

# Wildcats can't overcome Paola in rivalry battle



Louisburg senior Jayce Geiman puts up shot at home Friday during the Wildcats' game with Paola. The Wildcats fell 47-42 on Senior Night as Geiman, Grant Harding, Jake Hill, Sam Guetterman, T.J. Dover, Dalton Stone and Alex Seuferling were all honored prior to the game.

For the second time this season, the Louisburg boys basketball team had rival Paola where it wanted – tied or with the lead in the fourth quarter.

And for the second time, the Wildcats couldn't quite get over the hump. This time Paola handed Louisburg a 47-42 loss on Senior Night at Louisburg High School.

Along with the loss, the Wildcats and their fans also had to say goodbye to seven seniors as they played their final home contest. Grant Harding, Jayce Geiman, Dalton Stone, Sam Guetterman, T.J. Dover, Jake Hill and Alex Seuferling all had a chance to take the floor one last time.

"They are a group where I can bring my kids to practice if I need to and know they are in good hands," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "They are a good group of boys. The four years they have been tasked with helping change the mentality

of the program. I can get knit picky on them sometimes, and they have heard it all, but these are kids that would do anything for now or in the future.”

Down by two points, the Wildcats (8-12) had a chance to either tie or win the game with under a minute left and they called a timeout to set up a play.

Louisburg drew it up to go for the last shot but Guetterman lost the ball near the top of the key as the Wildcat bench thought he was fouled. Instead, it was a no call and turned into two free throws for Paola.

“That was a terrible no call on Sammy there,” Nelson said. “I thought he was fouled and it hurts because I had 100 percent certainty that either Stone, Jayce or Grant were going to slide to the ball and hit it. We asked the kids to give everything they have on senior night and see what happens. For the most part we did that.”



**Louisburg senior Sam Guetterman puts up a shot in the lane Friday against Paola.**

Louisburg built a 16-11 lead in the second quarter on a basket from junior Dalton Ribordy and a 3-pointer from Harding, but Paola battled back and eventually tied it at 18-all before halftime on a Noah Bell 3-pointer.

The lead changed hands six times and there were two ties in

the third quarter alone before Paola widened its lead to five late. Geiman knocked down a 3-pointer at the buzzer to cut the Paola lead to two.

Louisburg grabbed the lead in the fourth quarter on back-to-back baskets from Dover and another from Guetterman to go up 40-39. Bell hit a 3-pointer to give the Panthers the advantage again, before Dover tied it with another bucket.

Paola's Tanner Moala, who led all scorers with 14 points, put the Panthers up with under a minute left, which ended up being the game-winner.

"Defensively this was one of the better games we have played on the year with regard to pressuring the ball," Nelson said. "Even rebounding, we didn't give up much after the first quarter. Pressure was fantastic.

"Offensively, you see bits and pieces of it here and there. When we were running our half court sets and looking to attack, we didn't have many easy opportunities because they were sagging quite a bit inside. We were able to slide on the perimeter and get good looks, we just couldn't knock them down."

Harding was the lone Wildcat in double figures with 12 points, with nine of those coming in the first half. Guetterman and Dover each added eight points in the loss.

It won't be long before the Wildcats get another shot at the Panthers. Louisburg earned the No. 3 seed in the substate tournament and will face No. 2 Paola at 7:30 p.m., on Thursday at Spring Hill High School.

"We know them well obviously and I like Paola," Nelson said. "They have good kids and we have good kids. We play hard against each other and it is always a fun game. We have been working on some stuff in practice to use in substate, so we will see what happens."

<b>LOU</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8 –</b>
<b>42</b>				
<b>PAO</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>– 47</b>				

LOUISBURG (8-12): Grant Harding 12, Sam Guetterman 8, T.J. Dover 8, Jayce Geiman 6, Dalton Ribordy 4, Dalton Stone 2, Jake Hill 2. Totals: 17 3-7 42. 3-point field goals: 5, (Geiman 2, Harding 2, Guetterman)

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## Paola hands Lady Cats loss on Senior Night



Senior Paige Buffington prepares to give coach Shawn Lowry a hug as she comes off the floor for the final time at Louisburg High School on Friday against Paola. Buffington, along with Madisen Simpson, Emalee Overbay, Tayler Lancaster and Chloe Renner, were all honored during Senior Night ceremonies.

It is never easy when the Louisburg girls basketball team faces off with rival Paola.

