

# **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."

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|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>LOU</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>14</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>13 -</b> |
| <b>45</b>   |           |           |           |             |
| <b>SH</b>   | <b>21</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>16</b>   |
| <b>- 61</b> |           |           |           |             |

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)

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# **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.

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## **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."

|            |           |           |           |             |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>LOU</b> | <b>2</b>  | <b>11</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>19 -</b> |
| <b>48</b>  |           |           |           |             |
| <b>OTT</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>10 -</b> |
| <b>44</b>  |           |           |           |             |

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)

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## 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.

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|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>LOU</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>8</b>  | <b>12</b>   |
| <b>- 39</b> |           |           |           |             |
| <b>OTT</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>10 -</b> |
| <b>49</b>   |           |           |           |             |

**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)

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**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."

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|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>LOU</b>  | <b>3</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>11 -</b> |
| <b>34</b>   |          |           |           |             |
| <b>EUD</b>  | <b>9</b> | <b>8</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>12</b>   |
| <b>- 41</b> |          |           |           |             |

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)

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# Eudora hands Wildcats a loss on homecoming



**Louisburg sophomore Madden Rutherford goes up for a shot and gets fouled Friday during the Wildcats' game with Eudora in Louisburg. Eudora downed Louisburg 60-43.**

Even though it was homecoming, there wasn't a whole lot to celebrate for the Louisburg boys basketball team Friday against Eudora.

Despite a competitive first quarter in which the Wildcats stayed within striking distance, they couldn't keep pace with Eudora in a 60-43 loss in Louisburg. It was also Louisburg's third consecutive loss.

The Wildcats had a hard time getting in a rhythm offensively against the No. 4 team in Class 4A-Division I, as they shot just 32 percent from the field and were 1 for 12 from behind the 3-point line.

"We didn't shoot the ball well," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "That is not one of our strengths anyway, but it is going to take a night of knocking down our shots to stay with a team like that. Eudora is a really good team. They are very well-coached, disciplined, they play hard and play team basketball. They just do a lot of little things right. It is going to take great game on our end to stay with them and we just didn't have it. We have to get better, play harder, we

have to execute at a higher level and we didn't do that."

Louisburg (2-13) stayed with the Cardinals in the first quarter and trailed just 16-12 going into the second period. Unfortunately, the Wildcats managed just eight points in each of the second and third quarters, allowing the Cardinals to build on their lead.



**Louisburg's Scott Murphy and Isabelle Holtzen were crowned winter homecoming king and queen Friday during halftime of the boys game against Eudora.**

Eudora outscored Louisburg 16-8 right before halftime, which turned out to be a pivotal moment in the game, as the Cardinals built a double-digit lead that they wouldn't relinquish.

"I was proud of the way we competed in the second half," Pfannenstiel said. "I think in the second quarter we got kind of mopey. It is like we were defeated already and that has been part of our problems in games is having a bad quarter. We

have to continue to keep fighting. I thought in the second half that we had better leadership and guys were being vocal in a positive way."

Senior Dalton Ribordy and junior Dylan DeShazer led Louisburg in scoring with nine points each and senior Justin Sievert added eight in the loss. Ribordy also added a team-high seven rebounds and DeShazer finished with six.

Louisburg will have some extra time off to practice before the Wildcats return to action Friday when they travel to Ottawa, which is ranked No. 10 in Class 4A-Division I.

"We are down to six guaranteed games from here on out," Pfannenstiel said. "We have to take advantage of it. It is fun to play the game of basketball when you play it at a high level. We have to get back at having fun on the court and try to find that spark."

|             |           |          |          |           |
|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>LOU</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>15</b> |
| <b>- 43</b> |           |          |          |           |

|            |           |           |           |             |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>EUD</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>18 -</b> |
| <b>60</b>  |           |           |           |             |

LOUISBURG (2-13): Dalton Ribordy 9, Dylan DeShazer 9, Justin Sievert 8, Brayden Gage 7, Madden Rutherford 5, Kohl Vogel 3, Noah Hill 2. Totals: 15-47 12-24 43. 3-point field goals: 1, (Sievert)

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# Louisburg boys can't slow down Paola in loss



Louisburg senior Parker Perentis passes off to a teammate Tuesday during the Wildcats' game with Paola at Louisburg High School. Perentis finished with a team-high 13 points in the Wildcats' 69-52 loss.

