

# Girls basketball announces awards



Louisburg seniors (from left) Kallie O'Keefe, Natalie Moore and Kirstin Lowry were all smiles Wednesday during the team's postseason awards banquet at Louisburg High School. All three players were recognized for their postseason honors

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It was a bittersweet moment for the Louisburg girls basketball team Wednesday when it held its annual postseason banquet at Louisburg High School.

The team came together to relive some good memories from its 11-11 season and talk about the improvement the Lady Cats made from the start of the season till the end. However, it also meant saying goodbye to a few players.

Seniors Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O'Keefe were recognized for their achievements, not only this season, but for what they have accomplished in their four years. This season, the Lady Cats won their home invitational and advanced to the substate championship game for the second straight year.

"They have shown these younger kids what the expectations of this program are," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They have shown them how to lead, the character we expect and how

to play. They will all three be missed.”

Coach Lowry revealed all of the postseason honors to his team, in which all of them went to the three seniors.

Moore was named first team all-Frontier League, was second team all-state in Class 4A by Sports I Kansas. She also received honorable mention all-state honors from The Wichita Eagle and The Topeka Capital-Journal.

She was also the Co-Player of the Year and first team on the Tri-County Spotlight squad. She finished her career with 898 points.

Moore averaged 17.4 points a game and also made a living at the free-throw line. Moore had 204 free-throw attempts on the season and made 73 percent.

She also averaged 5.5 rebounds a game to go along with 4.6 assists. She had 27 steals on the year and shot 44 percent from the floor.

Kirstin Lowry was also honored as she was a second team all-Frontier League and was also second team Tri-County Spotlight. Lowry was second on the team in scoring at nine points a game and shot better than 40 percent from behind the 3-point line.

O’Keefe, who averaged eight points and seven rebounds a game, also earned second team all-Tri County Spotlight.

Members of the Lady Cats who earned varsity letters are:

**Seniors:** Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O’Keefe

**Juniors:** Megan Lemke

**Sophomores:** Zoie Gilliland, Paige Buffington, Emalee Overbay and Madisen Simpson

**Freshman:** Isabelle Holtzen and Sarah Wilson

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# Wertz, Harding earn all-league honors



Louisburg senior Corbin Wertz was one of two Wildcats to be named to the all-Frontier League basketball team. Wertz earned second team honors after he averaged 17 points a game.

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The talent in the Frontier League for boys basketball was at its usual high caliber this season and Louisburg found itself in the mix of it all.

Louisburg put two players from its six-win team on the squad. Senior Corbin Wertz earned second team all-league honors while sophomore Grant Harding found his way on the team for the first time as he was awarded an honorable mention spot.

"I felt our team was well represented granted the adversity we had with injury and the quality nature of our league," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "Any coach would want more representation or kids placing higher than they do, but that's the nature of the job itself."

Injury might have been the only thing that kept Wertz off the first-team in his final season as a Wildcat. He missed several

games with a hamstring injury, but he had first-team type numbers for Louisburg.

Wertz averaged 17.2 points a game to go along with 6.3 rebounds and four assists a contest in a tough league schedule.

“For Corbin to receive second team, despite missing four league games to injury, is a testament to his ability and the respect he’s earned among the coaches around the league,” Nelson said. “He leaves behind a legacy that all younger players will benefit from, be it next year, or four years down the road.”



Louisburg sophomore Grant Harding was recently selected to the all-Frontier League basketball team as an honorable mention.

With Wertz out for part of the season, it was up to several sophomores to pick up the scoring load and Harding took on the challenge. Harding nearly averaged a double-double in his first full season on the varsity level.

Harding averaged 11.1 points a game to go along with nine

rebounds. He also averaged one block a contest.

“For Grant to be recognized despite being only a sophomore is a great honor for him,” Nelson said. “He progressed in the manner his staff wanted throughout the year and deserved to be recognized.”

Underclassmen were littered all over the all-league team. The first team featured four underclassmen and one senior.