Going into Friday's contest in Louisburg, Paola was ranked No.

6 in Class 4A-DI and has won four consecutive Frontier League crowns. Not even an emotional senior night could stop the Panthers from getting their fifth.

Paola defeated Louisburg 52-38 to wrap up their fifth league crown, but the Lady Cats didn't go down without a fight as their five seniors laid it all out there in what was their final home game.

Madisen Simpson, Paige Buffington, Emalee Overbay, Tayler Lancaster and Chloe Renner all said goodbye to their home fans for the final time. It was a group that helped their team to a 10-win season this year after coming off a three-win season a year ago.

"This was the first group of freshmen that I had as a head coach and to be seniors this year – they are just awesome," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I love them to death. For what they have given, what kind of leaders they become, and what kind of women they have grown into, they are special. What they have done doesn't leave with them, it stays in the program and passed on to the next group of Lady Cats."

Although Louisburg played with a lot of energy, it didn't necessarily turn into points for the Lady Cats. Louisburg managed just nine first-half points but only trailed by 12 points going into halftime.

The Lady Cats (10-10) found a groove offensively in the third quarter as they scored 18 points and were able get Paola's lead to single digits. Sophomore Kennia Hankinson was a spark off the bench late as she connected on back-to-back 3-pointers to help keep the game within reach.





**Sophomore Carson Buffington tries to drive to the basket Friday against Paola.**

“It was a great effort and they played with great toughness,” Lowry said of his team. “They didn’t play basketball very well with some of the things we wanted to do offensively, but that happens sometimes. I will take that toughness and effort all the time. It was a special night and everyone wanted to give a

lot, and they did. I am proud of them for that.”

Paola was able to put the game away in the fourth quarter as it ballooned its lead to 16 at one point. Panther senior Matti Morgan led all scorers with 16 points, including four 3-pointers.

Simpson led Louisburg in scoring with 13 points, while Hankinson added 10 in the loss.

Prior to the final buzzer, Lowry subbed out each senior for the last time – one by one – to let them be recognized. It was a group that left a lasting impression on their teammates.

“They are outsized, they are not the biggest, they are not the most athletic, but they play together and for each other,” Lowry said. “For where they have come from as freshmen to where they are now, it is great to see and it is so much fun to see kids develop that winning attitude. It is not just the basketball stuff, but it is seeing them mature and gaining leadership. You see them being unselfish and loving their teammates and I will take that every day of the week.”

Louisburg’s season is not over, however. The Lady Cats earned the No. 3 seed in their substate tournament and will travel to Spring Hill on Friday to face the No. 2 Broncos in a 7:30 p.m. tipoff. The winner of that game will play the winner of No. 1 Paola and No. 4 Fort Scott on Saturday.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>– 38</b>				
<b>PAO</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12 –</b>
<b>52</b>				

LOUISBURG (10-10): Madisen Simpson 13, Kennia Hankinson 10, Emalee Overbay 6, Tayler Lancaster 3, Carson Buffington 2, Chloe Renner 2, Paige Buffington 1, Isabelle Holtzen 1.



Totals: 12 10-19 38. 3-point field goals: 4, (Hankinson 3, Lancaster)

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## **Zone defense keys Lady Cats win over De Soto**



**Louisburg's Emalee Overbay (left) and Paige Buffington battles for a rebound with a De Soto player Tuesday at De Soto High School. The Lady Cats rallied from behind for a 34-31 victory.**

DE SOTO – For most of the first quarter, De Soto did whatever it wanted offensively against the Louisburg girls basketball team.

De Soto scored 13 points in the first five minutes, while the Lady Cats struggled to score. Louisburg decided to change to a 2-3 zone defense to help combat a De Soto lineup with three 6-foot players.

Not only did the zone work, it changed the entire game for the Lady Cats.

Louisburg overcome an early nine-point deficit to hold on for a 34-31 victory Tuesday at De Soto High School. The Lady Cats

held De Soto to just eight points in the second and third quarters combined, which helped them get back into the game.

“It did slow them down,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said of the zone. “The girls really communicate in it and they don’t let down when they play in a zone. They don’t sit back in it and they are aggressive. It really helped a bunch there and the kids did their jobs. When you are playing in a zone like that, each of those girls have to do their job and they have to do it with a lot of effort and heart. I thought they did that really well.”

The win pushed the Lady Cats’ record to 10-9 on the season and also cements their spot in the Frontier League. Louisburg will finish third place in league behind state-ranked Paola and Baldwin.

