Vogel 4, Justin Sievert 4, Dylan DeShazer 4, Ben Minster 2, Dalton Ribordy 2. Totals: 16-37 2-3 39. 3-point field goals: 5, (Perentis 4, Sievert)

Lady Cats' rally not enough in loss to Spring Hill



Louisburg sophomore Carlee Gassman drives to the basket on a Spring Hill defender Friday during the Lady Cats' 61-45 loss to the Broncos. The Lady Cats return to action Wednesday when they host De Soto for Senior Night.

When Spring Hill knocked down a 3-pointer at the buzzer to end the first quarter, the Broncos built a 15-point lead on the Louisburg girls basketball team and the Lady Cats could have just played it out.

In two previous matchups earlier in the year, No. 10 Spring Hill ran away from Louisburg and it looked like déjà vu all over again.

Instead, the Lady Cats weren't about to let the same thing happen. Louisburg rallied to cut the Spring Hill to five at one point in the second half, before leaving with a 61-45 loss to the Broncos on Friday at Louisburg High School.

Despite the loss, Louisburg saw progress against a Spring Hill team that has all but locked up the No. 1 seed in the upcoming sub-state tournament.

"It was obviously an improvement from the first two times we played them," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I think it was a little sloppy for both teams, but there are things that we are getting better at and are continuing to get better at. We just have to get back in the gym for practice and continue to get better. With this group, it is about how much we can improve this week coming up as we get ready for sub-state."

Louisburg (7-11) struggled early on as the Lady Cats couldn't stop Spring Hill from the perimeter. The Broncos knocked down four 3-pointers in the first quarter, that included the buzzer-beater that gave them a 21-6 lead going into the second.

The Lady Cats picked it up offensively as they outscored Spring Hill 14-9 before halftime and trailed just 30-20. Louisburg opened the third quarter on a quick 7-2 run that cut the Bronco lead to just five points with 5 minutes left in the period, but the Broncos fought back and extended their lead to 13 going into the final frame.

“The girls just fight,” Lowry said. “They are scrappy and they battle. Sometimes it is ugly, but that is what we are and what we have been. Our girls are just going to fight their tails off and just like that we were back in it. But then comes the experience part that hurts when you overcome a big deficit and you have to try and keep it going. It was tough.”



Sophomore Haley Cain weaves in-between two Spring Hill defenders Friday in Louisburg.

Spring Hill kept its double-digit lead throughout the fourth

quarter and were able to hold off the Lady Cats' run.

Senior Isabelle Holtzen and freshman Madilyn Melton provided the scoring punch as they each scored 11 points and had five 3-pointers between them.

Junior Carson Buffington had eight points and a team-high 13 rebounds and freshman Alyse Moore was next on the team with seven rebounds off the bench. Senior Bailey Belcher provided the Lady Cats with a spark with six rebounds and four assists to go along with two steals.

Although the Lady Cats suffered the loss, Lowry is still happy with where his team is heading.

"We still had a lot of defensive breakdowns, but I see more positives all the time," Lowry said. "I saw it individually and collectively. When you see that, and then you see a girl like Bailey Belcher working her tail off on defense at the end of the game. She didn't care that the game was basically over, she was going to work when the buzzer sounded. That is the mentality that we have to play with from start to finish and I think that this group will."

Louisburg will play its final home game at 5:30 p.m., on Wednesday against De Soto on Senior Night. The game was originally scheduled for today, but had to be postponed due to inclement weather. Senior Night ceremonies will be immediately following the girls contest as they will honor seniors Isabelle Holtzen, Bailey Belcher and Mikayla Quinn.

"We are going to play our hearts out for our seniors," Lowry said. "Then we go to Paola for their Senior Night, so we have a nice run coming up before sub-state begins. This will be an important week for us."

45

SH
– 61

21

9

15

16

LOUISBURG (7-11): Isabelle Holtzen 11, Madilyn Melton 11, Carson Buffington 8, Haley Cain 6, Alyse Moore 3, Bailey Belcher 2, Carlee Gassman 2, Sydney Keagle. Totals: 18-48 4-10 45. 3-point field goals: 5, (Melton 3, Holtzen 2)

Louisburg boys, girls fall on the road to Baldwin



Louisburg junior Brayden Gage draws a foul while driving toward the basket Tuesday at Baldwin High School. Gage finished with eight points in the road loss to the Bulldogs.