The Louisburg boys basketball team survived a hot start from Paola on Tuesday and rebounded enough to nearly tie the game at halftime.

The Wildcats just couldn't survive another Panther run.

Louisburg scored just seven points in the third quarter and Paola did enough to hand the Wildcats a 69-52 loss at Louisburg High School.

"The third quarter was the disappointing part for me," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "We just came out flat and I am not sure what it is. We have to be better and we weren't very good in the second half."

Paola jumped out to a 20-9 lead in the first quarter behind a barrage of 3-pointers, but the Wildcats responded in the second quarter in an unconventional way.

Louisburg exploded for 25 points before halftime and 18 of those came from the Wildcat bench. Senior reserve guard Parker Perentis scored 11 of his team-high 13 points in the second

quarter, including three 3-pointers to help Louisburg get back in it.

Juniors Noah Hill and Kohl Vogel also came off the bench to score a combined seven points to cut the Paola lead to 38-34 at halftime.

"Paola came out hot," Pfannenstiel said. "I think they hit like five 3-pointers in the first quarter and they took a big swing and a punch at us. I was proud of the way we battled back from that. I thought our energy was really good in the second quarter. Parker came in off the bench and did a good job. He was able to hit some shots and we need that."

"Those are energy guys coming off the bench. They are getting their shot at varsity action and they come in and they play hard. That is what it takes and that is what we need as a team to be able to play against this league because it is so balanced and tough every game."

The Panthers outscored Louisburg 13-7 in the third quarter, but the Wildcats tried making another run at the Panthers. Senior Justin Sievert hit a pair of jumpers, including a 3-pointer, to cut the Paola lead to 53-46 early in the fourth, but couldn't get any closer.

Paola ended the game on an 11-1 run and converted at the free-throw line to preserve the win.

Wildcat senior Desmond Doles was second on the team in scoring with nine points and a team-high four steals. Fellow senior Dalton Ribordy finished with seven points after missing the last two games with an injury.

Louisburg will try and get back on track tonight when it hosts No. 10 Eudora for homecoming. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

"We have to be better now for the second half of the season,"

Pfannenstiel said. "We have played everyone in the league now, and at times we have been competed well. We have battled hard at times, even though the scores look bad in the end. I think if we play with energy, and execute on both ends of the floor, then I think we will be fine here in the second half."

|     |    |    |    |      |
|-----|----|----|----|------|
| LOU | 9  | 25 | 7  | 11   |
| -   | 52 |    |    |      |
| PAO | 20 | 18 | 13 | 18 - |
| 69  |    |    |    |      |

LOUISBURG (2-12): Parker Perentis 13, Desmond Doles 9, Dalton Ribordy 7, Brayden Gage 5, Ben Minster 5, Justin Sievert 5, Kohl Vogel 4, Noah Hill 4. Totals: 18-46 9-14 52. 3-point field goals: 7, (Perentis 3, Gage, Vogel, Doles, Sievert)

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## **Lady Cats score first win over Paola in four years**



Louisburg freshman Madilyn Melton goes up for two of her team-high 21 points against Paola on Tuesday at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats downed the Panthers, 69-57, for their first win over the Panthers since 2014.

It has been four years since the Louisburg girls basketball team has left the floor after a victory over Paola.

Since then, there has been a lot of heartbreak and disappointment.

Louisburg got a chance to change all that Tuesday when it hosted its rival and the Lady Cats were able to turn the tables on the Panthers. There was no heartbreak this time around.

Defense and free throws turned out to be the difference as the Lady Cats were able to pull out a 69-57 win over Paola – their first victory over the Panthers since 2014.

“They are excited to win a basketball game, but at the same time they are collectively starting to figure things out,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “Our effort and toughness was really good and Paola was a tough, physical team too. For us to play that way, and match that intensity and toughness, was important and we want to defend our home court with everything we have.”

It all started on the defensive end of the floor for the Lady Cats as they forced 21 Paola turnovers and recorded 15 steals on the night.

Louisburg used a half-court trapping defense that took Paola out of any kind of rhythm offensively and led to several baskets in transition.

“It started defensively for us and that just fed into everything else,” Lowry said. “As a coach, I still see those things that we have to clean up, but it was a good team effort. They were able to respond and battle through adversity when it happened.”