All this after coming off a year where they finished with just three wins.

“It was an ugly, scrappy, sloppy game on the road and it was an important league game for where we are going to finish out,” Lowry said. “We were able to secure third place in the game, and the girls knew that going in and they wanted that. We knew it was going to be tough to come in here and play, especially with their size and some of the things they can do. Our kids just battled and they didn’t quit, especially after De Soto got up on us early on. It was a good fight.”



**Senior Chloe Renner puts up a runner in the lane Tuesday in De Soto.**

The Lady Cats put the effort on the defensive end when their shots weren't falling. Louisburg struggled to get into a rhythm offensively, with just 10 points in the first half, but were able to make several key baskets and free throws with the game on the line.

Down 15-10, Louisburg senior Paige Buffington opened the second half with a 3-pointer and then senior Madisen Simpson scored on a drive to the basket and was fouled. She converted the 3-point play with the free throw and gave Louisburg a 17-16 lead.

Freshman Haley Cain scored on a shot close to the basket after an assist from sophomore Kennia Hankinson to give Louisburg a

three-point advantage it wouldn't relinquish.

De Soto would tie the game late in the third, but Simpson knocked in a 3-pointer to give the Lady Cats a lead going into the fourth.

Louisburg did the job at the free-throw line in the fourth quarter as it knocked down 10 of 12 opportunities to help secure the win. However, that didn't mean there weren't some tense moments at the end of the game.

De Soto cut the lead to one with 20 seconds left off a steal, but Paige Buffington found her sister Carson on a fast break opportunity to for a score to push the lead back to three.

Louisburg gave De Soto one last opportunity as it turned the ball over on De Soto's end of the floor with two seconds left, but a De Soto 3-pointer fell short.

Despite the struggles offensively in which the Lady Cats didn't have a player score in double figures, they were able to rally together and get a key road win.

"If calls aren't going your way, or your shots aren't falling, it can get you down, but these girls move right on to the next play and it is something we have worked on since day one," Lowry said. "It is on to the next play and you can't let something shake or rattle you. They did that tonight. They are excited in that locker room right now because they did it together. There was no great standout performance, it was a team effort."

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with nine points and Paige Buffington added eight. Carson Buffington and senior Emalee Overbay each had six rebounds to lead Louisburg.

Louisburg will try to end its season on a strong note as the Lady Cats will host No. 6 Paola on senior night in their final regular season game. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>- 34</b>				
<b>DES</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>- 31</b>				

LOUISBURG (10-9): Madisen Simpson 9, Paige Buffington 8, Carson Buffington 6, Emalee Overbay 4, Tayler Lancaster 3, Haley Cain 2, Chloe Renner 2. Totals: 8 14-20 34. 3-point field goals: 4, (P. Buffington 2, Simpson, Lancaster)

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## Louisburg boys fall to De Soto in road contest



Louisburg senior Jayce Geiman tries to dribble through a pair of De Soto defenders Tuesday at De Soto High School. The Wildcats fell to De Soto 57-40, which snapped a two-game winning streak.

DE SOTO – The first time the Louisburg boys basketball team squared off with De Soto, everything went its way in a 16-point victory at home.

The exact opposite happened Tuesday.

Louisburg traveled to De Soto for the return game and left with a 57-40 loss after winning its last two games at the buzzer. The Wildcats struggled to get much offense going from the start, and on the other end, had a hard time containing De Soto's Noah Watson.

Watson scored a game-high 25 points and pulled down 11 rebounds as he accounted for nearly half of his team's points.

De Soto opened the contest on a 11-4 run and led 17-8 at the end of the first quarter. Louisburg's deficit increased to 13 points halftime and the Wildcats (8-11) weren't able to get the De Soto lead under 10 the rest of the way.

Senior Grant Harding led Louisburg in scoring with 13 points and fellow senior T.J. Dover finished with eight points.

Louisburg will try to end its regular season on a positive note as the Wildcats will host rival Paola on Friday for senior night. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

Senior night ceremonies will be held in-between the varsity girls and boys contest.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10 -</b>
<b>40</b>				
<b>DES</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14 -</b>
<b>57</b>				

LOUISBURG (8-11): Grant Harding 13, T.J. Dover 8, Dalton Ribordy 6, Jayce Geiman 4, Jake Hill 4, Desmond Doles 3, Sam Guetterman 2. Totals: 18-45 4-12 40. 3-point field goals: none

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# Wildcats win at buzzer for second straight game



SPRING HILL – For the second time in three days, Louisburg had the ball in its hands with a chance to win.