Eudora sophomore Mitchell Ballock headed the first team along with junior teammate Austin Downing. Paola junior Mason McDow, Ottawa sophomore Isaac McCullough and Ottawa senior Quentin Blaue rounded out the list.

Ottawa led the way with four all-league selections, while Eudora and Paola followed with three each.

## **2015 All-Frontier League Boys Basketball**

### **First team**

Austin Downing, Eudora, junior

Isaac McCullough, Ottawa, sophomore

Mason McDow, Paola, junior

Mitchell Ballock, Eudora, sophomore

Quentin Blaue, Ottawa, senior

### **Second team**

Christian Gaylord, Baldwin, senior

Corbin Wertz, Louisburg, senior

Danny Hodge, Spring Hill, senior

Ivan Hughes, Spring Hill, junior

Justin Criddle, Paola, junior

#### **Honorable mention**

Alex Wilson, Paola, junior

Grant Harding, Louisburg, sophomore

Jake Matney, Ottawa, senior

Jomain Rouser, Eudora, junior

Nick Mullen, De Soto, senior

Tyler Smith, Ottawa, senior

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## **Moore, Lowry named to all-league team**



Louisburg senior Natalie Moore was named to the all-Frontier League first team for the second year in a row. Moore was joined by teammate Kirstin Lowry, who earned second team honors.

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According to the Frontier League coaches, the Louisburg girls basketball team has two of the best players in a league that featured two state runner-up teams.

Louisburg senior Natalie Moore was one of the league's top scorers and she was recognized for it. For the second year in a row, Moore was named to the all-league first team and was joined by one of her senior teammates.

Kirstin Lowry was named to the all-Frontier League second team as she was one of the top 3-point threats in the league. Lowry was an honorable mention a season ago.

"Natalie and Kirstin were really great leaders for our team in the offseason and during the season," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They always set the tone with how hard they worked and the positive, encouraging attitudes they brought every day."

"I think most coaches would always like more representation, particularly with players that may not fill up a stat sheet but are really good defensively or play unselfish. However, our league had an exceptional senior class this year."



**Louisburg senior Kirstin Lowry was recently selected to the all-Frontier League second team.**

Baldwin, the Class 4A-Division II state runner-up, led the league with five selections. Paola, the Class 4A-Division I state runner-up, finished with four.

Joining Moore on the first team was Ottawa's Corie Fischer, De Soto's Megan Bonar, Paola's Morgan Laudan and Baldwin's Maddie Ogle.

Teams had a hard time keeping Moore, the Lady Cats' point guard, out of the lane as she averaged 17.4 points a game and also made a living at the free-throw line. Moore had 204 free-throw attempts on the season and made 73 percent.

Moore also averaged 5.5 rebounds a game to go along with 4.6 assists. She also had 27 steals on the year and shot 44 percent from the floor.

"It's hard to express just how good Natalie was this year in arguably one of the toughest leagues in a 4A class with so many exceptional players," coach Lowry said. "This season was the culmination of so many years of hard work for Nat and we

were very fortunate to get to share in this journey.”

Kirstin Lowry was second on the Lady Cats in scoring. She averaged nine points a game and shot over 40 percent from behind the 3-point line.

The Louisburg senior was one of the team’s better defenders and also had the opportunity to have her dad as the head coach the last two seasons.

“Kirstin had a very good year shooting the ball from behind the 3-point line, but I’m most proud of her defensive effort and the passion she played with,” coach Lowry said.

“You’d be hard pressed to find one player that would want to have traded places with Kirstin all these years with me as her coach. I am amazed how she handled everything and I am so proud of the strong young lady she has grown into and the great values she has.”