The Lady Cats (6-8) experienced a little adversity in the

fourth quarter. Louisburg held a 17-point lead early in the final period, before junior starter Carson Buffington fouled out.

Paola went on a run and cut the lead to seven with 2 minutes and 28 seconds left in the game, but the Lady Cats were able to put the game away at the free-throw line. Louisburg converted 33 or 45 free-throw attempts for the game, including 10 straight makes to end the game by senior Isabelle Holtzen, sophomore Carlee Gassman and freshman Madilyn Melton.

"It is nice to see some of our inexperience go away at the end of the game like that," Lowry said. "Our kids stood tall, and Isabelle provided some great senior leadership and really took control of things when we were in foul trouble. Other people stepped up and made some good plays as well.

"We work a lot on free throws to win the game and that is what it came down for us. That won us the game."



**Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher gets fouled while driving to the basket Tuesday against Paola.**

Louisburg also got a big performance from Melton, who didn't play like a freshman. With the game tied at 23-all late in the first half, the Lady Cat freshman scored 11 straight point as Louisburg went on an 11-4 run and took a 34-27 lead at halftime.

For the game, Melton finished with a team-high 21 points and 11 rebounds and she converted 12 of her 16 free-throw opportunities.

"I think all the girls did really, really well," Melton said. "Playing against Paola in middle school was tough, so coming in as a freshman playing varsity, I knew it was going to be even harder. I am just so proud of the girls and I knew we could pull through."

"I just want to go out there, and even though that I am a freshman, I want to be there for my team and help them when they need me."

The Lady Cats got big performances up and down their lineup. Holtzen was second on in the team in scoring with 18 points, including 9 of 10 from the free-throw line.

Along with Melton, Buffington also finished with a double-double with 10 points and 11 rebounds to to alon with a team-high four steals. Senior Bailey Belcher also added 10 points and three steals in the win, while sophomore Haley Cain added seven rebounds.

"We were all pretty hyped up for this one, knowing we were going to play our rival," Holtzen said. "We just played hard as a team and we played together, even though we had some foul problems throughout the game. I think everyone stepped up at the right time and we were able to get a big win."

Louisburg will hope to build on this win tonight when it hosts Eudora for a homecoming matchup. The Lady Cats hope to exact some revenge after falling to the Cardinals in overtime early in the season.

"We are preparing for this run here," Lowry said. "Now we are going back through the league teams, and when it is all said and done, we are going to be in Paola for a sub-state tournament. We are going to see them again on their senior night, so I am sure it will be emotional for them and it will be a tough place to play. We will be ready though."

|     |    |    |    |      |
|-----|----|----|----|------|
| LOU | 12 | 22 | 14 | 21 - |
| 69  |    |    |    |      |

|      |   |    |   |    |
|------|---|----|---|----|
| PAO  | 9 | 18 | 6 | 24 |
| - 57 |   |    |   |    |

LOUISBURG (6-8): Madilyn Melton 21, Isabelle Holtzen 18, Bailey Belcher 10, Carson Buffington 10, Carlee Gassman 5, Haley Cain 5. Totals: 16-47 33-45 69. 3-point field goals: 4, (Holtzen, Melton, Belcher, Buffington)

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## Meet the LHS 2018 Winter Homecoming Candidates



**Members of the 2018 Louisburg High School winter homecoming court are (front row, from left): Grant Ryals, Scott Murphy, Kai Tinich, Mitchell Drew; (back row) Haven Trageser-Turner, Isabelle Holtzen, Alexa Goodspeed and Tomi Frederes.**

Homecoming week at Louisburg High School kicked off Monday and events are in full swing. With something going on every day this week, it will be a busy time for students. All of it is, of course, centered around the crowning of the 2018 winter king and queen. Eight students were selected as nominees and here are their names and profiles.

The crowning will take place on Friday at halftime of the boys basketball game with Eudora. Tipoff for that game is set for approximately 7:30 p.m. Good luck to all the participants and make sure to come out on Friday to support the Wildcat girls and boys teams against the Cardinals.



**Kai Tinich and Alexa Goodspeed**

### **Kai Tinich**

Kai is the son of Terry and Susan Tinich. He has been involved with student council for four years. Kai has participated in golf for three years, Leo's Club for three years, FCCLA for two years, FCA for two years, Spanish Club for two years and basketball for one year. After graduation, Kai plans to attend the University of Arkansas to study international business with a minor in Greek or Italian.

