

# Lady Cats bring program together at team camp



**Isabelle Holtzen drives to the basket and tries to get up a shot while being defended by Paige Buffington on Friday during the team's scrimmage on the final day of camp.**

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Walking onto the floor with so many young players last season, the Louisburg girls basketball team sometimes had its back against the wall before the game even started most nights.

The Lady Cats had a lot of inexperience, low numbers and were forced to play a lot of underclassmen. That resulted in a three win season, but they found a lot of positives in the process.

Whether it was watching underclassmen grow, playing state-ranked teams close or coming together as a team, Louisburg has plenty of things to build off of and it started last week.

Coach Shawn Lowry held his week-long team camp as 29 high school players took part in sessions from 8 to 9:30 every morning. Lowry also held a middle school session all week, along with a fourth through sixth grade portion for three days and a first through third grade mini-camp last Thursday.



**Carson Buffington (4) goes up for a shot while being defended by teammate Julianne Finley on Friday during the team's scrimmage.**

In all, Lowry had 110 campers fill the Louisburg High School gymnasium in what was a busy week of basketball.

"It was a really good week of camp at all levels," Lowry said. "From the first minute of camp, our upperclassmen set the tone with great attitudes, great effort and great leadership. With the number of girls returning to play from last season's team, we were able to get right into a lot of our offensive and defensive team work."

Lowry also tried something different this season as he invited all the campers from fourth grade on up to participate in a scrimmage-like atmosphere in front of their parents Friday on the final day of camp.

The camp ended with a feast of pizza and cookies, but more importantly, Lowry wanted to bring everyone together to experience what life as Lady Cat basketball players is all about.

“It is important that we create excitement and pride for those that have been Lady Cats, those that are currently Lady Cats and those that will someday be a Lady Cat,” Lowry said. “It was great to see the older girls cheering and high-fiving the younger girls. It was nice to see all the parents that came to watch and afterwards seeing the high school girls hanging out with many of the younger girls.”

Even though the camp is over, the Lady Cat players still have a lot of work in front of them. They will have open gym workouts twice a week through mid-July and the players also have weight sessions twice a week.

Louisburg will also compete in a summer league in Shawnee Mission for the next month.

Still, Lowry believes the team camp was a great way to kickoff the summer for his players and he likes what he has seen thus far.

“For us team camp is primarily about establishing our program’s culture and shaping our team’s identity,” Lowry said. “We find out who are leaders will be because they are pushed to the forefront as the week progresses. We also find out what younger players will compete.

“We have several girls returning that gained some very good experience last season. As part of that experience they know what kind of effort they have to give, what kind of teammate they have to be and they have more confidence and trust in each other.”

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# Harding named to all-league, state teams



Louisburg junior Grant Harding had a good season for the Wildcat basketball team and he was recently selected to the all-Frontier League second team and was also named as an honorable mention all-state player by the Topeka Capital-Journal and Wichita Eagle.

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Throughout the season, Grant Harding was a big focus for the opposition when it came to stopping the Louisburg boys basketball team.

Opposing teams knew Harding was going to get the ball and that he was a big part of the Wildcat offense. All that attention didn't seem to slow the Louisburg junior much and the rest of the Frontier League coaches took notice.

The all-Frontier League basketball team was recently released and Harding earned second team honors after a breakout season. Harding averaged 16 points a game to lead Louisburg and also averaged eight rebounds and three assists a contest.

"In our league, which I feel is the best in all of 4A, as a group, to get recognized at all is a huge honor," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "Being recognized as one of the top 10 players in the league is even more of an honor and I couldn't be more proud of him. His hard work and dedication to

the sport he loves is paying off and that's one of the greatest aspects of coaching."

Harding was also recently recognized outside of the league. He earned all-state honors as he was named to the Class 4A-Division I honorable mention team by the Topeka Capital-Journal and Wichita Eagle.

Paola and Eudora, which each earned state tournament bids, led the way with three all-league selections as did Spring Hill.