## **ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS BASKETBALL**

### **FIRST TEAM**

Corie Fischer, Ottawa, senior

Megan Bonar, De Soto, senior

Morgan Laudan, Paola, junior

Natalie Moore, Louisburg, senior

Maddie Ogle, Baldwin, senior

### **SECOND TEAM**

Brette Moore, Ottawa, senior

Tiana Moala, Paola, senior

Lyndsee Johnson, Paola, senior

Kirstin Lowry, Louisburg, senior

Tori Marshall, De Soto, senior

### **HONORABLE MENTION**

Corey Valentine, Baldwin, senior

Madeline Neufeld, Baldwin, junior

Makaila Garcia, Eudora, senior

Taylor Williams, Paola, junior

Alexia Stein, Baldwin, senior

Kyna Smith, Baldwin, junior

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## **Louisburg can't hold off Fort Scott in loss**



Louisburg senior Corbin Wertz goes up for a basket Thursday during the semifinals of the Class 4A Division I substate

**tournament at Paola High School. The Wildcats fell 65-49 to Fort Scott.**

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PAOLA – For one half anyway, the Louisburg boys basketball team went toe-to-toe with No. 1 seed Fort Scott.

The second half was a different story.

Fort Scott found its stroke and used a big third quarter to eliminate Louisburg 65-49 on Thursday in the Class 4A Division I substate semifinals at Paola High School. The Wildcats ended their season with a 6-15 record.

“We played as well as we’ve played all year in the first half,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “We were hitting out shots, contesting theirs and limiting their second chance opportunities.

“In the second half, we weren’t hitting our shots as well as we had in the first half, and they went on a little spurt where they hit three contested 3-pointers. To further complicate matters, we had a little foul trouble and consequently our rotation was a little off defensively which led to us not being as aggressive on the boards.”

The two teams traded leads in the first half and Louisburg held a 20-18 advantage with under three minutes left in the second quarter. Fort Scott went on a mini 5-0 run before halftime to grab the lead back.

Louisburg senior Nathan Moore made it just a one-point halftime deficit when he hit a runner in the lane with five seconds left to give the Wildcats a little momentum.

Fort Scott didn’t waste much time in the third quarter as it went on a 13-4 run to start and the Wildcats all of a sudden found themselves down double digits four minutes into the second half.

Sophomore Jayce Geiman came off the bench to hit two 3-pointers late in the third and Louisburg trailed by 12 points going into the final quarter. It was as close as the Wildcats would get.

Fort Scott defeated Paola in the championship game Saturday to move on to the state tournament.

Senior Corbin Wertz led the Wildcats in scoring with 19 points and Moore, another senior, finished with eight. Wertz, Moore and senior Brady Lambeth all played their final game for the Wildcats.

“Corbin, Nathan and Brady exemplified this program for the two years I’ve been responsible for it,” Nelson said. “They worked to improve, imparted their knowledge on their younger teammates and always believed in the progress of our program. They will be missed tremendously but their legacy will be seen through the progress and effort of next years and the teams that follow.”

It was an up and down season for the Wildcats as they finished with six wins that could have turned into even more. However, Nelson saw a lot of progress from his team despite several obstacles put in its way.

“When the season started, if you’d have told anybody on our staff that we’d have a broken leg, broken toe and a severely pulled hamstring which led to six sophomores on our varsity roster we would have been mortified,” Nelson said. “Once this happened, it turned into one of the most enjoyable experiences of my professional career. We had a young roster that grew leaps and bounds by being forced into an adverse situation and through the frustration, the yelling from the coaches, and uncertainty, each and every one of them improved dramatically.”

LOUISBURG	14	8
11	16 – 49	
FORT SCOTT	15	8
22	20 – 65	

LOUISBURG (6-15): Corbin Wertz 19; Nathan Moore 8; Grant Harding 7; Jayce Geiman 6; Brady Lambeth 5; T.J. Dover 2; Sam Guetterman 2. Totals: 20 6-8 49. 3-point field goals: 3, (Geiman 2, Lambeth)

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## Lady Cats' season comes to a close



Louisburg senior Kallie O'Keefe dives on the floor for a loose ball with Paola's Morgan Laudan during the Class 4A Division I substate championship game Saturday at Paola High School. The Lady Cats fell 62-28.