And for the second time, the Wildcats found a way to pull out a win – at the buzzer.

With Louisburg down by one point in overtime, senior T.J. Dover pulled down a rebound off a Grant Harding miss and scored as the buzzer sounded to give the Wildcats a 43-42 win Friday at Spring Hill High School.

On Tuesday against Baldwin, the Wildcats had their first buzzer-beater win when junior Dalton Ribordy broke a tie game with a game-winner of his own.

“I would rather just do things right the first time and not get in these close games to where we have to win in the last second, but I really do love these boys,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “This is the second time they just decided they weren’t going to lose.”

Both teams struggled to break free from one another, especially in the overtime. Dover gave Louisburg a three-point lead in the extra period as he scored five straight points, but Spring Hill rallied back to eventually tie and take the lead on a free throw from Jordan Hoston with less than minute left.

Louisburg (8-10) called a timeout to set up a play with nine seconds left, and while it didn't work to perfection, it certainly did the job.

Senior Jayce Geiman got the ball on the inbound pass, sent it over Harding who drove the basket. The shot missed but Dover was there to corral the rebound and put it in off the backboard to give the Wildcats their second straight win.



**Louisburg senior T.J. Dover goes up for a shot Friday against Spring Hill. Dover finished with nine points, including the game-winner in overtime.**

“I was just looking for any loose ball,” Dover said. “We obviously just wanted to get the ball in Grant’s hands for the last shot and we were just looking to rebound if he missed and we were able to clean it up. The same thing happened in the

last game. Everyone is just stepping up now and it seems like it is coming together at the right time.”

It was a tough game offensively for both teams as they struggled to get into any kind of rhythm. The Wildcats shot just 39 percent from the field and also struggled from the free-throw line, where they were 4-for-13 for the game.

Still, the Wildcats made that one extra play they needed to secure a big win against a possible postseason opponent in two weeks when Louisburg returns to Spring Hill for the Class 4A substate tournament.

“Tuesday was a manifestation of poor defense, and this time was a manifestation of poor free-throw shooting,” Nelson said. “We were 4 of 13 from the line and most of them were missed front ends of one-and-ones.

“I thought we played fantastic at times in the second half and in overtime. The first half we were a little bit slow offensively, but credit to the kids they found a way to win.”

The lead changed hands four times in the second half and Louisburg turned a three-point deficit into a one-point lead late in the third quarter on a basket from Ribordy and senior Jake Hill.

Spring Hill grabbed the lead right back to start the fourth and built a 36-32 lead midway through the quarter, but the Wildcats cut into the lead on a made shot from Ribordy. Louisburg then used its defense late to tie the game when Geiman knocked a Spring Hill pass away and threw it to teammate Sam Guetterman who had an easy layup with a minute left.

The game eventually went into overtime and Dover scored seven of his nine points in the extra period, including the game-winner, to help give Louisburg the win.

Geiman and Harding each scored in double figures with 10 points to lead the Wildcats, while Ribordy added eight points and five rebounds.

“It was exciting,” Dover said. “It was huge to get this game, especially after losing to them the first time at our place. We know what we need to do to win, and now that we figured out how to win those games, it is all about fixing the small stuff like free throws and not giving up offensive boards. When we get that stuff figured out, then I am excited to see what we can do for substate.”

Louisburg will have two more regular season games left before the postseason and it begins Tuesday when it travels to De Soto. The Wildcats will host rival Paola on Friday for senior night.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>7 - 43</b>			
<b>SH</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>6 - 42</b>			

LOUISBURG (8-10): Grant Harding 10, Jayce Geiman 10, T.J. Dover 9, Dalton Ribordy 8, Sam Guetterman 4, Jake Hill 2. Totals: 18-46 4-13 43. 3-point field goals: 3, (Geiman 3)

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## **Rally falls short for Lady Cats in loss to Spring Hill**



**Louisburg senior Emalee Overbay stretches out for a rebound Friday at Spring Hill High School. Overbay and the Lady Cats fell 55-49**

SPRING HILL – Trailing at any point in the game has never really rattled the Louisburg High School girls basketball team.

The Lady Cats have found themselves behind in several game this season, but in many of those, Louisburg always found a way to rally.