### **2016 All-Frontier League Boys Basketball Team**

**First team:** Justin Criddle, sr., Paola; Austin Downing, sr., Eudora; Isaac McCullough, jr., Ottawa; Mason McDow, sr., Paola; Ivan Hughes, sr., Spring Hill.

**Second team:** Perry Carroll, jr., Ottawa; Brian Tolefree, sr., Eudora; Grant Harding, jr., Louisburg; Jomain Rouser, sr., Eudora; Alex Wilson, sr., Paola.

**Honorable mention:** Jackson Barth, sr., Baldwin; Trey Heinrich, jr., Spring Hill; Jacob Jennings, sr., De Soto; Jacob Hodge, jr., Spring Hill; Jayce Dighans, soph., Baldwin.

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## **Buffington earns postseason honors**



**Louisburg High School freshman Carson Buffington dives on the floor for a loose ball during a game earlier this season. Buffington led the Frontier League with 11 rebounds a contest and earned honorable mention all-league and all-state honors.**

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It was just her first year of varsity basketball, but Carson Buffington seemed to make quite an impression on the rest of the Frontier League coaches.

The Louisburg forward did a lot of the dirty work for the Lady Cats this season and the coaches made sure she was rewarded for it. Buffington earned a spot on the all-Frontier League basketball team as an honorable mention when the team was released last week.

Buffington was the lone selection for the Lady Cats after they finished with a 3-18 record, but she had a season to remember. As a freshman, she led the league in rebounding with 11 boards a game to go along with four points and two steals a contest.

“Carson takes a great deal of pride and gives exceptional effort in rebounding the ball on both ends of the floor,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “She does many of those things coaches ask of their players when it comes to effort, hustle, character and being unselfish.

“She is the first one on the floor for a loose ball. She is a great teammate, always positive and encouraging, and I expect her to develop into a good leader for her team this

offseason.”

The honors didn't stop there, however.

Buffington also earned all-state honors as she was named to the Class 4A-Division I honorable mention team by the Topeka Capital-Journal.

As for the rest of the all-league team, Paola, which finished as a state runner-up, led the way with four all-league selections. Baldwin, which made the state tournament in Class 4A-Division II, also had four selections.

### **2016 All-Frontier League Girls Basketball Team**

**First team:** Morgan Laudan, senior, Paola; Kyna Smith, sr., Baldwin; Matti Morgan, jr., Paola; Maddie Neufeld, sr., Baldwin; Kamryn Shaffer, soph., Ottawa.

**Second team:** Mariah Grizzle, soph., De Soto; Julia Johnson, jr., De Soto; Kristen Saucerman, sr., De Soto; Abby Ogle, soph., Baldwin; Taylor Williams, sr., Paola.

**Honorable mention:** Lauren Delker, fr., Spring Hill; Carson Buffington, fr., Louisburg; Meghan Goff, fr., Spring Hill; Taylor Cawley, jr., Baldwin; Brynn Ferguson, sr., Ottawa; Chandler Karr, jr., Paola.

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# **Paola AD proposes bill to help classification issue**



Last October, Paola activities director Jeff Hines went to a Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) regional meeting to get updates on classification issues.

Six months later, Hines found himself in Topeka, in front of the Kansas Senate Education Committee to talk about a bill that could change the way schools are classified.

On Thursday, Hines sat in front of the committee to discuss Senate Bill 464 – a bill that he proposed with guidance of Sen. Caryn Tyson.

Statute 72-130 establishes specific guidelines pertaining to the organizational structure and functions of KSHSAA. Senate Bill 464 would change one part of the statute and strike the line which allows schools to be classified only by student enrollment.

“The total number of students in schools is a great starting point for classifying them,” Hines said. “It makes sense that the largest schools should play the largest schools and the smallest schools should play the smallest schools, but there are other things that need to be considered.”

For several months, KSHSAA has had a classification committee discuss different ways to have a competitive balance with its member schools. They came up with ideas of reducing the number of classifications or changing the number of schools in a division.

“There were no other factors being considered and that bothered me,” Hines said, “All that would do was reshuffle the schools just a little bit but we would have the same problem.”



