

Wildcats snap losing skid with win over Bishop Ward



Louisburg junior Brayden Gage drives to the basket on Friday during the Wildcats' consolation semifinal game against Harmon at the Baldwin Invitational Tournament. The Wildcats took seventh place Saturday with a 70-42 win over Bishop Ward.

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg boys basketball team was staring a ninth straight loss in the face Saturday when it faced off with Bishop Ward.

If the Wildcats wanted to break the streak, they were going to have to do it without senior starter Dalton Ribordy, who had to sit out with an injury. Louisburg held a slim 3-point lead at halftime against Ward in the seventh-place game of the Baldwin Invitational.

Louisburg had a tough time getting in any kind of rhythm offensively. So in the second half, the Wildcats let their defense do the work.

The Wildcats turned over Bishop Ward several times in the final two quarters and turned that into instant offense in their 70-42 win over the Cyclones, and broke their long losing streak in the process.

“Our defense was better in the second half, no doubt,” Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “Ward didn’t shoot the

ball well in the second half and we were very good on the defensive glass. A lot of that had to do with our triangle-and-2 look we threw at them. We did a good job of getting buckets in transition and then when we got into a half court set, we were patient and worked the ball inside. I was pleased with the way we played in the second half."

With Ribordy out of the lineup, Pfannenstiel was looking for someone else to replace that void and he found it in Ben Minster. The Louisburg senior was all over the floor for the Wildcats as he finished with a game-high 24 points.

Along with his scoring punch, Minster also did it on the glass with a team-high six rebounds and on the defensive end with team-best six steals.

"Dalton is one of our leaders, so not having him out there was a concern," Pfannenstiel said. "He's our best rebounder and low post defender so we had to have some other guys step up for us. Ben played with a lot of energy and provided a spark offensively and defensively. He played with a different energy this week. He was aggressive on both ends and kept attacking. He's an explosive player and needs to continue to play with that mentality from here on out."

Louisburg (2-10) held a 25-22 halftime lead over Bishop Ward, but Pfannenstiel wanted to change things up in order to spark his team. He decided to employ a triangle-and-2 defense in hopes of confusing Ward.

It seemed to work.

The Wildcats forced 28 Bishop Ward turnovers and scored 23 points off those Cyclone mistakes, which gave them the spark they were looking for. Louisburg recorded 18 steals and were able to score 17 points in transition.



Senior Dalton Ribordy goes up for two of his 12 points Friday against Harmon.

They were also able to hold Bishop Ward leading scorer Clarence Johnson in check in the second half. Johnson, who scored a team-high 16 points, scored most of those in the first half.

"Our defense did a good job of executing in the second half," Pfannenstiel said. "We went some triangle-and-2 to try and get them out of an offensive rhythm. We did a great job of keeping the ball out of the hands of No. 4 (Johnson). He was a really good player and we were able to make him work harder in the second half."

Senior starter Desmond Doles gave the Wildcats a big boost himself as he scored in double figures with 12 points and four steals on defense. Junior Kohl Vogel scored nine points and

had five rebounds to go along with four steals.

Junior Dylan DeShazer added eight points and five rebounds, while sophomore Madden Rutherford finished with six points and five boards. Senior Parker Perentis added three steals on defense.

"It's taken us awhile, but I think we are finally playing to our strengths as a team," Pfannenstiel said. "We have to continue to focus on the things that we do well and capitalize on those moments in games."

Louisburg returns to action Thursday when it travels to Spring Hill in hopes of getting its second straight win. Tipoff is set for 7:30 p.m.

LOU	11	14	25	20 –
70				
BW	10	12	11	9 –
42				

LOUISBURG (2-10): Ben Minster 24, Desmond Doles 12, Kohl Vogel 9, Dylan DeShazer 8, Madden Rutherford 6, Parker Perentis 4, Justin Sievert 4, Noah Hill 2, Michael Waldron 1. Totals: 25-54 18-32 70. 3-point field goals: 2, (Perentis, Minster)

Louisburg falls to Bonner Springs, Harmon to open tournament

Louisburg had a difficult first-round matchup in the Baldwin Invitational on Wednesday when it faced off with Bonner Springs, the state's No. 3-ranked team in Class 4A-Division I.

The Wildcats fell to the Braves 75-43, but had a chance to rebound in the consolation semifinals Friday against Harmon. Despite a furious fourth quarter rally, the Wildcats came up short, 64-56.

Against Harmon, the Wildcats trailed by 18 points early in the fourth quarter, but they eventually whittled the lead. Louisburg went on a 17-0 run to cut the lead to one, but couldn't get over the hump.

Louisburg used full-court pressure to speed up Harmon and those turned into turnovers and easy baskets for the Wildcats.

"We played with a different intensity in the fourth quarter," Pfannenstiel said. "Our kids have to realize that when we play with that type of intensity and focus, we can be pretty good."

Ben Minster led Louisburg in scoring with 20 points and Dalton Ribordy added 12 in the loss. Ribordy had to leave the game in the second half with an ankle injury and didn't return.

Junior guard Brayden Gage finished with nine points and three assists, while Desmond Doles brought down six rebounds. Doles also led Louisburg in scoring with 13 points in the loss to Bonner Springs.