Friday was no different.

Louisburg overcame a 14-point fourth quarter deficit on the road against Spring Hill to tie the game, but couldn't quite get over the hump in a 55-49 loss, despite putting together a 23-point fourth quarter.

“Defensively we made a little bit of an adjustment there in the fourth and we were able to pick up our intensity a little bit,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “We started battling for possessions and making them count. At the end of the day, we have to be better at our end of game situations. It is good one to learn from and we are going to be right back here in two weeks playing likely the same team.”

It was a good litmus test for the Lady Cats as they will return to Spring Hill on Mar. 3 for the substate tournament and have a reasonable chance of playing the Broncos again for the right to continue their season.



After an even first quarter, Louisburg (9-9) had a tough time handling the Bronco size in the second and third quarters. Spring Hill forward's Camryn Williams and Savannah Leaton, who both stand 6-foot-1 and 6-0, respectively, scored several easy baskets.

Williams was second on the Spring Hill team with 13 points, but the Broncos also got some production from the perimeter as point guard Meghan Goff led all scorers with 16 points.

"Their size was probably the biggest factor for most of the game," Lowry said. "Again, we have to play through that and we have all year. It was a little tougher for us this time, but I thought the girls battled hard and did some good things."

Goff hit a 3-pointer shortly before halftime to give Spring Hill a 10-point lead and the Broncos maintained the double digit lead into the fourth quarter.

It was then Louisburg started to attack the basket more and was able to get back in the game from the free-throw line. The Lady Cats hit 9 of 11 free throws in the final eight minutes.

The Lady Cats became more aggressive on both sides of the floor. With five minutes remaining, Paige Buffington connected on a 3-pointer, and then senior Emalee Overbay turned hustle into four points on one possession.

Overbay made a basket and was fouled with 4:35 left in game. She tried to convert the 3-point play from the free-throw line, however Overbay missed the shot, but got the rebound and went back up for two more points to cut the Spring Hill lead to five.

Sophomore Carson Buffington hit a basket and a pair of free throws to get it within one and senior Chloe Renner tied the game with a free throw with 2:39 remaining.

Unfortunately for Louisburg, Goff connected on back-to-back

shots to push the lead back to five and the Wildcats were unable to get any closer.

Carson Buffington recorded a double-double to lead the Lady Cats with 12 points and 14 rebounds, including six offensive boards. Paige Buffington also finished with 12 points and had six rebounds and three assists.

Senior Madisen Simpson also scored in double figures with 11 points and had seven rebounds and three steals.

Louisburg has one week left of its regular season as it travels to De Soto on Tuesday before returning home Friday against rival Paola for senior night.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>- 49</b>				
<b>SH</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>- 55</b>				

LOUISBURG (9-9): Paige Buffington 12, Carson Buffington 12, Madisen Simpson 11, Tayler Lancaster 4, Emalee Overbay 4, Haley Cain, Isabelle Holtzen 2, Chloe Renner 2. Totals: 14 18-24 55. 3-point field goals: 3, (P. Buffington 2, Simpson)

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## **Ribordy's buzzer-beater lifts Wildcats past Baldwin**



**Louisburg's Sam Guetterman (left) celebrates with Dalton Ribordy (middle) and Desmond Doles following Ribordy's buzzer-beater Tuesday that gave the Wildcats a 60-58 win over Baldwin.**

Less than two minutes into the game, Dalton Ribordy found himself on the bench with two fouls.

For the next 14 minutes of the first half, Ribordy had to sit as he watched his team dig themselves a double-digit hole against Baldwin on Tuesday. The Louisburg junior wanted to be out there to help in some way.

Ribordy got his chance later – and it was a big one.

After a couple missed shots, and with two seconds left in a tie game, Ribordy fought for an offensive rebound. He grabbed it and put up one last opportunity. That shot found the bottom of the net to give the Wildcats a 60-58 win at the buzzer at Louisburg High School.

“I didn't know how much time we had left when I got the shot off,” Ribordy said. “I just put it up and watched it rattle around a couple times. Then I heard the buzzer and saw it go in. I just felt – I don't even know what I felt actually. Then I see the student section run onto the floor and it was just an amazing feeling.”

It was a feeling many didn't think they were going to have, especially after the first half. Ribordy, Grant Harding and Desmond Doles all had to sit a majority of the half in foul

trouble and the Wildcat offense struggled to get going.



