

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.

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)

0’Keefe’s 18 points lifts Lady Cats



Louisburg senior Kallie O'Keefe scored 18 points and pulled down nine rebounds in the Lady Cats' 52-36 victory over Spring Hill on Friday.

SPRING HILL – The Louisburg girls basketball team picked the right time to flip the switch as it was in danger of losing its second straight game.

The Lady Cats put together a big fourth quarter Friday in Spring Hill as they outscored the Broncos by 14 points in the frame and ended up cruising to a 52-36 victory. Senior Natalie Moore hit a shot at the buzzer to end the third quarter to help set up the final push.

“Natalie’s shot at the buzzer to end the third quarter seemed to give us some good momentum to start the fourth,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “We pushed the tempo more in that final quarter and some of the younger players made some plays for us.”

Spring Hill had a tough time containing forward Kallie O'Keefe as she made impacts on both ends of the floor. The Louisburg senior finished with a game-high 18 points and nearly had a double-double with nine rebounds. O'Keefe also had two steals to add to her line.

“Kallie was active in the offense and the others did a good job of getting her the ball in good positions,” coach Lowry said.

The Lady Cats (10-8) took a 25-20 lead into halftime before Spring Hill made a mini run. The Broncos eventually tied the game at 32-all before Moore's shot at the buzzer gave Louisburg the lead and the momentum back. Louisburg outscored Spring Hill 18-4 in the final quarter.

Moore had another solid game at both ends of the floor for Louisburg as she was second on the team in scoring with 15 points to go along with six assists and five rebounds.

Louisburg also got good production from its underclassmen as junior Megan Lemke was second on the team with seven rebounds and five points. Sophomores Paige Buffington and Emalee Overbay also scored some crucial baskets for the Lady Cats and each had four points.

"It's always good to get wins as we get closer to the end of the regular season," coach Lowry said. It's also a challenge preparing and playing against a team that we could see in a couple of weeks in substate."

Spring Hill, along with Paola and Fort Scott, will join Louisburg in substate action in two weeks and the Lady Cats will see another one of those opponents later this week.

Louisburg will host Paola on Friday for senior night after the Lady Cats nearly knocked off the unbeaten and No. 2-ranked team in Class 4A, Division I earlier this month. It will be the final time Moore, O'Keefe and Kirstin Lowry play in front of their home crowd.

Tonight, the Lady Cats will also try for another revenge victory when they travel to De Soto. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

"This week gives us an opportunity to play two very good teams and obviously Paola that has yet to be beaten and is someone we hope to have a chance to play in substate," coach Lowry said. "More importantly, this week is the final time that our

three seniors will play on their home court. We know De Soto will be another tough game tonight but it's another opportunity to help prepare us for the postseason."

LOUISBURG	10	15
9	18 – 52	

SPRING HILL	8	12
12	4 – 36	

LOUISBURG (10-8): Kallie O'Keefe 7-10 4-9 18; Natalie Moore 5-13 5-6 15; Megan Lemke 1-2 3-4 5; Paige Buffington 2-5 0-0 4; Emalee Overbay 2-2 0-0 4; Kirstin Lowry 1-8 0-0 3; Madisen Simpson 1-7 0-0 3. Totals: 19-47 12-19 52. 3-point field goals: 2, (Simpson, Lowry)

Lady Cats lose lead, game to Baldwin



Louisburg sophomore Paige Buffington drives between two Baldwin defender Tuesday during the Lady Cats' home 44-28 loss to the Bulldogs.

For the second time in a month, the Louisburg girls basketball team had its sights set on upsetting the No. 1 team in Class 4A, Division II.

The Lady Cats hosted Baldwin on Tuesday, and for three quarters, positioned themselves for what could have been their biggest win of the season. The fourth quarter, however, was a different story.

Baldwin held Louisburg to just two fourth-quarter points and ended up pulling away for a 44-28 victory. It was a little bit of déjà vu, as earlier in the year the Lady Cats had a 17-point halftime lead at Baldwin and couldn't hold on.