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PAOLA – The Louisburg girls basketball team had the tough task of trying to end undefeated Paola's season on its home floor, in the substate finals, no less.

It was as difficult as it sounded for the Lady Cats as they

couldn't stay with the bigger, deeper Panther team. Louisburg fell 62-28 on Saturday in the Class 4A Division I substate championship game in Paola.

As much as the end of the season hurt, the Lady Cats also had to say goodbye to three senior starters. Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O'Keefe all suited up for Louisburg for the final time.

"They are hurting, there is no doubt about that," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "I think that finality is starting to set in. Those three players have meant so much to this program. They all left it out on the floor, and they may be leaving, but they put so much into the program that the returning players can learn from for years to come."

Against an athletic and deep Paola team, the Lady Cats tried to slow the game down early. Louisburg worked the clock in the first quarter and were able to get shots off, but they didn't fall.

On the other end, Paola went on an 11-0 run to take a 14-2 lead going into the second quarter and the Lady Cats (11-11) were forced to play faster. Paola took a 36-13 lead at halftime and didn't look back.

"We tried a bunch of different things," coach Lowry said. "We slowed it down early and then we even tried some zone a little later and that didn't really work. They are just a great team with a lot of weapons. They are one of the best teams in the state for a reason."

Moore led the Lady Cats with 14 points and Lowry finished with eight in the loss. Megan Lemke, O'Keefe and Paige Buffington also scored in the loss.

Coach Lowry has seen his team progress throughout the season, a team that is filled with underclassmen to go along with three senior leaders.

“You could tell the chemistry wasn’t where it needed to be to start the season, but this team is so close right now,” he said. “The seniors did a good job of leading those underclassmen and they have really come together. Before the game, they basically just hung out all day, not because they had to, but because they wanted to.

“I am just as proud of this 11-11 team as I am of the 17-5 team that made it this far last year. They really have improved a great deal and have worked hard at it.”

<b>LOUISBURG</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4 – 28</b>	

<b>PAOLA</b>			<b>14</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10 – 62</b>	

**LOUISBURG (11-11): Natalie Moore 3-11 6-9 14; Kirstin Lowry 3-8 2-2 8; Megan Lemke 1-4 1-2 3; Kallie O’Keefe 1-2 0-0 2; Paige Buffington 1-4 0-0 2. Totals: 9-36 9-13 28. 3-point field goals: 2, (Moore 2)**

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## **Lady Cats advance to substate title game**



**Louisburg senior Kirstin Lowry drives the lane on a Fort Scott defender during Friday's substate Class 4A Division I semifinal game at Paola High School. Lowry and the Lady Cats rolled to a 71-42 victory.**

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PAOLA – The first step to a state tournament berth was an easy one for the Louisburg girls basketball team.

The No. 2 seed Lady Cats faced off with No. 3 Fort Scott in the semifinals of the Class 4A Division I substate tournament and ran away with a 71-42 victory Friday at Paola High School. Louisburg opened the game on a 24-5 run and never looked back.

“It was probably the most fun game we have played all year,” Louisburg senior Natalie Moore said. “It is definitely exciting to get this win because we all played well. It was a good win.”

Moore definitely had a lot of fun as she made the Fort Scott defense pay on countless occasions as the Tigers couldn't keep her out of the lane and she eventually finished with a game-high 24 points. Most of those points came from the free-throw line as she connected on 16 of 20 attempts.

When she wasn't putting up runners or going to the free-throw line, Moore had no problems finding her open teammates, including Kallie O'Keefe. Her drives left O'Keefe open several time as she finished with 17 points to go along with several rebounds and second-chance points.

“When teams don't play us often or don't know what we like to run, our style of play can make it pretty difficult on them and that is what happened,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “I thought we played well. We had different kids step up and not just one or two girls. All the girls made some big contributions.”