The problem for the committee was its hands were tied thanks to the wording in Statute 72-130 that specifically states schools can only be classified by enrollment numbers and nothing else.

So Hines went to work and helped create Senate Bill 464, which does not give a specific solution to the problem, but rather would take wording out of the statute to allow KSHSAA to figure out how to classify schools on its own.

Hines gave a 15 minute testimony in front of the committee and then answered questions from the committee members for more than 30 minutes afterward. Before the hearing, Hines received support from every member in the Frontier League, Pioneer League and all but two schools in the Kaw Valley League, as those two didn't respond before the hearing.

Following Hines' testimony, Sen. Vicki Schmidt, R-Topeka, had concerns as to why KSHSAA did not come in front of the committee itself to ask for changes.

Hines informed the committee that it would be redundant for KSHSAA to endorse the plan, because if approved, member schools would still have to vote on it. He believes Bill 464 would let KSHSAA come up with a system and let schools improve it, instead of the legislature.

"KSHSAA wants to be neutral because this proposal would affect different schools in different ways," Hines said. "It could be very beneficial to some schools and others may not like it because they might have to move up a class. So, why should KSHSAA have to pick sides in it and pit member against member? It doesn't have to be that way in my opinion.

"Yes, a school that has to move up a classification might not like it, but is it the best thing overall for the association? They can't look themselves in the mirror and say 'No, this isn't the right thing to do?'

A major problem for some member schools in KSHSAA is they do not believe it is competitively equal the way it is currently structured.

“I am not a believer in participation medals,” Hines said. “If they are kindergartners, sure, but when you start playing, part of being successful later in life is learning how to compete. We all competed for a job when you have gone in for an interview and that is good. You need to have that skillset and I am not saying that we need to give more trophies out and give everyone a shot, but I just want a system in place that is equitable for all so that some don’t have an unfair advantage at the expense of the rest and I think that is what is happening.”

One of the problems is the lack of balance between championships won between public and private high schools. Hines did research and presented numbers at the hearing at the number of state championships won between private and public schools from 2004 to 2014.

Here is what he found.

- Private schools make up slightly less than 8 percent of the KSHSAA membership.
- Private schools have won slightly less than 32 percent of the state championships.
- Based on membership percentage, private schools should only win approximately 8 percent of the titles, not nearly 32 percent.
- Private schools are winning four times more state titles than should be expected based on their memberships.
- Private schools are nine times more likely to win five or more state titles than their public school peers.

“In that period of time, I looked for who has won five or more state titles,” Hines said. “That is a difficult feat. You look at Paola’s history and we have won like seven and Louisburg

has won three in 100-plus years. During those 10 years, 37 percent of those private schools won five or more during that time and public schools had 4 percent win five or more. Private schools are nine times more likely to become a dynasty or a successful program with strong tradition. You tell me how we are all the same?"

Another problem they are facing is schools with a high percentage of low socioeconomic status (SCS) students, cannot compete against fellow schools in their own classification in many activities, including football.

"There is a whole bunch of schools in the Kansas City, Kansas school district that are 6A or 5A that have no business competing against those really hard schools," Hines said. "They don't have resources, they don't have the students, there is no interest and they have all those things working against them and I feel bad for those kids. Who wants to trot out against some of those bigger schools and know you are going to get your ears boxed in? That is not fun. Moreover, it is not challenging for the kids those schools are playing against."

Hines believes competition is important when it comes to the growth of the student athlete and it is beneficial for the school and its community.

"Not only what it does for grades, but for what it does for the human spirit," Hines said.

"When I was the FFA advisor in Paola, we won 10 state championships in nine years and you could tell the interest by the students and the community went through the roof. You can say the same thing about Louisburg and what Jim Morgan does with his FFA kids. People flock to success.

"Naturally, when they are there they feel better about themselves, they want to work harder in the classroom to stay eligible and kids that want to stay involved are going to be

more successful in life. It is all about having the chance to be successful.”