LOU	15	4	12	25 –
56				
HAR	14	12	20	18 –
64				

LOUISBURG: Ben Minster 20, Dalton Ribordy 12, Brayden Gage 9, Justin Sievert 6, Dylan DeShazer 5, Madden Rutherford 2, Desmond Doles 2. Totals: 23-52 9-17 56. 3-point field goals: 1, (DeShazer)

LOU	8	15	13	7 –
43				
BOSP	20	18	24	13 –
75				

LOUISBURG: Desmond Doles 13, Ben Minster 11, Dylan DeShazer 7, Dalton Ribordy 4, Brayden Gage 3, Justin Sievert 3, Madden Rutherford 2. Totals: 15-40 12-19 43. 3-point field goals: 1, (DeShazer)

Spring Hill trips up Lady Cats



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher goes up for a layup Wednesday during the Lady Cats' game at Spring Hill. Belcher scored a team-high 13 points in the 70-37 loss.

SPRING HILL – It was a game the Louisburg High School girls basketball team wanted to quickly forget.

The Lady Cats had a tough time stopping a Spring Hill team that lived in the paint as the Broncos handed Louisburg a 70-37 loss Wednesday at Spring Hill High School.

It was game that featured mistakes on both ends of the floor

for Louisburg, but if there is a positive, those mistakes are all correctable.

"We had breakdowns and those are things we are going to have to get back into practice and work on," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "Part of it is some inexperience, at this point though, we have to start to reduce that. We are no longer a senior, junior, a sophomore or a freshman. We are a group of basketball players and we each have individual jobs to do.

"This is a good group of kids and they are going to work their tails off. They want to do the right things and they care about each other. This bothers them and I am going to be anxious to see how they respond."

Spring Hill jumped out to a big lead early and never let up and it led Louisburg 36-19 at halftime. After an even third quarter, the Broncos went on a 21-4 run in the fourth to seal the win.

The Broncos were able to run a lot of motion offense, which led to a lot of easy points near the basket, and Louisburg couldn't get enough stops early on in the game.

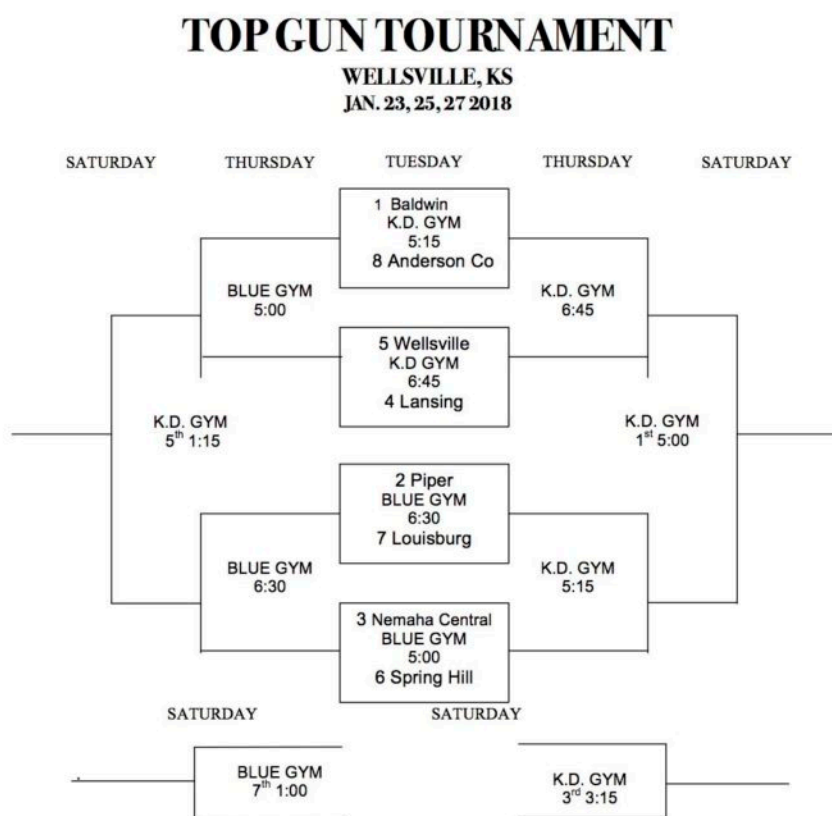
"They are a good team, but we didn't rise to the occasion of playing a good team," Lowry said. "We have some things to figure out about ourselves and each other. We play in one of the strongest tournaments in the state next week we are going to find out a lot about ourselves and how we will respond to how we played against Spring Hill."

Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher led the Lady Cats in scoring with 13 points, including three 3-pointers, and also added seven rebounds.

Forward Carson Buffington was one point away from another double-double for Louisburg as he finished with nine points to go along with a team-high 10 rebounds. Sophomore Haley Cain and Madilyn Melton added five rebounds in the loss, and senior

guard Isabelle Holtzen had a team-high four assists.

This week will present several challenges for the Lady Cats as they compete in the Top Gun Tournament at Wellsville High School beginning Tuesday. Louisburg is the No. 7 seed and will open with No. 2 Piper, which is currently undefeated on the season. The Lady Cats will also play on Thursday and Saturday.



The top team is considered the home team and will wear their white uniforms.