The Lady Cats (11-10) also got a big boost from the outside as senior Kirstin Lowry and sophomore Paige Buffington all hit big shots. Buffington finished with 13 points and Lowry added 11 as each connected on three 3-pointers.

Louisburg and Fort Scott went back and forth through the first part of the opening quarter, but the Lady Cats pulled away as they went on a 19-0 run that went into the second quarter. Louisburg went into halftime with a 42-15 lead.

"Getting off to a good start was very important to us," O'Keefe said. "We aren't exactly the best third quarter team so to get out to a big lead was nice and really got some confidence going."

That next step to a possible state tournament berth is going to be a little tougher. The Lady Cats will go up against undefeated Paola on the Panthers' home court at 6 p.m. tonight. Paola defeated Spring Hill 50-23 on Friday.

"They are excited for the opportunity, there is no doubt," coach Lowry said. "We are going to have our hands full but the girls have worked hard all week in practice and all season for this. This team, especially these seniors, are not ready to see this come to an end."

O'Keefe couldn't agree more.

"This game is why we have been going to summer weights since the sixth-grade for," she said. "All the work we have put in over the years is to prepare us for this game. We want to go to state and we are excited for the opportunity."

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>7 - 71</b>		
<b>FORT SCOTT</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>9 - 42</b>		

LOUISBURG (11-10): Natalie Moore 24, Kallie O'Keefe 17, Paige Buffington 13, Kirstin Lowry 11, Isabelle Holtzen 4, Megan Lemke 2. Totals: 22 21-27 42. 3-point field goals: 6, (Lowry 3, Buffington 3)

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## Lady Cats fall to Paola on senior night



It wasn't the senior night the Louisburg girls basketball team had hoped for when it hosted rival Paola.

The Lady Cats took the Panthers to the wire in their first match up, but Friday was a different story. Paola shot well from the field and took control early as it downed Louisburg 62-38.

Paola, the No. 2 team in Class 4A-Division I, also ended its regular season with a 20-0 record – an unbeaten streak the Lady Cats had hoped to break.

"Paola is just a really good team," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "They have really good players. They are athletic, they have size and they can shoot the ball really well. We just didn't play well enough to stay with them."

Following the game, the Lady Cats (10-10) and their fans honored their three seniors and their families. Natalie Moore,

Kallie O'Keefe and Kirstin Lowry all said their final goodbyes to their home crowd.



**Kallie O'Keefe skips into her senior night ceremony Friday with her parents Angie and Mike O'Keefe.**



**Louisburg senior Kirstin Lowry holds hands with her parents Kristine and Shawn Lowry as she was honored Friday during senior night.**



**Natalie Moore walks onto the floor for the senior night ceremony Friday with her brother Nathan and her parents Lynne and Doug Moore.**

The three Louisburg seniors have led the team throughout the season and provided a lot of highs in a season that brought 10 wins.

“They have been in the program for four years and have given a lot to this team,” coach Lowry said. “For me personally, I have been around them for most of their lives and I have watched them grow. I have probably coached them since the third grade and my relationship with them is pretty special, and not just because Kirstin is my daughter.

“All three have provided good leadership for the younger kids playing and they have been a big part of the team. They will definitely be missed.”

After the last meeting went down to the final minutes, the

Lady Cats couldn't keep up with Paola this time as the Panthers connected on eight 3-pointers and controlled the glass. Paola took a 17-6 lead into second quarter after scoring the first nine points of the game.

Kirstin Lowry ended the scoring drought with a 3-pointer and O'Keefe followed with a basket to make it a 9-5 deficit, but the Lady Cats would get no closer.

Paola scored 22 more points in the third quarter to grow its lead to 56-28 and all but sealed the win for the Panthers.

O'Keefe led the Lady Cats scoring wise with a team-high 10 points, while Kirstin Lowry and Moore each finished with eight points. Sophomores Madisen Simpson and Paige Buffington each added five.

Paola's Tiana Moala was one of four Panthers to score in double figures as she scored a team-high 16 points and Lyndsee Johnson added 13.