During Hines’ testimony in front of the Senate Education Committee, not all of the legislatures seemed open to the idea. Molly Baumgardner, R-Louisburg, asked Hines if he would be willing to relinquish state funding if the legislature agrees to release oversight of how KSHSAA classifies schools.

“If we relinquished the funding behind it, (high school activities) would disappear,” Hines said at the hearing.

No action was taken following the hearing, but the committee chairman spent 15 minutes with him and Tyson to help them strategize on what to do next.

One option is to amend the bill to include more specifics that could include a multiplier or a separate division for private schools and a low SCS school de-multiplier.

Another option, Hines said, would be to have the classification committee draft a letter to the Senate Education Committee that states they would like to study these other factors as part of a proposal for revamping the classification system, but not until they feel the legislature is open to changing the law.

Whatever decision comes next, however, Hines wants it to be decided by multiple people within KSHSAA on how to proceed.

“I don’t feel comfortable making that change because I feel a committee needs to do the work,” Hines said. “I shouldn’t be doing it, nor should 11 legislators, you need more. We should let the classification committee work on it and hopefully we can get some things accomplished.

“The only way to allow this to happen is to remove the barrier in place that exists due to the state statute.”

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# Wildcats fall to Paola in substate tourney



Louisburg's Ben Minster dives to the floor to try and get a loose ball away from Paola's Tanner Moala on Friday during the Wildcats' substate tournament game at Louisburg High School. Louisburg saw its season come to an end with a 58-34 loss.

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It wasn't the most pleasant finish to the season for the Louisburg boys basketball team and that end came Friday.

During the Class 4A-Division I substate tournament at Louisburg High School, the Wildcats met No. 1 seed Paola in the opening round and gave the Panthers a close game through three quarters. Louisburg couldn't hold on, however, as it fell to the eventual substate champion, 58-34.

The Wildcats (6-15), who won six of their first nine games to start the year, went winless the rest of the way, including several close losses down the stretch. Although the season didn't end on a high note, Louisburg coach Jason Nelson believes his team grew in a lot of different areas.

"There were probably two games we should have won during that

stretch without question and it would be a lot different,” Nelson said. “This is probably the best 4A league in the state, especially when you look at the upper echelon of teams.

“We had some season goals that we strove to meet. We wanted to keep teams at 60 points or less a game on average and we matched that. We wanted to outrebound teams and I think we were close there, which is a testament to our kids because we are undersized compared to most of the other schools. The turnover number was good, we just had a hard time finding consistency on offense.”



**Louisburg senior Jacob Welsh drives past Paola's Blain Ohlmeier during Friday's substate game in Louisburg.**

Offense was hard to come by for Louisburg again Friday, but the Wildcats found themselves up against a Paola front line that stands 6-7, 6-7 and 6-5. Louisburg also went up against an aggressive perimeter defense that made it difficult to score from the outside.

Although the offense wasn't clicking, the Wildcat defense slowed Paola down, especially in the second and third quarters to keep the game close.

"You just look at Paola's kids, they are just huge, well-coached and good," Nelson said. "Our kids battled and did what we asked them to do. We emphasized blocking out just because they are so massive, and we could have done a little better job early, but to our credit they cleaned it up. We got the looks we wanted, we slowed them down offensively and they took the shots we wanted them to take. I couldn't be prouder of our kids."

Paola opened the game on a 17-3 run to get out to a double-digit lead early. To start the second quarter, Louisburg got two baskets from Korbin Hankinson and another from Ben Minster to cut the Paola lead to 10.

The Panthers then went on a mini 8-0 run to push their lead to 18 points shortly before halftime. Louisburg's Jayce Geiman hit a 3-pointer with a minute left in the first half, but Paola still held a 29-14 lead at half.

T.J. Dover hit a basket to cut the Paola lead to 13 early in the third quarter, but it would be as close as the Wildcats would get.