"I know the girls aren't satisfied with playing some the best teams in the league and state like Paola and Baldwin close, but for some reason we have a hard time closing out games," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "For whatever reason, we are just not a good second half team right now and I don't think it is a lack of effort, but we just aren't playing smart and executing like we need to."

The execution was good early as the Lady Cats (9-8) jumped out to a 10-0 lead in the first quarter, including six points from Natalie Moore. The Bulldogs hit a 3-pointer with 45 seconds left to make it 10-3, but the Lady Cats still had control.

A pair of Kallie O'Keefe free throws made it 12-3 in the second quarter, but Baldwin went on a 10-0 run to take the lead back. A 3-pointer from Madisen Simpson gave the Lady Cats the lead back and Moore hit a runner to make it 19-16 at halftime.

"We have had good first half efforts, and we did again in this one, but we just aren't finishing strong," coach Lowry said. "The girls have to be able to dig down and finish when they don't have a lot left. They are capable of doing that and have seen them do that."

Baldwin eventually took a six-point lead in the third quarter, but the Lady Cats cut it to two with under a minute left after a basket from O'Keefe. However, Baldwin hit a 3-pointer to end the quarter and then hit another to start the fourth to build a 10-point lead and eventually pulled away.

The Bulldogs outscored the Lady Cats 13-2 in the final period.



Louisburg's Kallie O'Keefe (left) dives on the floor for a loose ball Tuesday in Louisburg. O'Keefe finished with seven points and seven rebounds.

"I am not sure what was different about the second half because I don't think Baldwin did anything different than they did in the first half, we just didn't execute," coach Lowry said. "We got sloppy in the fourth quarter and did things that aren't like us."

Moore led the Lady Cats in scoring with 16 points, while O'Keefe finished with seven points and a team-high seven

rebounds.

“I thought Kallie played really aggressive out there and played smart,” coach Lowry said. “She was diving after loose balls and that sort of stuff is contagious and I think the rest of the team feeds off that.”

Before the game, the Lady Cats came out dressed in pink for the ‘Pink Out Night’ in honor of breast cancer awareness. Players also wore pink head bands during the game.

Louisburg will try and snap its two-game losing skid Friday when it travels to Spring Hill. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOUISBURG	10	9	7	2 –
28				
BALDWIN	3	13	15	13
– 44				

LOUISBURG (9-8): Natalie Moore 5-13 6-6 16; Kallie O’Keefe 1-9 5-6 7; Madisen Simpson 1-5 0-0 3; Kirstin Lowry 1-4 0-0 2. Totals: 8-36 11-12 28. 3-point field goals: 1, (Simpson)

Harding’s big game lifts Wildcats



Louisburg sophomore Grant Harding goes up for two of his of his 23 points Tuesday against Baldwin in Louisburg. The Wildcats won 57-45.

Grant Harding walked out of the Louisburg boys locker room Tuesday and ran into Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin, who had a rolled up banner ad in his hand that Harding had broken with a blocked shot during the Wildcats' game with Baldwin.

"You owe me 5 bucks," Gagnebin joked to Harding.

Harding couldn't hold back the grin. He and the rest of the Wildcats had a lot to smile about.

The Louisburg sophomore led the way with a game-high 23 points to help the Wildcats to a 57-45 victory over Baldwin in Louisburg. The victory snapped a nine-game losing skid and is the third time the Wildcats have defeated the Bulldogs this season

"This is obviously a huge win for us," Harding said. "We really needed this as we are getting close to the end of the season. Hopefully this will give us the boost we need and we can start getting some momentum as we get closer to substate."

Harding was a big boost for Louisburg as he seemed to be all over the floor. Along with his 23 points, he finished with 11 rebounds, five assists, two steals, two blocked shots and one broken banner. He was also 11 for 11 from the free-throw line.

A lot of those assists came as Harding brought the ball up the floor. In the absence of point guard Corbin Wertz, who is still out with an injury, he played a point forward at times trying to initiate the offense.