The two teams could see each other again this weekend as Paola hosts the four-team substate tournament. Louisburg, the No. 2 seed, will play No. 3 Fort Scott (4-16) at 6 p.m. on Friday

If the Lady Cats advance, they will play in the championship game at 6 p.m. Saturday against the winner of No. 1 Paola and No. 4 Spring Hill.

"I guess we just need to try different things," coach Lowry said. "I hope to play Paola again because that means we will be in the championship game. I think the girls are ready for substate and they know what it means. If you lose, it is over and the girls aren't ready to be done."

**LOUISBURG**

**6**

**9**

**13**

**10 - 38**

PAOLA

17

17

22

6 – 62

LOUISBURG (10-10): Kallie O'Keefe 10; Kirstin Lowry 8; Natalie Moore 8; Madisen Simpson 5; Paige Buffington 5; Emalee Overbay 2. Totals 11 12-22 38. 3-point field goals: 4, (Lowry 2, Simpson, Buffington)

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## Paola spoils senior night for Louisburg



It played against the same players and the same scheme, but the Louisburg boys basketball team played like different squads in each half.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, the first version put them in a big hole against Paola and they weren't able to recover in the second half. Louisburg outscored Paola in the final two quarters, but still fell 60-43 on Friday in Louisburg, which was also senior night.

"Paola really didn't let up or change it up in the second half, but for some reason we didn't play as well in the first half," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "The second half was just so different. Our intensity was up, our cuts were crisper and we were playing hard. The first half we didn't have that intensity, we didn't play with confidence and we ended up

spotting them a lot of points and we can't do that against a team like Paola."

Before the game, Louisburg honored its three seniors: Corbin Wertz, Nathan Moore and Brady Lambeth as each played their final game on their home floor.



**Louisburg senior Corbin Wertz escorts his parents Kristin and Todd Wertz onto the floor during senior night Friday.**



Louisburg senior Brady Lambeth brings his parents Karen and Mark Lambeth onto the floor for senior night.



**Senior Nathan Moore was honored along with his sister Natalie Moore and parents Lynne and Doug Moore on Friday during senior night activities.**

Wertz provided the Wildcats a spark as he finished with a team-high 14 points, while Lambeth added eight points in the loss. Moore led the Wildcats with a team-high seven rebounds.

"We are constantly talking about building something and those three guys are our foundation," Nelson said. "Two years ago I came in as a new coach, with a new system and those guys did everything we asked of them and they didn't complain. They are the heart and soul of this team and have done a great job of leading those six sophomores that we have on the bench."

The Wildcats (6-14) had a tough time staying with Paola in the first half. Louisburg committed 13 turnovers against a Paola full-court press in the first half, which led to several transition baskets for the Panthers.

Louisburg had a tough time scoring in the second quarter as the Panthers outscored the Wildcats 19-6 and built a 20-point halftime lead. Paola ended the first half on a 9-2 run.

"The effort was there, we just couldn't execute and we didn't play well against their press," Nelson said. "In the second half though, we came out with a different mentality and cut down those 13 turnovers to just five in the second half. They were still pressuring us and they had the same players out there, we just played better. I just wish we could have started the same way."

The Wildcats got a good performance from sophomore forward T.J. Dover as he finished with 11 points to go along with five rebounds against a tall Paola front line.

It is a new season for Louisburg as it begins substate action Thursday. The Wildcats are No. 4 seed and will play No. 1 Fort Scott (14-6) at 6 p.m. on Thursday at Paola High School.

If the Wildcats advance, they will play for the championship at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>10 - 43</b>	
<b>PAOLA</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>9 - 60</b>	

**LOUISBURG (6-14): Corbin Wertz 4-7 6-8 14; T.J. Dover 5-8 1-3 11; Brady Lambeth 3-6 2-2 8; Grant Harding 2-5 0-0 5; Nathan Moore 1-5 2-4 4; Jake Hill 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 16-37 11-18 43. 3-point field goals: 1, (Harding)**

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# Wildcats pull upset of De Soto on road



The Louisburg boys' basketball team defeated De Soto 46-41 on Tuesday in De Soto to get its second win in three games. The Louisburg girls had a little more difficult time as it fell 51-14.