Dover led the Wildcats in scoring with eight points as eight different players scored for Louisburg. Grant Harding and Hankinson each finished with six points for the Wildcats.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>9 - 34</b>		
<b>PAOLA</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>18 - 58</b>		

LOUISBURG (6-15): T.J. Dover 8, Grant Harding 6, Korbin Hankinson 6, Jayce Geiman 4, Jacob Welsh 4, Ben Minster 2, Dalton Ribordy 2, Sam Guetterman 2. 3-point field goals: 2, (Harding, Geiman)

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# Paola ends Lady Cats' season



Louisburg junior Paige Buffington tries to get a shot up over a couple Paola defenders Thursday during the first round of the Class 4A-Division I substate tournament at Louisburg High School. Paola defeated Louisburg 67-39.

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It was a cliché performance for the Louisburg girls basketball team – but that was a good thing.

The Lady Cats squared off against No. 1 seed Paola in the first round of the Class 4A substate tournament Thursday and as the old cliché goes “they gave everything they had.”

However, sometimes that just isn't enough – especially against one of the top teams in Class 4A-Division I.

Despite a competitive first half, Louisburg couldn't keep up with Paola in a 67-39 loss at Louisburg High School. Paola would beat Spring Hill 52-36 in the substate championship game two days later, while the Lady Cats saw their season come to an end.

“We came into this game saying that we were going to leave it all on the table, we are going to give every ounce we have for every quarter and for every play,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “For the most part, the effort and toughness was there



and I can't say enough about these kids."

The Lady Cats weathered the storm early as they found themselves down 23-10 going into the second quarter and were having some problems slowing the Paola offense down. Louisburg slowed Paola down a little in the second and the Lady Cats even outscored the Panthers 15-14 to only trail by 12 points at halftime.



**Louisburg senior Megan Lemke puts up a shot during Thursday's substate tournament game in Louisburg.**

Louisburg cut the deficit to eight points at one time early in the second quarter after back-to-back 3-pointers from Paige Buffington and Madisen Simpson. However, Paola's Matti Morgan hit a 3-pointer with under a minute left to push the lead back up to double digits before halftime.

To start the second half, Louisburg junior Emalee Overbay hit a basket to make it a 10-point game, but shortly after is when Paola went on a tear. The Panthers proceeded to go on a 22-0 run and were 11-for-11 from the free-throw line during that

span.

Paige Buffington led the Lady Cats in scoring with 12 points, and in her final game as a Lady Cat, senior Megan Lemke finished with 10 points and six rebounds.

“Megan Lemke has set a great example for her teammates by her work ethic, leadership and unselfishness and I can’t say enough what a big part it was for our team this year,” Lowry said. “It was hard in the locker room with her after the game, that is for sure. It is hard because you get so close to them.”

The Lady Cats also had several young players step up this season, including freshman Carson Buffington, who ended the Paola contest with 13 rebounds and averaged more than 10 rebounds a game.

Although Louisburg finished with a 3-18 record, it was the effort the team gave throughout the season – on and off the court – that left Lowry optimistic for the future.

“We talk about different expectations and things, but my expectation for them was what they gave out on the floor and the character that they did it with,” Lowry said. “It is such a success for me. When they leave this program, I hope that they look back and say they got more out of this than playing basketball.”

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>10 – 39</b>		
<b>PAOLA</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>8 – 67</b>		

LOUISBURG (3-18): Paige Buffington 4-8 1-2 12; Megan Lemke 4-13 2-4 10; Carson Buffington 3-8 0-0 7; Kennia Hankinson 1-4 0-2 3; Madisen Simpson 1-8 0-0 3; Emalee Overbay 1-1 0-0 2;

Haven Turner 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 15-53 3-11 39. 3-point field goals: 6, (P. Buffington 3, C. Buffington 1, Hankinson 1, Simpson 1)

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## Quick start lifts Paola past Louisburg



Louisburg sophomore Dalton Ribordy puts up a shot against Paola during a game earlier this season in Louisburg. The Wildcats fell to Paola on Friday, 70-31.

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PAOLA – The Louisburg High School boys basketball team had a big challenge of trying to stay with No. 3 ranked Paola on Friday at Paola High School.

Paola made it difficult on the Wildcats from the start.