**Junior Dalton Ribordy puts up shot at the buzzer that gave the Wildcats the win Tuesday against Baldwin.**

Baldwin held Louisburg to seven points in the second quarter and took a 34-22 lead at halftime. Louisburg, which had beaten Baldwin three times earlier this season, found that a fourth time was going to be even tougher.

“The end was fantastic,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said.

“The first 16 minutes were terrible for us. We were slow on defense. Offensively, we were settling for shots and we were playing right into their zone. To our credit, once halftime was over our defensive intensity was much better, we blocked out much better, but most importantly we asserted ourselves offensively.”

The Wildcats (7-10) also got good production from their bench as different players had to step up as Louisburg had to play without starter Jayce Geiman and they had to battle foul problems.

Senior Jake Hill came off the bench to finish in double figures with 11 points, including a couple big baskets in the fourth quarter to help Louisburg battle back. Hill was one of three Wildcats to score in double figures as Harding led Louisburg with 16 points and Ribordy added 10.

Senior Dalton Stone started for this first time this season and finished with nine points on three 3-pointers.

“Jake had a good game and he is our best player against a zone, especially at getting the zone to collapse,” Nelson said. “He did fantastic at that.”

“This is probably our first attitude win of the year. This was our first win of the year where we basically weren’t going to be denied, which is refreshing to see.”





**Louisburg senior Jake Hill goes up for two of his 11 points off the bench Tuesday.**

Louisburg found itself down eight points late in the third quarter, but Hill scored a basket to end the frame and then another to begin the fourth quarter to cut Baldwin's lead to four. Louisburg eventually tied it up on four straight points from Harding with 3 minutes and 50 seconds left in the game.

The lead switched hands and was tied on two different



occasions before Harding tied the game at 58-all late in the game. After a Baldwin missed shot, it gave the Wildcats one final possession.

Harding drove the lane but his shot rimmed out. He then got his own rebound, but missed a second shot before Ribordy got the offensive board and the game-winner.

“It feels pretty good,” Ribordy said. “We came in at halftime and talked about things that we needed to fix. I felt like when we came out at the beginning of the third quarter, that is exactly what we did. We fought all the way back to the very last second and pulled out the win.

“After a win like this, I think it shows that no matter what the deficit is, we know we can come back if we play together as a team.”

Louisburg will try for back-to-back wins Friday when it travels to Spring Hill. The Wildcats and Broncos could meet a couple weeks later as they are in the same substate tournament.

“Spring Hill is always good at home,” Nelson said. “This game is big for our confidence and this will be a good barometer to see where we are at for substate.”

<b>LOU</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19 –</b>
<b>60</b>				
<b>BAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11 –</b>
<b>58</b>				

LOUISBURG (7-10): Grant Harding 16, Jake Hill 11, Dalton Ribordy 10, Dalton Stone 9, T.J. Dover 8, Sam Guetterman 6. Totals: 22-53 13-18 60. 3-point field goals: 4, (Stone 3, Harding)

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# Lady Cats nearly pull off upset of Baldwin



Louisburg sophomore Carson Buffington backs down a Baldwin player under the basket Tuesday during the Lady Cats' home game. Louisburg came up just short against No. 7 Baldwin in a 55-52 loss.

In prior years, a near upset of a state-ranked team might have been looked at as a moral victory for the Louisburg High School girls basketball team.

However, in Tuesday's close 55-52 loss at home to No. 7-ranked Baldwin, it was viewed a bit differently.

"I am so proud of them, but the girls don't like it right now," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "It is great to see that out of this group. It bothers them to lose on this floor, in front of our crowd. They are disappointed, but we are going to build from this."

The Lady Cats were on the verge of knocking off one of the top teams in the Frontier League thanks to their defense. Louisburg was able to hold Baldwin to just 20 first half points and took a 23-20 halftime lead.

The one player the Lady Cats weren't able to slow down was Baldwin's Abby Ogle. The Bulldog junior accounted for more than half of her team's points with a game-high 31.

Still, the Lady Cats were within striking distance in the game's final minute.

"They played fantastic," Lowry said. "I am as proud of them right now as I was when we took the floor. I knew what they were going to give tonight. We made some adjustments at practice to help slow Baldwin down and took that and implemented it in the game. We have some tough kids and they played hard."

Louisburg (9-8) found itself down five points with under three minutes left in the game, but senior Tayler Lancaster hit a 3-pointer to cut the lead to two. Sophomore Carson Buffington tied it with a shot after pulling down an offensive rebound with 1 minute and 45 seconds left.