Along with Piper, which is ranked No. 3 in Class 4A-Division I, is Baldwin (No. 1 in Class 4A-DII), Lansing (No. 1 in 5A) and Nemaha Central (No. 3 in 3A).

"It is a fantastic midseason tournament just looking at the teams that will be there," Lowry said. "There is one of the best teams in 3A there in Nemaha Central. Baldwin and Piper are undefeated in 4A, then you mix in a Lansing team that is ranked No. 1 in 5A. Wellsville and Spring Hill are really nice teams too. It is an incredible field of teams and it will be a fun one to be a part of."

LOU	9	12	12	4	–
37					
SH	18	18	13	21	
– 70					

LOUISBURG (4-6): Bailey Belcher 13, Carson Buffington 9, Carlee Gassman 5, Isabelle Holtzen 4, Haley Cain 3, Sydni Keagle 2, Madilyn Melton 1. Totals: 11-58 10-26 37. 3-point field goals: 5, (Belcher 3, Buffington 2)

Lady Cats fall short at De Soto



Louisburg sophomore Carlee Gassman drives to the basket for a layup Friday against De Soto. Louisburg came up short in a 54-40 loss at De Soto High School.

DE SOTO – Going on the road in the Frontier League is difficult enough on normal nights, but the Louisburg girls basketball team found itself down a starter for Friday's contest at De Soto.

The Lady Cats were without senior captain Isabelle Holtzen, who was competing at the Class 4A state debate tournament, and they had to find a way to make up for her production.

De Soto proved to be too much for Louisburg on both sides of the floor as Louisburg fell, 54-40, and the Lady Cats are now 1-3 in Frontier League play and 4-5 overall.

"Our rotation was a little shorter and some girls were on the floor a little longer than maybe I want them to be," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "It is what it is and the next girl has to be ready to go and be ready to play. That is why we work as hard as we do in practice, so when we have a situation like that, they are prepared.

"We were kinda flat. We talk a lot about adversity, and the girls didn't lay down or quit and they kept battling. This is a journey that we are on and we have to have people that are stepping up at different times and doing more and learning more. This is still part of that learning process for us, even a game like this."

De Soto took control of the game early on. The two teams were tied at 5-all early, but De Soto went on a 10-4 run to end the first quarter. The Lady Cats couldn't get in a rhythm offensively in the second quarter and De Soto built a 31-16 halftime lead.



Sophomore Sydni Keagle goes up for two points on Friday in De Soto.

Louisburg couldn't trim the De Soto lead to single digits in the second half as it shot 31 percent for the game.

"We did a lot of stuff to ourselves," Lowry said. "De Soto is a good team, they were well-coached and they were physical. It wasn't anything that we weren't prepared for, but we just didn't execute as well as we should have.

"That is a mentality thing and we just have to be better. We just have to be able to finish some of those shots and watching the ball go through the basket is just about mentality."

Lady Cat junior Carson Buffington recorded a double-double to lead Louisburg with 11 points and 10 rebounds. Sophomore forward Haley Cain also scored in double figures with 10

points.

Freshman Madilyn Melton added nine points in the loss and fellow freshman Alyse Moore was second on the team with eight rebounds.

Louisburg will try and get back on the winning track Wednesday when it travels to Spring Hill for a 6 p.m. contest.

LOU	9	7	11	13
– 40				
DES	15	16	10	13 –
54				

LOUISBURG (4-5): Carson Buffington 11, Haley Cain 10, Madilyn Melton 9, Carlee Gassman 4, Brooklyn Diederich 3, Sydni Keagle 2, Bailey Belcher 1. Totals: 15-49 6-21 40. 3-point field goals: 4, (Melton 2, Buffington, Diederich)

De Soto's fast start helps down Louisburg boys



Louisburg junior Dylan DeShazer stretches out for a rebound Friday at De Soto High School. De Soto connected on seven first half 3-pointers on its way to a 65-48 win over the

Wildcats.

DE SOTO – It became apparent early on that there wasn't much that Louisburg could do to stop De Soto offensively.

De Soto connected on seven 3-pointers in the first half alone, and Louisburg couldn't keep up in a 65-48 loss Friday at De Soto High School. It marked another loss on the Wildcats' resume, but it was the best offensive performance Louisburg has gone against in its first nine games.

"They can really shoot it," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said of De Soto. "Their guards are really good and we knew that coming in. This time they were hot and that is a good basketball team we just played. They move without the basketball very well, they are very unselfish and very patient. It is all good qualities you want to see in a team and we can learn from that. I am trying to gain some of those characteristics that they have. They had a very good shooting night though."

On the night, De Soto finished with nine 3-pointers and shot 43 percent from the field, compared to just 33 percent for Louisburg. The Wildcats struggled to get much going offensively, but were able to slow down De Soto for a few minute stretch in the second half.

The two teams were basically even on the scoreboard in the second half, but Louisburg couldn't overcome De Soto's 35-19 lead at halftime.

"We went a little zone, and that slowed them down at least a little bit for a few possessions, and then they figured it out," Pfannenstiel said. "The problems with zones, especially with a team like us that doesn't play it very much, is you can kind of get lethargic. A team that can shoot the ball like that, it doesn't really matter if you go man or zone."

Louisburg had a pair of players score in double figures as senior Ben Minster led the way with 11 points and fellow senior Justin Sievert added 10 points and a team-high seven rebounds.