### **Alexa Goodspeed**

Alexa is the daughter of Susan Goodspeed. She has participated in cross country for four years, FFA for four years, softball

for two years, Spanish Club for two years. She was a basketball manager for one year and participated in Leo's Club and choir for one year. After graduation, Alexa plans to attend Pittsburg State University and major in physiology.



**Tomi Frederes and Mitchell Drew**

### **Tomi Frederes**

Tomi is the daughter Christy and Jerry Frederes. She has participated in FFA for four years, cross country and Leo's

Club for three years, softball and Spanish Club for two years and track and volleyball for one year. After graduation, Tomi plans to attend Pittsburg State University and major in business.

## **Mitchell Drew**

Mitchell is the son of Pat and Shanna Drew. He has participated in baseball for four years and football for four years. After graduation, Mitchell plans to attend Pittsburg State University and pursue a bachelor degree in nursing.



## **Scott Murphy and Isabelle Holtzen**

### **Scott Murphy**

Scott is the son of Gene and Amanda Murphy. He has participated in soccer, band, stage crew, Model United Nations, student council, Scholars Bowl and Technology Student Association for four years. He has also taken part in track and Spanish Club for three years, Jazz Band for two years and National Honors Society, Math Club and Science Olympiad Club for one year. After graduation, Scott plans to attend Cornell University to study mechanical engineering.

### **Isabelle Holtzen**

Isabelle is the daughter of Craig and Michelle Holtzen. She has participated in debate, basketball, cross country, track and Fellowship of Christian Athletes for four years. She has also taken part in choir for three years, National Honors Society and Model United Nations for two years and musical, Leo's Club and Student Advisory Council for one year. After graduation, Isabelle plans to attend the University of Northern Iowa to major in business and will pole vault for the track team.



**Grant Ryals and Haven Trageser-Turner**

## **Grant Ryals**

Grant is the son of Janelle Ryals and Jason and Michelle Ryals. He has participated in soccer for four years, student council for three years, National Honors Society and girls soccer manager for two years, and Leo's Club and golf for one year. After graduation, Grant plans to attend William Jewell College to play soccer and major in biomedical engineering.

## Haven Trageser-Turner

Haven is the daughter of Jeff and Katie Trageser and Courtney Turner. She has participated in FFA, student council and musical for four years, basketball and choir for three years, FCCLA for two years and softball, Leo's Club and Spanish Club for one year. After graduation, Haven plans to attend the University of Kansas and major in nursing.





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# **Lady Cats salvage Top Gun tourney with blowout win**



**Louisburg sophomore Haley Cain gets on the floor for a loose ball during the Lady Cats seventh-place game against Anderson County Saturday in the Top Gun Tournament at Wellsville High School.**

WELLSVILLE – It would have been easy for the Louisburg girls basketball team to just push its seventh-place game aside Saturday in what was an already tough Top Gun Tournament.

Earlier in the week, the Lady Cats had double-digit losses to state-ranked Piper and Frontier League foe Spring Hill, and they have a game with rival Paola looming on the horizon.

The Lady Cats placed all of that behind them and put together a strong performance Saturday to close out the Wellsville tournament. Louisburg took control of the game from the start against Anderson County and never looked back in a 51-22 victory to finish in seventh place.

“It was an awesome midseason tournament to play in,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “We talked before it started about the caliber of teams that we were going to go up against. It was great to watch some of them and it was great to play some of

them.

"The girls could have come out flat in our last game, and have not enough emotion, but they didn't. They played with a lot of toughness, effort, togetherness, unselfishness – just like they did the first two games. I was really proud of that."

Louisburg came to life offensively in the second and third quarters as it scored a combined 35 points in the two frames to help pull away thanks to its defense.

The Lady Cats turned Anderson County over many different times during the contest, which led to easy transition points on the other end.

"If we can use some of our athleticism, we would like to," Lowry said. "It worked for us this time. We have some things that we still need to work on."

Senior guard Isabelle Holtzen led the Lady Cats in scoring with 12 points and fellow senior Bailey Belcher added 11 in the win. Buffington finished with nine points, including three 3-pointers, and ended the tournament with 27 rebounds in the three games.