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg boys basketball team had an opportunity to break its losing skid Tuesday when it faced off with Baldwin – a team the Wildcats had split with earlier this season.

It became evident early on that it was not going to be the Wildcats' night.

Baldwin caught fire on the offensive end as it shot 54 percent

from the field in its 77-44 win over Louisburg at Baldwin High School.

“Our defense was not very good,” Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “We pride ourselves on playing tough defense and this was our poorest effort of the season by far. With our offensive struggles this year, it has been so important for us to be good on the defensive end of the floor each night. We didn’t compete as a team and that’s disappointing.”

Senior Ben Minster led Louisburg (2-15) in scoring with 12 points and fellow senior Justin Sievert also finished in double figures with 10. Junior Brayden Gage added eight points in the loss, while senior Dalton Ribordy and sophomore Madden Rutherford both pulled down a team-high six rebounds.

Jayce Dighans led Baldwin in scoring with 28 points and had seven rebounds.

Louisburg returns to action tonight when it hosts Spring Hill. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

Lady Cats fall to Baldwin

The Louisburg girls basketball team hit the road Tuesday for a matchup with Baldwin, the No. 1 team in Class 4A-Division II.

Baldwin showed exactly why they considered as one of the favorites to win a state title. Louisburg couldn’t keep up with the hot-shooting Bulldogs in a 63-28 loss.



Freshman Madilyn Melton led the Lady Cats with 13 points in a loss to Baldwin.

Freshman Madilyn Melton and senior Bailey Belcher provided Louisburg (7-10) with a bulk of its offense. Melton was the lone Lady Cat in double figures with 13 points to go along with seven rebounds, while Belcher added eight points.

Junior Carson Buffington did the work on the glass as she led Louisburg with 15 rebounds on the night.

Lady Cats overcome slow start

to beat Ottawa



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher goes up for a shot and gets fouled Friday during the Lady Cats' game at Ottawa High School. The Lady Cats rallied from 20 points down to beat the Cyclones, 48-44.

OTTAWA – For the first 12-plus minutes of Friday's game with Ottawa, the Louisburg girls basketball team found themselves in dire straits.

The Lady Cats had managed just two points during that stretch and were down 20 with three minutes left in the first half.

Offensively, no matter what the Lady Cats tried, nothing seemed to work.

"Based on some of the shots I saw in the first quarter, it was just us and trying to get settled down," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "Maybe we practiced really hard for those first four days that we were off, because we were all amped up for those first few shots of the first quarter."

Once the lid finally came off the basket for Louisburg, that all changed.

Louisburg put together a furious rally that eventually ended in a 48-44 victory over the Cyclones and gave the Lady Cats a big road win in the process.

"It was great, especially to do it at this point in the season

and battle back like we did on the road,” Lowry said. “Ottawa has been playing really well here the last couple weeks and we knew it would be tough coming in.

“To play as poorly as we did to start that game, and for the girls not to lose focus, was great to see. What I was most proud of is they battled together. It wasn’t one person battling by themselves, they battled together. They played for each other and that was fun to watch.”

As good as the ending was, the beginning was a tough one to watch for Louisburg as Ottawa jumped out to an 11-2 lead at the end of the first quarter. The scoring drought continued into the second quarter and the Cyclones eventually took a 22-2 advantage with under four minutes left in the first half.

Along with their offensive woes, the Lady Cats were also battling their 12 first half turnovers that turned into some easy Ottawa baskets.

Senior Isabelle Holtzen ended Ottawa’s long run with a 3-pointer with 3 minutes and 10 seconds left in the second quarter and the Lady Cats started chipping away from there.

Louisburg (7-9) eventually whittled the Ottawa lead to 24-13 at halftime as it ended the first half on an 11-2 run thanks to six straight points from junior Carson Buffington and another basket from freshman Brooklyn Diederich.

Still, the Lady Cats had a lot of work to do in the second half.



Freshman Brooklyn Diederich puts up a shot in the lane Friday against Ottawa.

“The message to the girls at halftime was the game isn’t over and we have to chip away at this,” Lowry said. “I told the girls that it starts with what we do defensively. We have to win the 50-50 balls and we have to win the rebounds and then the offense will come from that. It just seemed like we settled down in the second half.”

Ottawa still led by 10 late in the third quarter when freshman Madilyn Melton connected on a 3-pointer and another freshman, Alyse Moore, scored near the basket to make it 34-29 going into the final eight minutes.

