

# 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 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

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## **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

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# **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.”

<b>LOU</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>– 33</b>				

<b>SH</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>13 – 41</b>			

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)

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# 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.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6 –</b>
<b>35</b>				
<b>PAO</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17 –</b>
<b>51</b>				

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)

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## 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.”

<b>LOU</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16 –</b>
<b>47</b>				
<b>PAO</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>– 40</b>				

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)

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## 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 43	16	11	7	9 –
PAO 45	14	11	10	10 –

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).

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# 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.

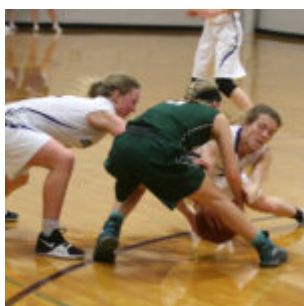


<b>LOU</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9 –</b>
<b>40</b>				
<b>DES</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>– 57</b>				

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

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## 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.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7 –</b>
<b>38</b>				
<b>DES</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12 –</b>
<b>55</b>				

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)

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# 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)

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## 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

21

9

15

16

– 61

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