Sophomore Madden Rutherford drives around a De Soto player toward the basket Friday in De Soto.

Senior Desmond Doles finished with nine points in the loss, while junior Brayden Gage and senior Dalton Ribordy each scored six. Ribordy also pulled down six rebounds.

"We were better offensively in the second half and started working the ball inside more, but we have to find a way to get the ball into the basket," Pfannenstiel said. "I think a lot of that is sharing the ball more. I think sometimes we try to do a little too much 1-on-1 stuff and we could get easier

looks at the basket if we do a better job of cutting and moving without the basketball.”

Although Louisburg was never within striking distance of a win, Pfannenstiel was still able to learn some things about his team.

“It was a good environment,” he said. “A couple of our guys got knocked around a little bit and that kind of sparked our guys. But it shouldn’t take us getting run over to spark that warrior mentality that it takes to compete every possession. I did see that we do have that side of us, which is good, but we have to do that every single possession. That is what it is going to take in this league because everyone in this league is good.”

The Wildcats will try and get on the winning track this week when they take part in the Baldwin Invitational Tournament beginning on Tuesday. Louisburg, which is the No. 7 seed, will face No. 2 Bonner Springs at 7 p.m., Tuesday.

The Wildcats will play again Friday and Saturday with times to be announced.

LOU	9	10	11	18 –
48				
DES	19	16	15	15 –
65				

LOUISBURG (1-8): Ben Minster 11, Justin Sievert 10, Desmond Doles 9, Brayden Gage 6, Dalton Ribordy 6, Madden Rutherford 3, Noah Hill 2, Dylan DeShazer 1. Totals: 18-54 9-17 48. 3-point field goals: 3, (Sievert 2, Minster).

Wildcats can't keep up with Frontenac in road loss



Louisburg junior Kohl Vogel puts up a 3-pointer late in the game Tuesday at Frontenac High School. The Wildcats came up short in a 60-47 loss to the Raiders.

FRONTENAC – Like most outings this season, the Louisburg boys basketball team got off to a great start offensively during Tuesday's road contest in Frontenac.

And just like those other outings, the Wildcats had a tough time sustaining its momentum. Louisburg couldn't stay with Frontenac thanks to a four-point third quarter in a 60-47 loss to the Raiders.

"Our guys are playing hard, but we have to place more of an emphasis on playing hard each and every possession," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "There were key times in the game where we got out hustled. Every possession is important, and that's something we are learning and trying to build on."

Louisburg (1-7) got out to a great start offensively in the first quarter as it took a 19-15 lead following a 3-pointer Justin Sievert. In the final 10 seconds of the frame, Frontenac scored four straight points to tie the game and used

that momentum to build a 39-30 lead at halftime.

Frontenac shot 50 percent from the field for the game and knocked down seven 3-pointers on the night. The Raiders also forced 21 Louisburg turnovers and turned those into 24 points.



Senior Justin Sievert puts up a shot in the lane Tuesday at Frontenac.

Despite outscoring Frontenac in the fourth quarter, it wasn't enough for the Wildcats as they managed just four points in the third quarter and trailed by as many as 17 points at one time.

Sievert and junior Dylan DeShazer led Louisburg in scoring with nine points each and DeShazer pulled down five rebounds.

Senior Ben Minster finished with eight points and had a team-high four steals, while junior Brayden Gage and senior Dalton

Ribordy each tallied seven. Ribordy led Louisburg with seven rebounds on the night.

Louisburg will try and snap its five-game losing streak Friday when it travels to De Soto. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOU	19	11	4	13 –
47				

FRON	19	20	11	10 – 60
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LOUISBURG (1-7): Justin Sievert 9, Dylan DeShazer 9, Ben Minster 8, Brayden Gage 7, Dalton Ribordy 7, Desmond Doles 6, Madden Rutherford 1. Totals: 18-41 7-12 47. 3-point field goals: 4, (Gage 2, Sievert, Ribordy).

Defense ignites Louisburg to win over Frontenac



Senior Isabelle Holtzen goes up for two of her 13 points during Tuesday's road contest at Frontenac High School. Holtzen and the Lady Cats forced 22 Frontenac turnovers en route to a 64-56 win.

FRONTENAC – The Louisburg girls basketball team picked the right time to have its best offensive game of the season when it hit the road Tuesday in Frontenac.

As good as the Lady Cats' offense was, their defense might have been even better.

Louisburg forced 22 turnovers on its way to a 64-56 victory over Frontenac and evened their record to 4-4 on the season. The Lady Cats used a lot of those turnovers and turned them into offense as they simply outran the Raiders to a win.

"We practice that way," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "After getting back off break and just getting back into the gym all together, the girls have practiced great. I expected that effort and toughness on the road against a really good team at their place and it is never easy to play down here."

The Lady Cats employed a frantic-style defense that allowed them to trap the Frontenac guards and it ended up forcing 19 steals. Those steals became points for Louisburg on the other end as it held the lead for 29 of the game's 32 minutes.

Louisburg pushed the ball offensively for many of those 32 minutes and got easy transition baskets thanks to its frenetic pace.

"We did some different things defensively that we have been working on and that we have been putting in over break," Lowry said. "There is a lot of breakdown stuff that we have to clean up and fix, but overall I love the effort, the toughness and we have some athletic girls that can cover some ground. We have some freshmen that are still figuring some stuff out, but overall I was really happy with it.