Louisburg (5-8) already had control of the game with a 29-10 lead at halftime, but the Lady Cats all but sealed the win with a monstrous start to the second half. They opened the third quarter with a 14-0 run and ended their tournament on a solid note.

"We talked about those first couple minutes of the third quarter, and how important they are," Lowry said. "Regardless of what is going on in the game score-wise, it seems like those first two or three minutes of the third quarter and so big in determining what is going to happen in that second half. They always respond well with that."



**Freshman Brooklyn Diederich passes off to a teammate Saturday. Diederich finished second in the tournament's free throw competition.**

Following the tournament, two Lady Cat players also earned honors.

Freshman Brooklyn Diederich placed second in the tournament's free throw competition as she made 22 of 30 over three days, finishing just one behind Wellsville's Ally Newhouse.

Senior Mikayla Quinn was also named to the tournament's all-academic team.

For the first time in more than three weeks, the Lady Cats will return home tonight when it hosts Paola in a 6 p.m. tipoff. They will follow that up with another home game against Eudora on Friday for homecoming.

|            |           |           |           |            |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>LOU</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>6 -</b> |
| <b>51</b>  |           |           |           |            |

|              |          |          |          |               |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| <b>ANDCO</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>8 - 22</b> |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|

LOUISBURG (5-8): Isabelle Holtzen 12, Bailey Belcher 11, Carson Buffington 9, Sydni Keagle 5, Alyse Moore 4, Madilyn Melton 4, Brooklyn Diederich 3, Haley Cain 2, Carlee Gassman 1. Totals: 20 6-11 51. 3-point field goals: 5, (Buffington 3, Diederich, Keagle).

## **LOUISBURG FALLS TO SPRING HILL, NO. 3 PIPER**

In what could be called one of the tougher tournaments in the state, that features four state-ranked teams, Louisburg had its hands full from the opening game of the Top Gun Tournament.

The Lady Cats opened play against No. 3 Piper on Jan. 23 and couldn't keep up with the Pirates in a 72-41 loss.

Louisburg then had to square off with Spring Hill in the consolation semifinals Thursday, and despite keeping it close in the first half, came up short in a 65-40 defeat.

Against Spring Hill, the Lady Cats played the Broncos tough as they trailed just 27-17 at halftime before the Broncos opened the game up in the second half.

"It has been a process from the start and I think the first quarter or first half of the Spring Hill game really showed our development and the continued work that we are getting in with our kids," Lowry said. "They are learning, growing and getting better. Our younger players are stepping up and I

think that first half shows we aren't that far away come March, but we have a lot of work to do between now and then, but we are getting there.

"The first time we played them (a 30-point loss), it wasn't much as what they did to us as what we did to ourselves. I think that is part of a young, inexperienced team. The more experience we get, the better we are going to be and I think that showed in that first half."

Carson Buffington led the Lady Cats with 11 points, while freshman Madilyn Melton finished with seven and sophomore Haley Cain added six.

Piper also proved to be worthy of its ranking as it used a 26-point third quarter to help seal its win over Louisburg. Senior Isabelle Holtzen scored a team-high 13 points in the loss and Cain finished with nine.

|            |           |          |           |             |
|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>LOU</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>11 -</b> |
| <b>40</b>  |           |          |           |             |
| <b>SH</b>  |           |          |           |             |
|            | <b>65</b> |          |           |             |

LOUISBURG: Carson Buffington 11, Madilyn Melton 7, Haley Cain 6, Alyse Moore 5, Brooklyn Diederich 3, Isabelle Holtzen 3, Sydni Keagle 3, Bailey Belcher 2. Totals: 14 9-16 40. 3-point field goals: 3, (Buffington 2, Diederich)

|             |           |           |           |            |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>LOU</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>8 -</b> |
| <b>41</b>   |           |           |           |            |
| <b>PIP</b>  | <b>19</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>11</b>  |
| <b>- 72</b> |           |           |           |            |

LOUISBURG: Isabelle Holtzen 13, Haley Cain 9, Carson Buffington 8, Bailey Belcher 5, Madilyn Melton 5, Alyse Moore. Totals: 10 17-22 41. 3-point field goals: 4, (Belcher, Buffington, Cain, Holtzen)