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DE SOTO – The fourth quarter hasn't always been so kind to the Louisburg boys' basketball team.

Before Tuesday's game with De Soto, the Wildcats have had six leads going into the fourth quarter only to come out on the losing end. Louisburg made sure that streak stopped at six.

The Wildcats came through in a big way as they knocked off De Soto on the road with a 46-41 victory despite several runs by De Soto to take the lead back in the fourth quarter. Louisburg didn't let this one get away.

"We played well, but not great," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "However, the best thing about the win is that we had the mentality necessary to win games when we're not our best. Our defensive rotations went into a few lapses, and our offensive sets were a bit stagnant at times."

"To the credit of our boys, however, we found a way to not let this one get away. They were determined not to let that happen again and I couldn't be more proud of that fact."

Louisburg (6-13) took an early 14-9 lead after the first quarter and held that lead as it had a 27-22 halftime lead. De Soto made a mini-run in the third quarter to tie the game going into the fourth quarter.

It was then the Wildcats took a small lead and were able to hold it. The Louisburg defense came through in the final minute as it held De Soto empty in its final possession with Louisburg up three points.

The victory was the second in three games for the Wildcats, and had it not been for a bad fourth quarter last week against Spring Hill, it could have been three in a row. Looking at that, Louisburg seems to be trending upward at the right time of the season with the substate tournament a week away.

"Our boys work as hard as any I've been around," Nelson said. "Be it finishing moves, defense, shooting, offense, or the like, our boys put in the work through high energy and intense practices and I like we're beginning to reap the benefits of this, especially with the six sophomores that suit up on varsity. We've tasked these young men with a great deal of pressure, especially given that they're in 10th grade and they're starting to figure out how to play."

Louisburg senior point guard Corbin Wertz made his return to the Wildcat lineup and made an immediate impact. Wertz had a double-double as he led the team with 15 points and 12 rebounds in the victory.

Another senior, Nathan Moore, also had a strong game as he finished in double figures with 14 points, while sophomore Grant Harding added six rebounds.

Wertz, Moore and teammate Brady Lambeth will play their final

home contest tonight when they Wildcats host rival Paola on senior night. Senior night ceremonies will be held in-between the varsity girls and boys game.

Tipoff for the boys game is set for approximately 7:30 p.m. Nelson hopes it is a memorable night for his three seniors.

“More than anything, I want our seniors to experience success (tonight),” Nelson said. “They truly deserve it and have worked hard towards it. Paola is a fantastic team with a great coach that we may face in substate, so we’ll definitely be looking to assert ourselves and let them know that we’re a capable and competent group of young men. “

<b>LOUISBURG</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>12 – 46</b>		
<b>DE SOTO</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>7 – 41</b>		

**LOUISBURG (6-13):** Corbin Wertz 4-9 6-9 15; Nathan Moore 5-8 3-4 14; T.J. Dover 3-7 0-0 6; Grant Harding 2-7 0-1 4; Brady Lambeth 2-3 0-0 4; Jacob Welsh 1-1 0-0 2; Sam Guetterman 0-0 1-2 1. Totals: 17-36 10-16 46. 3-point field goals: 2, (Moore, Wertz)

## **LADY CATS STRUGGLE ON ROAD**

DE SOTO – The Louisburg girls basketball team wanted to quickly forget Tuesday’s game with De Soto before it even finished.

The Lady Cats struggled offensively as they scored on seven

points in each half and fell 51-14 as they enter their final regular season game tonight against Paola. De Soto jumped out to an 11-5 lead in the first quarter and jumped out to a 22-7 halftime lead.

De Soto put the game away in the third quarter as it outscored Louisburg 23-5 in the frame to seal the win.