The Panthers took an 18-point lead into the second quarter and the Louisburg offense didn't have an answer as it fell 70-31. The Wildcats ended their regular season with a 6-14 record.

In the process, Paola captured their undefeated Frontier League title in front of its home crowd on senior night. Throw in two hall of fame inductions and it was a difficult

environment for the Wildcats to play in.

Paola jumped out to a big lead and never looked back and it took a 26-8 advantage into the second quarter and led 38-14 at halftime.

Junior T.J. Dover helped the Wildcats offensively as he, and fellow junior Grant Harding, were the lone players to score in double figures. Dover led Louisburg with 12 points and Harding finished with 11, who also had eight rebounds in the loss.

Paola's Mason McDow was one of four Paola players to score in double figures and led the Panthers with 23 points.

The postseason will now begin for the Wildcats as they will host the Class 4A substate basketball tournament, beginning Friday. Louisburg, the No. 4 seed, will face none other than Paola (18-2) again. Paola is the No. 1 seed and the game will tipoff at 7:30 p.m., on Friday

No. 2 Fort Scott (11-9) and No. 3 Spring Hill (10-10) will square off at 6 p.m. on Friday and the winners of the two games will meet in the championship at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday at Louisburg High School.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>4 - 31</b>		
<b>PAOLA</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>12 - 70</b>		

LOUISBURG (6-14): T.J. Dover 6-12 0-1 12; Grant Harding 4-10 3-3 11; Korbin Hankinson 2-4 0-0 4; Alex Dunn 1-1 0-0 2; Dalton Ribordy 1-2 0-0 2. Totals: 14-43 3-6 31. 3-point field goals: none

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# Lady Cats fall to No. 4 Paola in finale



Louisburg junior Emalee Overbay looks to get up a shot during the Lady Cats' game with Paola earlier this season in Louisburg. The Lady Cats fell 74-30 to Paola on Friday at Paola High School.

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PAOLA – Going on the road for an opposing team's senior night is difficult for any program, but it is even more difficult when you are going up against a ranked opponent.

The Louisburg High School girls basketball team faced off with Paola, the No. 4 ranked team in Class 4A-Division I, on Friday in Paola and it was a challenge from the opening tip.

Paola was sharp from the start as it defeated Louisburg 74-30 and captured its fourth consecutive Frontier League title. As for the Lady Cats, it was hard to keep up with Paola as the Panthers connected on 11 3-pointers to pull away.

The Panthers jumped out to a 26-12 lead at the end of the first quarter and never looked back. Paola led 45-17 at halftime.

Louisburg junior Madisen Simpson was a bright spot offensively for the Lady Cats as she racked up 17 of the team's 30 points, including four 3-pointers.

Fellow junior Paige Buffington added seven points in the loss and freshman Carson Buffington led Louisburg in the rebounding department with a game-high 14 boards.

Although the regular season is now complete, it doesn't get any easier for the Lady Cats, who will host the Class 4A substate tournament beginning on Thursday. Louisburg (3-17), the No. 4 seed, will meet up with No. 1 seed Paola (18-2) again at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday.

No. 2 Spring Hill (11-9) and No. 3 Fort Scott (7-13) will play at 6 p.m. on Thursday and the two winners will play in the championship game at 6 p.m. on Saturday.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>2 - 30</b>		
<b>PAOLA</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>7 - 74</b>		

LOUISBURG (3-17): Madisen Simpson 5-13 3-4 17; Paige Buffington 2-7 2-2 7; Isabelle Holtzen 1-6 1-2 3; Haven Turner 1-1 0-0 2; Megan Lemke 0-8 1-2 1. Totals: 9-38 7-10 30. 3-point field goals: 5, (Simpson 4, Buffington 1)

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## **Wildcats let another close**

# game get away



Louisburg junior Sam Guetterman passes off to a teammate during Tuesday's senior night contest against De Soto at Louisburg High School. The Wildcats nearly stopped their losing streak, but lost in overtime, 66-62.

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For the second time in three games, the Louisburg High School boys basketball team had the ball in its hands in the final seconds with the chance to win.