"I thought we did a really good job of pushing the ball up the floor and we were the aggressor on defense for the most part. When we weren't, that is when they got back in the game a little bit and we have to stay the aggressor and use our speed

and athleticism to our advantage.”

It was a team effort as Louisburg had four players in double figures for the first time this season.

Junior Carson Buffington had a big night as she recorded a double-double with 12 points and 12 rebounds to go along with five steals. Senior guard Bailey Belcher led the Lady Cats in scoring with 14 points and also finished with six rebounds, four assists and three steals.

Isabelle Holtzen, another senior guard, was a catalyst on the defensive end for Louisburg as she joined Buffington with a team-high five steals. She also scored 13 points and added four rebounds and four assists.



Freshman Alyse Moore goes up for a layup Tuesday against Frontenac.

Sophomore Carlee Gassman gave the Lady Cats some big minutes as well with 12 points, seven rebounds and three steals. Sophomore Haley Cain added six points in the win, while freshman Alyse Moore finished with nine rebounds.

“(Frontenac) played a lot of zone against us, so our guards had to be solid,” Lowry said. “They were all good, and we do have some that are still learning, but they are learning from some great upperclassmen.”

The game didn’t get off to the start the Lady Cats had hoped as Frontenac scored the first five points of the game to take a quick lead, but the Louisburg defense quickly changed that around.

Louisburg went on a 15-3 run in which it didn’t allow a field goal. Buffington hit two 3-pointers during the run and Melton got it started with a 3-pointer of her own. Gassman and Holtzen each added baskets to help give Louisburg a 19-13 lead going into the second quarter.

The Lady Cats built a 14-point lead midway through the second and eventually led 35-26 at halftime.

Frontenac made a mini-run to start the third quarter and trimmed the Lady Cat lead to five, but Louisburg went on a 9-2 run to end the frame and took back its 14-point advantage.

The Raiders were able to crawl back and get within four with two minutes left in the game, but the Lady Cats took advantage of their free-throw opportunities down the stretch to hold on.

“We weren’t very good that first three minutes of the third quarter, but with all that being said, they never got too low and they didn’t get too high either,” Lowry said. “They were level throughout and did the things that I was asked them to do.”

Louisburg will try for its second straight win Friday when it

travels to De Soto. Varsity is set to tipoff at approximately 6 p.m.

LOU	19	16	15	14 –
64				
FRON	13	13	10	20 – 56

LOUISBURG (4-4): Bailey Belcher 14, Isabelle Holtzen 13, Carson Buffington 12, Carlee Gassman 12, Haley Cain 6, Alyse Moore 4, Madilyn Melton 3. Totals: 25-70 9-21 64. 3-point field goals: 5, (Buffington 2, Belcher, Gassman, Melton).

Despite fast start, Wildcats fall to Baldwin



Louisburg senior Desmond Doles drives to the basket Thursday during the Wildcats' 54-52 home loss to Baldwin. Doles finished the game with eight points and three steals.

The Louisburg boys basketball team couldn't have asked for a better start in its first game back from the holidays.

The Wildcats were looking to snap a 3-game losing streak

Thursday when they hosted Baldwin. They were well on their way to doing that as they scored 23 points in the first quarter and built a double-digit lead.

Everything was going as planned – that is until the second quarter.

Louisburg's offense cooled off in the final three periods and Baldwin took advantage to pull out a 54-52 win over the Wildcats.

"It is tough because it is a home game and it would have been good for our guys to get a win just to show that we have made progress," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "I do feel that we are getting better and our guys could have used a win, but you don't just get wins, you have to earn them. Baldwin just made more plays than us. I think we can build from this.

"I feel a lot more positive about this than maybe I have in some of our other games and I thought we fought hard for four quarters. We did some good things, especially coming off of break."

Louisburg (1-6) used a 10-0 run to get going in the first quarter, thanks to baskets from five different players in Desmond Doles, Justin Sievert, Dylan DeShazer, Ben Minster and Brayden Gage. Ben Minster and Dalton Ribordy added a pair of baskets later and Louisburg had a 17-6 advantage.



Senior Ben Minster drives in for a layup Thursday against Baldwin.

The Wildcats were up by 10 to start the second quarter, but the Bulldogs whittled away at the Louisburg lead. Louisburg took a 31-26 advantage into halftime, but Baldwin jumped out to a 9-2 run to start the second half and eventually grabbed the lead midway through the third quarter.

Baldwin never relinquished it, but the Wildcats did make it interesting. Down by three with just over two minutes left in the contest, Minster stole a Baldwin pass and scored to cut the Bulldog lead to one.

Fouls became a problem for Louisburg in the fourth quarter, but in a different way. The Wildcats didn't commit a team foul until under two minutes left in the game, which meant they had to foul Baldwin several times to get up to seven team fouls to put Baldwin on the free-throw line.

Louisburg got the ball back on a few different occasions to either tie the game or take the lead, but its shots couldn't find the bottom of the net. Baldwin led by five with under three seconds left, when Sievert hit the Wildcats' lone 3-pointer of the game to cut it to two, but Louisburg couldn't get another opportunity.