Senior Kirstin Lowry led the Lady Cats (10-9) in scoring with six points, while Madisen Simpson and Paige Buffington each had three points.

Lowry, along with fellow seniors Natalie Moore and Kallie O'Keefe, will play their final home game tonight against Paola for senior night. Tipoff for tonight's game is set for approximately 6 p.m.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>2 - 14</b>	
<b>DE SOTO</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>6 - 51</b>	

**LOUISBURG (10-9):** Kirstin Lowry 6, Madisen Simpson 3; Paige Buffington 3; Kallie O'Keefe 2. Totals: 3 5-8 14. 3-point field goals: 1, (Buffington)

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## **Rough fourth quarter haunts Cats**



**Brady Lambeth goes up for a shot earlier this season. Lambeth and the Wildcats fell to Spring Hill 57-47 on Friday in Spring Hill after the Broncos outscored Louisburg 21-10 in the fourth quarter.**

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SPRING HILL – It was right there for the taking, but the Louisburg boys basketball team lost a hold of what could have been its second straight win.

A bad fourth quarter haunted the Wildcats on Friday as they fell to Spring Hill 57-47 in Spring Hill. Louisburg held the lead for much of the game, but the Broncos went on a 21-10 run to end the game and halted any momentum the Wildcats had going into the final week of the season.

“For three quarters, we played pretty well,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “We were assertive, got good looks, limited turnovers and controlled the glass, but we encountered a little adversity in the fourth that changed our mentality and we weren’t able to recover.

“We missed a couple bunnies, and they came down and hit two contested 3’s. We lost confidence and they gained confidence and didn’t look back. It’s part of being such a young team with leadership and experience on the bench with injuries in Corbin (Wertz) and Mitchell (McLellan), but I feel like all of our sophomores have progressed in their absence.”

One sophomore has in particular.

For the second game, Grant Harding reached the 20-point mark

as he nearly finished with a double-double. Harding scored 20 points, including three 3-pointers, and pulled down nine rebounds.

The Louisburg sophomore has been more assertive as of late, especially with Wertz, the team's leading scorer, still out with a leg injury.

"We've expected Grant to become a dominant force since we first saw him last year and we're seeing his evolution in the present," Nelson said. "He has such good court awareness and ability to reach the rim that as he gets older and more experienced, he's only going to get better.

"In addition to leading by example, he's becoming a leader on the court. He has grown in the past few weeks as we've asked him to do more on the court, both physically and verbally in Corbin's absence."

Louisburg (5-13) jumped out to a slim lead in the first quarter and took a 27-22 lead into halftime. The Wildcats held a 37-36 lead into the fourth quarter before the Broncos went on a run.

Along with Harding, senior Nathan Moore provided the team with a much-needed scoring punch as he finished with 12 points. Another sophomore, T.J. Dover, added seven points and six rebounds in the loss.

The Wildcats have a tough week to close out their regular season as they travel to De Soto tonight before returning home Friday for senior night against rival Paola. Tonight's tipoff in De Soto is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

"One of my goals for the last two weeks of the season has been to get all our sophomores some quality minutes to see how they respond and to give them something to build towards for the summer and the future," Nelson said. "We've done that and we're seeing our guys continue to improve.

"For this last week, our goal is to get Corbin back to his pre-injury shape, and continue to see the growth of our sophomores and continued high level of play from Grant, Nathan and Brady (Lambeth). If everything falls into place, we are capable of going on a run."

LOUISBURG	10	17
10	10 - 47	

SPRING HILL	7	15
14	21 - 57	

LOUISBURG (5-13): Grant Harding 7-15 3-6 20; Nathan Moore 4-6 4-6 12; T.J. Dover 3-6 1-2 7; Jayce Geiman 1-2 0-0 3; Korbin Hankinson 1-2 0-0 3; Sam Guetterman 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 17-36 8-17 47. 3-point field goals: 5, (Harding 3, Hankinson, Geiman)