And for the second time in three games, the Wildcats came up empty.

Louisburg had the opportunity to knock off De Soto at home Tuesday, but came up short in a 66-62 overtime loss in a contest in which the Wildcats rallied from seven points down in the fourth quarter to tie the game.

On a night that could have had a lot of celebration with the honoring of Alex Dunn, Jacob Welsh and Ben Brummel on senior night, or Grant Harding's 33-point effort, instead ended in disappointment.

"It really stuck to the script as what a lot of the other games have been," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "We outrebounded them, we broke the press fine and all these little things that we are focusing on in practice, we are

doing it. When we attacked the rim and run what we do, good things happened. It is what it is. It doesn't matter who is on the court, all five guys want to be the best they can be, we just aren't putting it altogether."

Harding had his best night of the season offensively as the De Soto defenders couldn't keep him out of the lane. He made eight field goals in the game, but Harding hurt De Soto at the free-throw line where was 15-for-19.

Despite all that, the Wildcats needed one more of Harding's shots to go down at the end of regulation. With the game tied, and seconds remaining on the clock, Harding drove the lane but his shot bounced off the rim and the game then went into overtime.



**Junior Grant Harding scores two of his 33 points on a dunk Tuesday against De Soto.**

"Grant was superb," Nelson said. "He shot great from the free-throw line and really everyone is doing what we need them to do. But when we have breakdowns, they come at the worst time. We have been in a lot of close games, but we just can't seem



to get those.”

Louisburg jumped out to 16-11 lead at the end of the first quarter when junior Jayce Geiman connected on a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

De Soto started to battle back and took one-point lead with under three minutes left in the first half. But the Wildcats got big baskets from Harding, Korbin Hankinson and a free throw from Dalton Ribordy to give them a 25-21 halftime lead.

Everything seemed to be going Louisburg’s way in the third quarter as it took an eight point lead with three minutes left in the period. Then things started to unravel.

The Wildcats (6-13) started missing shots and De Soto took advantage as it went on a 12-1 run to end the quarter with a 38-35 lead as it got forward Isaac Albert involved. Albert scored a team-high 26 points and was tough for the Wildcats to stop inside.

Louisburg nearly tied it up at the buzzer as Welsh heaved a three-quarter court shot that hit off the back of the rim and went out to end the third.

“It is ultimately on us, but we had some advantageous foul calls that took us out of our rhythm a little bit,” Nelson said. “But if we played inside-out like we are supposed to do, those things probably don’t matter.”

De Soto eventually built a seven point lead, but the Wildcats had another charge in them. Harding scored eight straight points in about a minute span get Louisburg back in it.

Harding converted a basket and was fouled for the traditional three-point play, hit two more free throws and then knocked down a 3-pointer to give the Wildcats the lead.

De Soto took the lead back, but a basket from Sam Guetterman, along with free throws from Harding and Welsh gave Louisburg a

53-52 lead with under a minute left. De Soto hit a free throw to tie the game with 21 seconds left, which gave the Wildcats one lost opportunity before overtime, but Harding's drive to the basket rolled off.

That missed opportunity by Louisburg seemed to fuel De Soto as it opened the extra period on a 9-3 run to give it a 62-56 lead with 45 seconds left.

Welsh converted a traditional three-point play of his own to cut the lead to three, and after a De Soto basket, Harding answered with a 3-pointer with 13 seconds remaining. After the made basket, the Wildcats stole the ball from De Soto in backcourt with a chance to at least tie the game, but turned the ball over themselves.

De Soto sank two free throws with eight seconds left to seal the win.



**Louisburg seniors (from left) Alex Dunn, Ben Brummel and Jacob Welsh were honored before the game during a senior night ceremony.**

It was the final regular season home game for Louisburg's three seniors as they were honored before the game during a senior night ceremony. Nelson knows those three brought a lot

to the team this year.