"The second quarter was kind of tough because we gave them some life by not scoring for a while," Pfannenstiel said. "We scored 23 in the first quarter and I said something about that to the guys in the huddle and I probably shouldn't have because I think that jinxed us. Right after that, we struggled to score and gave them some momentum.

"(Baldwin) knocked down some shots and made a few more plays. We stress how important every possession is, offensively and defensively, because you never know. We lost by two points and if we just make a couple more plays that could have made a difference."

Ribordy led Louisburg with 12 points to go along with three blocks, while Minster also scored in double figures with 10. Doles finished with eight points and a team-high three steals. DeShazer added a team-high six rebounds.

Louisburg will try and bounce back Tuesday when it travels to Frontenac. The Wildcats will hit the road again Friday when it goes to De Soto.

LOU	23	8	10	11 –
52				
BAL	13	13	18	10 –
54				

LOUISBURG (1-6): Dalton Ribordy 12, Ben Minster 10, Desmond Doles 8, Justin Sievert 7, Madden Rutherford 5, Dylan DeShazer

4, Brayden Gage 2, Kohl Vogel 2. Totals: 23-58 3-5 52. 3-point field goals: 1, (Sievert)

Louisburg girls fall to No. 1 team in state



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher drives around a Baldwin player to the basket during Thursday home game against Baldwin. The Lady Cats fell to Baldwin, 72-42. Baldwin is currently ranked No. 1 in Class 4A-Division II.

In its first game back from the holiday break, Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry figured his team would have a little rust.

It certainly didn't help that the Lady Cats had to go up against the No. 1 team in Class 4A-Division II.

Louisburg hosted Baldwin on Thursday and the Bulldogs put up a performance worthy of their ranking as they handed Louisburg 72-42 loss.

"They are obviously a very good basketball team, and well-deserving of their ranking," Lowry said of Baldwin. "At the same time, we have to do more. We can do more and we are

capable of that. We talked to the girls about what a great opportunity and challenge this was going to be for us. We also talked about playing through adversity against the No. 1 team in Division II. We are on a journey, and this is part of a process, and we are going to get better from this.”

The two teams were in a close game midway through the first quarter before Baldwin went on an 11-1 run to take a 25-12 lead going into the second quarter. The Bulldogs employed a full-court press against Louisburg and didn’t allow the Lady Cats to get in a rhythm.

Baldwin eventually took a 49-22 lead at halftime, but Louisburg didn’t back down and made a little run in the second half. The Lady Cats opened the third quarter on an 8-0 run to cut the lead down to 19, but couldn’t get any closer.

“The start of the third quarter is one of the most important parts of the game,” Lowry said. “I think the girls took to heart about what I said at halftime. I love seeing that from the girls, but at the same time, as the game went on we just got wore down and it is what it is.”

Although the Lady Cats fell short, Lowry liked the effort he saw from his players. Senior Isabelle Holtzen and Madilyn Melton each finished with a team-high 11 points and senior Bailey Belcher added seven points and five rebounds.

Junior forward Carson Buffington also recorded six points and a team-high seven rebounds in the loss.

“It was the first game after break, so that added a little more difficulty to it,” Lowry said. “Some of the individual effort was really good and I was extremely proud of some individuals. Collectively, though, we have to do more. I thought Isabelle, Carson, Bailey and Haley (Cain) gave every ounce they had. They never quit. Even with a minute left in the game, you saw players like Isabelle dive on the floor for loose balls and I was really glad to see that.”



Louisburg freshman Madilyn Melton battles Baldwin's Reilly Stewart for position Thursday in Louisburg. Melton tied for a team-high 11 points.

Junior Kayla Kurtz led Baldwin in scoring with 20 points and senior Abby Ogle added 16 points in the win. Ogle also scored her 1,000th career point against Louisburg.

"She has been a really nice player since she was a freshman and it is finally nice now that she is a senior," Lowry said. "They have a lot of good upperclassmen and (Baldwin coach) Bob (Martin) and his crew and have done a really nice job and have for many years."

Louisburg will try and get back on track Tuesday when it travels to Frontenac. The Lady Cats will also hit the road later in the week when they go to De Soto on Friday.

LOU 42	12	10	17	3 –
BAL 72	25	24	18	5 –

LOUISBURG (3-4): Isabelle Holtzen 11, Madilyn Melton 11, Bailey Belcher 7, Carson Buffington 6, Megan Foote 4, Haley Cain 2, Alyse Moore 1. Totals: 13-43 11-17 42. 3-point field goals: 5, (Melton 2, Belcher, Buffington, Holtzen).

OPINION: 2017 was a banner year for Louisburg



Having the opportunity to cover Louisburg High School athletics, for what has been almost 10 years now, I have seen a lot of different highs and lows.

I have been lucky enough to cover state championship teams and watched several athletes perform at the highest level. However, this last year has to be one for the record books when it comes to success at Louisburg High School.

For Wildcat athletics, 2017 was a banner year for many reasons.

Louisburg qualified for the state tournament in three different sports – volleyball, girls soccer and boys basketball – and the first two each placed in the top four.

The volleyball team was just a point away from winning the school's first state title after the Lady Cats finished second to defending state champion Rose Hill, and tied for the best finish in school history.