Buffington, who finished with a team-high 16 points and seven rebounds, hit one of her four 3-pointers to get Louisburg within one with 4:40 left, but seconds later the Lady Cats would be without their leading scorer as she fouled out of the

contest.

Several Lady Cats picked up her slack down the stretch. Holtzen hit the go-ahead jumper with 2:17 remaining, while senior Bailey Belcher connected on 3 of 4 at the free-throw line to widen Louisburg's lead to 46-43 with 1:06 left as she finished with eight points on the night.

"Bailey came through late for us there at the end," Lowry said. "In fact, she was the one who stayed late after practice (Thursday) to work on free throws and I really think it paid off."

Diederich and Melton each hit 1 of 2 free throws in the final seconds to help hold off the Cyclones and complete their furious comeback.

Melton and Diederich provided Louisburg with big minutes down the stretch as they scored nine and five points, respectively, while Moore filled in for Buffington down low late with six rebounds. Melton also tied Buffington with a team-high seven rebounds.

"I thought both Brooklyn and Alyse are both growing and maturing throughout the season and what a great time for both of them to step up and do what they did to contribute to this," Lowry said. "They are still freshmen, but getting opportunities like this is good for them, and at this point in the season they are no longer freshmen. They are basketball players."

Louisburg will try to build on its win Tuesday as it faces another difficult test when it travels to No. 1 Baldwin in its first of four final regular season games.

"As we prepare for our run, this is absolutely one we can use later on," Lowry said. "We have young and inexperienced players who got experience in a big game on the road. To come from that far behind, and not just compete, but to win, we

will definitely use and build off this.”

LOU	2	11	16	19 –
48				
OTT	11	13	10	10 –
44				

LOUISBURG (7-9): Carson Buffington 16, Madilyn Melton 9, Bailey Belcher 8, Brooklyn Diederich 5, Isabelle Holtzen 5, Haley Cain 3, Alyse Moore 2. Totals: 14-50 13-22 48. 3-point field goals: 7, (Buffington 4, Belcher, Holtzen, Melton)

Ottawa tops short-handed Wildcats



Louisburg senior Desmond Doles drives to the basket on an Ottawa defender Friday at Ottawa High School. Doles finished with a team-high 13 points, but the Wildcats fell on the road, 49-39.

OTTAWA – Going up against a state-ranked team is a difficult enough with a full roster, but the Louisburg boys basketball team traveled to No. 10 Ottawa with a thin bench.

The Wildcats were without two of their starting big men in Dalton Ribordy and Dylan DeShazer, who were both out with an illness, and they needed to get big minutes from their bench. Louisburg got some good production and hung with the Cyclones, but couldn't get over the hump in a 49-39 loss.

Louisburg was able to slow down Ottawa at times, but the Cyclones were still able to shoot 53 percent from the floor and go on the big runs when they needed them.

"Ottawa got seven points really quick to start the game and they were the first team that has really exposed our defense like that," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "They knocked down some shots later in the first half, but I was proud of the way we battled back and competed for four quarters. Hopefully we will get back to full strength soon and keep getting better."

Seniors Desmond Doles and Ben Minster gave the Wildcats a scoring lift to help keep them in the game as they trimmed a double-digit deficit to four midway through the third quarter, before Ottawa went on another run.

Doles led Louisburg in scoring with 13 points, including three 3-pointers, while Minster finished with 12 points and six rebounds.

Junior Noah Hill came off the bench to start in place of Ribordy and played 23 minutes. Sophomore Madden Rutherford saw an increase in playing time with five points in 16 minutes to go along with a team-high three assists.



Louisburg senior Noah Hill works his way toward the basket Friday against Ottawa.

“We were a little short-handed this week and we have been battling some illness,” Pfannenstiel said. “We were down two bigs tonight and that is Ottawa’s strength and those guys are good. I thought Noah came in and did a really good job and gave us good minutes. He is always going to battle hard and he is tough and plays with a lot of energy. I was proud of our effort.”

Both teams went back and forth at each other early as the game was tied at 7-all midway through the first quarter, but the Cyclones went on 9-0 run that went into the second and eventually went into halftime with a 27-19 advantage.

Louisburg (2-14) made things interesting in the third quarter when Minster scored back-to-back baskets to trim the Ottawa lead to 31-27, but the Cyclones went on another 8-0 run to

create more distance from the Wildcats.