“Welsh and Corbin Wertz (2015 grad) are two of the most intense defenders that I have had the opportunity to coach and Jacob is a hard worker,” Nelson said. “Alex couldn’t play last year with his knee, but he gives us some of the best minutes and he makes things happen. Brummel works hard and has a lot of natural ability and I wish I had him for four years. They are super kids.”

Louisburg will try and stop its 10-game losing skid tonight when the Wildcats travel to Paola for their final game of the regular season. Tipoff is set for 7:30 p.m.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9 – 62</b>	
<b>DE SOTO</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13 – 66</b>	

LOUISBURG (6-13): Grant Harding 8-14 15-19 33; Jayce Geiman 2-7 0-0 6; T.J. Dover 2-4 2-4 6; Jacob Welsh 1-4 3-3 5; Sam Guetterman 2-4 0-0 4; Dalton Ribordy 1-4 2-3 4; Alex Dunn 1-3 0-0 2; Korbin Hankinson 1-2 0-0 2. Totals: 18-42 22-31 62. 3-point field goals: 4, (Geiman 2, Harding 2)

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## **De Soto pulls away from Lady Cats**



**Louisburg's Megan Lemke (left) and Carson Buffington go up for a rebound during Tuesday's home contest against De Soto. The Lady Cats came up short in a 55-31 loss on senior night.**

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In its first meeting with De Soto, the Louisburg girls basketball team had a hard time stopping De Soto's inside game.

So when Tuesday's contest came around, the Lady Cats took on the challenge to slow down De Soto's post players – and they did. In doing so, however, Louisburg saw what the other half of the De Soto lineup can do.

De Soto connected on seven 3-pointers, many of which came in the second half and Louisburg didn't have the offensive firepower to keep up in the 55-31 senior night loss.

"We defended it much better, but we just have to pick your poison with them," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They are a good young team and they are pretty solid.

"They hit those shots in the second half, but at the same time they had a couple big girls that we had to defend inside. The first half we kept it close, but in the second half they just hit some big shots."

Following the game, two Lady Cats and their parents were honored during senior night ceremonies as Megan Lemke and Megan Roy played their final regular season home contest.



**Seniors Megan Lemke (left) and Megan Roy were honored during a senior night ceremony following their game Tuesday against De Soto.**

“I can’t say enough about both girls,” Lowry said. “Megan Roy has been hurt, but it was a situation where she was helping her team out and she got injured. I am so glad that she decided to come out and play again. She is an absolute pleasure to be around and such a great kid.

“This is Megan Lemke’s fourth year playing. She will be a four-year, three-sport athlete and she is our team captain. The girls follow her and love her to death. She is a great teammate and I am going to miss both of those girls a lot.”

As for the game, the Lady Cats (3-16) got off to a good start and held a 9-7 lead with under a minute remaining in the first quarter on a 3-pointer from Madisen Simpson, but De Soto rallied to take a 12-11 lead going into the second.

De Soto opened the second quarter with a mini 6-1 run, which led to a 23-16 halftime lead, but the Lady Cats were still in the game.

After halftime is when De Soto started to pull away. It went on a 10-0 run to start third quarter and outscored Louisburg 22-8 to lead 45-27 going into the fourth quarter.

"We came in with a game plan and for the most part our players did pretty well," Lowry said. "There were a few breakdowns, but they did what we asked them to do. De Soto just hit shots. They are a good team."

Simpson led the Lady Cats in scoring with 10 points, while Lemke added seven points, seven rebounds and a team-high three steals. Freshman Carson Buffington led Louisburg with 11 rebounds on the night.

Louisburg will end its regular season Friday when it travels to Paola in its final game before the substate tournament. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>7 - 31</b>		
<b>DE SOTO</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>10 - 55</b>		

LOUISBURG (3-16): Madisen Simpson 2-10 4-4 10; Megan Lemke 1-6 5-8 7; Isabelle Holtzen 2-5 1-2 5; Carson Buffington 1-5 2-6 4; Kennia Hankinson 0-5 3-4 3; Haven Turner 1-2 0-0 2. Totals: 7-33 15-24 31. 3-point field goals: 2, (Simpson 2)