The Wildcat girls soccer team qualified for the state semifinals in just its second year of existence and suffered a heartbreaking 1-0 loss in the semifinals to eventually take fourth overall.

In boys basketball, the Wildcats qualified for the state tournament for the first time in 12 years despite getting knocked out in the first round by defending state champion Bishop Miege.

Most schools would love to have that success with their athletic programs, but for Louisburg, that was just the tip of the iceberg. As special as the seasons were for those three programs, the Wildcats also thrived in a few other sports.

Louisburg's cross country program, which has been around for 19 years, had the best season in its history – by far. Not only did the Wildcats have three state medalists for the first time ever, but it had a year that featured the school's first female league champion in Trinity Moore and the best league finish by a male, Wyatt Reece, who took second.

Tim Smith continued the Wildcat success as he became the school's first regional cross country champion, and Moore, Reece and Smith each went on to win a state medal. Moore and Smith also set school records for the fastest time.

The Wildcats also qualified the girls team for the first time in school history as Moore, Carlee Gassman, Reilly Alexander, Isabelle Holtzen, Kaitlyn Lewer, Payton Shaffer and Emily

Williams took third at regionals and eventually 10th at state.

The Wildcat wrestling team tied a program best by qualifying eight for the state tournament and came back with a medal by Ryan Adams, who finished sixth.

Louisburg's track and field team persevered and qualified for state in 10 events and had two regional champions in Quinn Rigney and Chris Williams. Isabelle Holtzen and T.J. Dover each brought home their first state track medals.

The boys soccer team was one goal away from making its second consecutive trip to the state semifinals, but their run was halted by a loss to McPherson in state quarterfinals. Still, the Wildcats won a regional title, which was the seventh in team history.

Freshman Calvin Dillon led the Wildcat golf team this past year and recorded the program's first state medal in more than decade as he took 10th overall.

All these things and more I described in detail when releasing my top 10 stories of the year and what a year it was.

Obviously, I haven't had a chance to look through all the results, but I can't imagine a more successful year for LHS when you are talking about athletics. There may have been years in the 70s, 80s and 90s that I don't know about, but I find it hard to imagine one that tops 2017.

Sure, the 2010-11 school year featured two state championship teams in football and boys track and field and that was a fantastic time to be Wildcat, but as far as calendar years go, 2017 was one to remember.

Even outside the sports world, Louisburg High School put together many great accomplishments as the Wildcat Marching Band was selected to participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade and put on a great show for the nation on New Year's

Day.

Then in October, the FFA Food Science team of Hallie Hutsell, Faith Seuferling, Addie Katzer and Hattie Harris won a national championship, while Hutsell and Seuferling placed second and third in the nation, respectively.

I don't get a lot of opportunities to cover programs or groups outside the sports world, but these are fantastic accomplishments and deserved to be recognized.

For me, 2017 was a whirlwind. It seemed around every corner, school history was being made and there aren't many schools around the state that can boast about the successes Louisburg has experienced.

It was an honor for me to cover many of these historic runs in Wildcat history and I hope you all realize how lucky you have it. Louisburg is a school filled with great coaches who care about the student athletes.

Believe me, I know how fortunate I am to be able to be a part of something special and this place is it. If 2018 is half of what 2017 was, it will be a fun ride.

I can't wait for what 2018 has in store and hopefully you all will follow along to see what these Wildcats can accomplish.

Top 10 Stories of 2017



It was a successful, and eventful, 2017 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program. This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and several programs brought back state hardware to Louisburg.

Below are the Top 10 stories from 2017, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

This year was a blast to cover and I was blessed to have the opportunity to go along for the ride with many of these. As much fun as it was, I can't wait for 2018 to begin. Looking forward to it!



Louisburg's Calvin Dillon earns his first state

golf medal as a freshman as he took 10th at the state meet.

10. Dillon medals at state golf

Louisburg freshman Calvin Dillon certainly didn't play like a first-year varsity player as he led the Wildcat golf team all season. Dillon finished 10th at the Class 4A state tournament in Wamego and became the first Wildcat golfer to earn a state medal in several years.

Dillon made the state tournament alongside senior Ty Martin, who finished in 28th place overall after he earned his second straight state appearance.



Isabelle Holtzen earned her first state medal in the pole vault as she took seventh back in May.

9. Holtzen, Dover earn first state track medals



T.J. Dover finished eighth in the discus at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita.

Junior Isabelle Holtzen and senior T.J. Dover both ended their track and field seasons on a good note as they earned state medals in late May at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita.

Holtzen had a big season in the pole vault as she ended seventh in the state after she cleared 10 feet. Earlier in the year, Holtzen broke a 15-year old school record in the pole vault as she topped 11-1.

Dover made his second consecutive trip to the state meet and finished strong in his final high school performance. He took eighth with a throw of 143-4.

The Wildcats qualified for the state meet in 10 events and had two regional champions in junior Quinn Rigney (100-meter dash) and sophomore Chris Williams (400 dash).



8. Frontier League adds three schools, says goodbye to another

For the Frontier League, 2017 brought a lot of changes to a league that has featured seven schools for the last several years.

Starting in the 2018-19 season, the Frontier League will add three new schools. Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs each accepted invitations to join the league last April to create a 10-team league.

It is didn't stay 10 teams for long as De Soto will make the move to a different league during the same season. The current league will be made up of nine schools: Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Spring Hill, Baldwin, Eudora, Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs.