About six seconds later, Baldwin took the lead again thanks to Ogle who hit a basket and was fouled to convert the three-point play. The Baldwin lead ballooned again to five thanks to another score from Ogle.

The Lady Cats were able to stay in the game after Baldwin missed six of its final eight free throws. Louisburg senior Madisen Simpson hit a pair of free throws with 14 seconds remaining to cut the deficit to two

Baldwin added a free throw to make it a three-point game with 12 seconds left, but the Lady Cats' attempt to tie the game came up short.

The Lady Cats fought the entire game as they used a big second quarter run to turn what was a big deficit into a halftime lead. Louisburg found itself down eight, but went on a 13-2 run to end the first half.



**Louisburg senior Chloe Renner drives to the basket Tuesday against Baldwin.**

Simpson made two 3-pointers and junior Isabelle Holtzen hit another 3-pointer during the run, while senior Chloe Renner hit a pair of free throws and freshman Haley Cain made a basket after an offensive rebound shortly before halftime.

“They are finding ways together, and different kids are doing different things, to stay in games maybe when things aren’t

going their way,” Lowry said. “They don’t freak out, or let down about the situation they are in, they just keep battling. They keep rebounding, they keep defending and they keep doing things offensively that they want to do.”

Louisburg extended that lead to six midway through the third quarter, before Baldwin would rally back.

Another positive for the Lady Cats is they converted 20 of 22 from the free-throw line and have shown improvement in that department as of late.

“We have to be good from the free-throw line, especially with some of the things we try to do offensively,” Lowry said. “We have made strides from the beginning of the season to where we are at now. The girls have bought in and are committed to get better. We have some younger kids who are getting better too.”

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 24 points, including four 3-pointers. Senior Paige Buffington also finished in double figures with 10 points – as she was 10-for-10 from the free-throw line.

Carson Buffington led Louisburg with 12 rebounds and Renner added eight.

Louisburg will travel to Spring Hill on Friday for what is an important game for postseason ramifications as both teams are in the same substate and could see each other in the first round. The two teams are 1-1 against each other so far this year.

“It will be a big one to see where the league will finish out and preparing for substate,” Lowry said. “The girls will be ready.”

BAL  
55

10

10

18

17 –

LOUISBURG (9-8): Madisen Simpson 24, Paige Buffington 10, Carson Buffington 6, Tayler Lancaster 5, Isabelle Holtzen 3, Chloe Renner 2, Haley Cain 2. Totals: 13 20-22 52. 3-point field goals: 6, (Simpson 4, Lancaster, Holtzen)

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## Quick start lifts Lady Cats past Ottawa



Louisburg junior Isabelle Holtzen goes up for two points during the Lady Cats' 48-34 win over Ottawa on Friday at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats won their third straight game and are now 9-7 on the season.

The Louisburg High School girls basketball team picked a good time of the season to go on a winning streak.

With only four games left in the regular season, the Lady Cats need every win they can get when it comes to the Frontier League and substate standings. Louisburg got another big win Friday when it hosted Ottawa and pulled away for a 48-34 win.

It was the third consecutive victory for the Lady Cats as they improved their record to 9-7 on the season and are now 6-2 in the Frontier League standings – currently in third place. Louisburg also has the second-best record in its substate.

“It was definitely big for substate and league standings,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “Each one is important now with substate and the end of the season getting closer and closer. With four games left, these ones at home are important for us and we take a lot of pride in these.”

The Lady Cats took a lot of pride in their defense early as Louisburg held Ottawa without a field goal and forced nine turnovers in the first quarter. Louisburg turned Ottawa over 15 times in the first half and had 11 steals for the game.

Louisburg countered that with a strong offensive start as it outscored Ottawa 18-2 in the first quarter and maintained the lead in the next three frames.

“We wanted to something a little bit different defensively and the girls did a great job with it,” Lowry said. “They executed everything that we wanted to do and it was good to see. There were a few breakdowns on some help defense stuff, but for the most part they stuck with the game plan and played really great defensively.”

Senior Paige Buffington and sophomore Carson Buffington got the Lady Cats going early as Paige hit a pair of 3-pointers and a basket, while Carson scored six points as the two combined for 14 of the team’s 18 points in the first quarter.