A Doles 3-pointer cut the Ottawa lead to 44-37 with 1 minute and 45 seconds left in the game, but the Wildcats could get no closer.

Ottawa's Krys Johnson led the Cyclones in scoring with 13 points.

Louisburg will try and rebound Tuesday when it travels to Baldwin. The Wildcats have split their two matchups with the Bulldogs already this season as they go for their third win.

Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOU	7	12	8	12
- 39				
OTT	12	15	12	10 -
49				

LOUISBURG (2-14): Desmond Doles 13, Ben Minster 12, Justin Sievert 6, Madden Rutherford 5, Kohl Vogel 3. Totals: 15-38 4-4 39. 3-point field goals: 5, (Doles 3, Rutherford, Vogel)

Eudora uses late run to pull away from Lady Cats



Louisburg junior Carson Buffington dives for a loose ball Friday during the Lady Cats' home game against Eudora. Buffington finished with 10 points and 16 rebounds in the Lady Cats' 41-34 loss.

The shots weren't falling. Turnovers were piling up, as were the foul problems.

It wasn't exactly the performance the Louisburg girls basketball team wanted to have following its big win over rival Paola earlier in the week. Then, in just a few minutes time, the Lady Cats had life again.

Louisburg rallied to tie Eudora late in the third quarter and it seemed to have all the momentum. Then in a matter of seconds – it was a gone again.

The Cardinals scored the next seven points and took that momentum into the final period for a 41-34 win over the Lady Cats in their homecoming game Friday.

“We just weren't ready to play,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “You always worry about a letdown after a good showing, then with homecoming added on to that, we just weren't checked in at all to play and that is on me.”

It was a rough first half for the Lady Cats offensively. They managed just three points in the first quarter, and struggled at times in the second, but still managed to claw back to a 17-13 deficit at halftime.

Louisburg turned up its defensive pressure to start the third quarter and got back in the game. A 3-pointer from freshman Brooklyn Diederich cut it to 18-17 and a free throw from freshman Madilyn Melton tied it up with 3 minutes left in the third.

Eudora grabbed the lead right back with a basket, but another Louisburg freshman, Alyse Moore, drove to the basket and scored to knot it at 20-all.

From there, it was all Eudora.

The Cardinals forced Louisburg into eight turnovers in the third and turned several of those into transition points as they went on an 18-3 run that went into the fourth quarter and built a 15-point lead.

“Eudora just made some plays and some shots,” Lowry said. “To their credit, they worked harder than we did at getting 50-50 balls, which we take a lot of pride in and we didn’t this time. Eudora was ready to come in here and play.”



Sophomore Haley Cain dribbles around a Eudora defender Friday.

The Lady Cats (6-9) tried to get back into the game, as Moore scored three baskets in the final quarter and junior Carson Buffington hit a 3-pointer to cut the lead to six late in the game, but Louisburg couldn't get any closer.

Eudora employed a zone defense for most of the night and the Lady Cats weren't able to crack it as the Cardinals forced 24 turnovers.

"We weren't very strong with the basketball," Lowry said. "We weren't very strong with our passes, we weren't strong catching the ball and if you don't do those two things first, then it doesn't matter what happens after that. That kind of fed into everything and that kind of goes into the mental side of the game.

"I was concerned about it going into the game, and as a coach, you just kind of get that feeling that maybe not everyone was ready for the game. There is a lot of stuff going on, but that is no excuse. You have to be ready to play a basketball game and we weren't."

Buffington recorded another double-double to lead the Lady Cats' offense with 10 points and team-high 16 rebounds. Moore was next on the team with nine points and Diederich added six in the loss. Melton was second on the team with eight rebounds.

Louisburg will try to bounce back Friday when it travels to Ottawa for another Frontier League matchup.

"This is one that we have to learn from," Lowry said. "We have to pick ourselves back up and individually they have some things they have to think about and make sure that they are all in and then we go from there."

LOU	3	10	10	11	-
34					
EUD	9	8	12	12	
- 41					

LOUISBURG (6-9): Carson Buffington 10, Alyse Moore 9, Brooklyn Diederich 6, Bailey Belcher 2, Carlee Gassman 2, Haley Cain 2, Isabelle Holtzen 2, Madilyn Melton 1. Totals: 10-40 10-24 34. 3-point field goals: 4, (Buffington 2, Diederich 2)