7. Louisburg boys soccer wins regional crown

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team was trying to make its second consecutive trip to the state tournament this past season and the Wildcats almost got there.

Although the Wildcats fell to McPherson in the state quarterfinal game in late October, Louisburg put together another successful season that included a 1-0 victory over Independence in the regional championship game.

The Wildcats finished the season with a 13-6 record and earned the school's first Frontier League championship since 2010.



Junior Ryan Adams celebrates after he earned a state medal at 138 pounds.

6. Wildcat wrestling qualifies eight for state, Adams picks up medal

The Louisburg High School wrestling team had an historic season as it qualified eight for the Class 4A state wrestling tournament, which tied for the most in school history, during the regional tournament in February at Frontenac High School

Thad Hendrix (106 pounds), Nathan Keegan (120), Kyle Allen (126), Ryan Adams (138), Dylan Meyer (145), Austin Moore (170), Austin Raetzel (195) and Mason Koechner (285) all competed at the state tournament in Salina.

Adams earned the school's lone state medal on the season as he finished sixth overall at 138 pounds.



Louisburg head football and boys track and field coach Gary Griffin retired from the district after 32 years. It was one of many changes for the LHS athletic department.

5. LHS goes through staff/coaching changes

The 2017-18 school year looked a lot of different than in previous years for Louisburg High School athletics.

LHS saw a lot of changes in its coaching staff and in the administration as well. Activities director Darin Gagnebin stepped down and was replaced by current director Jeremy Holloway.

In the coaching department, former head and assistant football Gary Griffin retired from the district after 32 years with the high school and Louisburg promoted assistant Robert Ebenstein

as the new Wildcat head football coach.

Jason Nelson resigned his post as the Wildcat head boys basketball coach and he was replaced with Ty Pfannenstiel. Griffin and Greg Darrington also resigned as the boys and girls track and field coaches, and were replaced by Andy Wright (boys) and John Reece (girls).



Louisburg cross country runners (from left) Tim Smith, Trinity Moore and Wyatt Reece each ended the season with a state medal.

4. LHS cross country earns three state medals, qualifies girls team

The Louisburg High School cross country team might have had

its best season in its 19-year history in 2017.

The Wildcats thrived against some of the state's best competition as seniors Wyatt Reece, Tim Smith and sophomore Trinity Moore all earned state medals at the Class 4A meet in Wamego.

Moore recorded the highest finish for a female runner in school history as she finished fifth in the state and broke her own school record in the process with a time of 19 minutes and 47 seconds.

In the boys race, Reece picked up his first state medal with a time of 17 minutes and finished 11th overall. Smith, who won a regional title the week before, came in 15th with a time of 17:05. Smith was the first Wildcat to win a regional title in school history.

Louisburg also made history as the Wildcat girls team qualified for the state meet for the first time after they finished third at their regional in Burlington. Moore joined Isabelle Holtzen, Reilly Alexander, Carlee Gassman, Kaitlyn Lewer, Payton Shaffer and Emily Williams to make up the seven-member squad that finished 10th in the team standings at state.

Earlier in the year, Moore became the school's first Frontier League champion, while Reece recorded the highest league finish in boys history as he took second at the league meet.



3. Louisburg boys basketball earns first state tournament berth in 12 years

The season may not have started out the way the Louisburg boys basketball team would have liked, but it certainly finished on a positive note.

Louisburg knocked off rival Paola in the sub-state semifinals and then defeated Fort Scott in the championship game in early March to earn its first sub-state championship since 2005.

The Wildcats earned the No. 6 seed and squared off with eventual champion Bishop Miege at the Class 4A state tournament in Salina. The Stags ended the Wildcats' season with an 81-47 loss.



2. LHS girls soccer finishes fourth at state tournament

Louisburg's girls soccer program has only been around for two years, but the Wildcats have set high expectations from the beginning and that continued in 2017.

The Wildcats advanced to the Class 4-1A state semifinals for the first time in school history as they defeated Piper with a 2-1 victory in overtime. This victory came off their second consecutive regional title as they knocked off Bonner Springs.

At the state tournament, Louisburg faced off with Thomas More Prep and suffered a heart-breaking 1-0 loss in the semifinals. The Wildcats moved on to the third-place game against Maize South and eventually finished fourth overall.



1. Lady Cat volleyball ends season as state runner-up

The Louisburg High School volleyball team was just one point away from not only becoming the school's first state volleyball champion – but also the first female team to win a state title in Louisburg history.

As close as the Lady Cats got, they came up just short against defending state champion Rose Hill in late October at the Class 4A-Division I state championship. Louisburg fell 23-25, 25-10 and 29-27 in heartbreaking fashion to finish as the state runner-up.

Still, it was an impressive season for Louisburg volleyball as it finished with a 34-10 record. The Lady Cats reeled off wins over Basehor-Linwood, Bishop Miege and Rose Hill in pool play and then downed Wellington in the state semifinals.

The Lady Cats received several accolades as junior Anna Dixon

and senior Sophie McMullen earned first team all-state and all-league honors. Dixon was also named as the Co-Player of the Year in Class 4A-Division I.

Junior Carson Buffington was also named to the all-state tournament team with Dixon and McMullen.