**Senior Paige Buffington rises up for a shot Friday against Ottawa.**

The Lady Cats took a 29-14 lead into halftime, and although their lead was never threatened, cooled off a little offensively in the third quarter with just four points. Louisburg picked it up back up in the fourth and secured the 14-point win.

“It is tough to play with a big lead sometimes,” Lowry said.

“We try to practice with a lot of intensity, so when we get into game situations then that will carry over. Still, there is probably a little bit of letdown and mental breakdown stuff when you have a lead like that. But if your starters don’t have that, then the players off the bench need to come on and pick them up and provide that intensity. That is a real positive about the rotation that we have right now.”

Senior Madisen Simpson was the lone Lady Cat to score in double figures with 11 points to go along with three steals, while senior Chloe Renner came off the bench to give Louisburg a spark with nine points, six rebounds and three assists.

Paige and Carson Buffington finished with eight points each, while Carson pulled down a team-high nine rebounds in the win. Senior Tayler Lancaster added seven points and a pair of steals.

Ottawa’s Ryen White scored 25 of her team’s 34 points.

Louisburg returns action Tuesday when it hosts No. 7 Baldwin and then will follow it up with a road game against Spring Hill on Friday.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15 –</b>
<b>48</b>				
<b>OTT</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>– 34</b>				

LOUISBURG (9-7): Madisen Simpson 11, Chloe Renner 9, Paige Buffington 8, Carson Buffington 8, Tayler Lancaster 7, Kennia Hankinson 3, Isabelle Holtzen 2. Totals: 20 3-7 48. 3-point field goals: 5, (P. Buffington 2, Simpson, Lancaster, Hankinson)

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# Hot-shooting Cyclones down Louisburg



Louisburg senior Sam Guetterman battles for a rebound with a pair of Ottawa players Friday at Louisburg High School. The Wildcats couldn't slow down Ottawa as they fell 75-60.

There weren't many teams that were going to slow down the Ottawa boys basketball squad Friday.

Louisburg gave it a try, but the Cyclones didn't miss much – more specifically the duo of Isaac McCullough and Perry Carroll. The Ottawa teammates scored 26 points each as the Cyclones downed the Wildcats 75-60 at Louisburg High School.

The Cyclones shot 59 percent from the field and knocked down eight 3-pointers as the Wildcats tried several different things to climb back in the game.

“We did everything well that was in our game plan except blocking out and preventing offensive rebounds,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “I think we gave up five or six offensive rebounds and that is too much. It hurt us in the first half, but aside from that we contested their shots.



“We went through progressions offensively and did some good things there, but I have never seen anything like that in what Ottawa did. We answered as best we could, but on a night like that, not much more we could do.”



**Louisburg’s T.J. Dover wins a jump ball Friday against Ottawa.**

Senior Grant Harding did his best to try and keep the Wildcats (6-10) in it as he scored a season-high 31 points, including five 3-pointers. Harding shot well from the field as he made 8 of 17 attempts and was aggressive all night in attacking the Cyclone defense.

“Grant has been working really hard at his shot and we have all been waiting for it to come together and it did (against Ottawa),” Nelson said. “We have all seen what kind of shooter Grant is, but the biggest blessing with him not shooting as

well as he wants is it has taught him to attack the rim more. Once his shots starts falling more, it will really make him difficult to stop”

Defense didn't factor much into the first quarter as the two teams pushed the ball up the floor. Ottawa, which had a three-point lead midway through the first, went on a mini 7-0 run, to push the lead to 10.

Senior Sam Guetterman hit a 3-pointer and junior Desmond Doles cut the Cyclone lead in half, but Ottawa went on a another 7-1 run to end the quarter and the Wildcats wouldn't get the lead to under 10 again.

Guetterman was second on the team in scoring with seven points and five rebounds, while senior T.J. Dover had six points and a team-high six rebounds. Senior Dalton Stone also finished with six points.

Louisburg will try and snap its four-game losing streak Tuesday when it hosts Baldwin. The Wildcats have defeated the Bulldogs three times already this season.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14 -</b>
<b>60</b>				
<b>OTT</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11 -</b>
<b>75</b>				

LOUISBURG (6-10): Grant Harding 31, Sam Guetterman 7, T.J. Dover 6, Dalton Stone 5, Jayce Geiman 5, Dalton Ribordy 3, Desmond Doles 2. Totals: 20-46 13-17 60. 3-point field goals: 9, (Harding 5, Stone 2, Geiman, Guetterman)