“Grant was fantastic and we really needed him to be,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “With Corbin being out, we needed to find some offense somewhere and Grant really stepped up and took control. It was great to see, but what was even better was we were able to find 34 points from other spots on the floor.”

Senior Brady Lambeth rose to the challenge as he joined Harding in double figures with 17 points, including two 3-pointers. The Wildcats (5-12) also did a good job on the boards as senior Nathan Moore led Louisburg with 14 rebounds from the guard spot.



Wildcat senior Brady Lambeth puts up a shot over two Baldwin defenders Tuesday in Louisburg.

"I think Brady is getting it and the game is finally slowing down for him," Nelson said. "A lot of times he is a mismatch out there on the floor, and it is all about trying to exploit those mismatches and he did a great job of that for us. He is starting to figure it out."

As good as the game ended up being for the Wildcats, it didn't

start out that way. Both teams were sluggish from the floor and the game was tied at 6-all going into the second quarter.

It didn't get much better in the second as Louisburg center T.J. Dover was saddled with three fouls and the Wildcats were forced to play small. Baldwin was able to take advantage and turn that into a 23-18 halftime lead.

Baldwin built a seven-point lead early in the third quarter, but the Wildcats responded with an 18-5 run to grab a 36-30 lead. Lambeth connected on two 3-pointers in the quarter and the Wildcats also got baskets from Harding, Moore and Guetterman.

Louisburg answered with another 8-3 run to start the fourth quarter to pull away for the win.

"There have been times this year where we have lacked a killer instinct and it has hurt us, but we found it in that second half," Nelson said. "This win was huge for us."

The Wildcats will try and start a win streak Friday when they travel to Spring Hill. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG		6	12
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18	21 - 57		
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BALDWIN		6	17
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7	15 - 45		
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LOUISBURG (5-12): Grant Harding 6-12 11-11 23; Brady Lambeth 7-14 1-1 17; Jacob Welsh 2-5 2-2 6; T.J. Dover 2-8 0-3 4; Nathan Moore 1-4 1-3 3; Sam Guetterman 1-3 0-2 2; Korbin Hankinson 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 20-47 15-22 57. 3-point field goals: 2, (Lambeth 2)

Second half Ottawa run sinks Wildcats



Louisburg sophomore T.J. Dover goes up for two of his team-high nine points Friday against Ottawa. The Wildcats fell 64-31.

It wasn't exactly the showing the Louisburg boys basketball team wanted to put together on homecoming.

The Wildcats faced a big obstacle against Ottawa, which is ranked No. 4 in Class 4A-Division I. After a back-and-forth first half, Louisburg couldn't keep up with the Cyclones as it fell 64-31.

Louisburg took the Cyclones to overtime a month ago, but it was a little different this time around and the Wildcats' offense went cold as they scored just 13 points in the second half.

"They hit their open shots and we didn't hit early," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "We had really good looks, but missed too many shots that we need to hit. As they gained confidence from hitting their contested shots, we got frustrated and that frustration snowballed."

Ottawa jumped out to a 9-2 lead to get started, but the Wildcats were able to cut it to one after a bucket from Corbin Wertz, along with a basket and two free throws from T.J. Dover.

The Cyclones tried to pull away again in the second quarter and built an 11-point lead halfway through the period. Again, a basket from Wertz and five straight points from Dover cut the lead to just 21-17.

Louisburg trailed 27-18 at halftime but was still in the game.

“The effort was there most of the night,” Nelson said. “Our staff was a little disappointed in the fourth quarter, but for the majority of the game, our defense was solid, communication was good and rebounding was a plus.”



Seniors Natalie and Nathan Moore were crowned homecoming king and queen at halftime of the boys contest Friday.

The Wildcats' offense went silent in the third quarter as it recorded just four points and Ottawa came out of the locker room on a 13-1 run. Ottawa sophomore Isaac McCullough led all scorers with 18 points.

Dover, a sophomore, provided the Wildcats with some good

scoring in the post as he finished with a team-high nine points. Another sophomore, Sam Guetterman, came off the bench and finished with five points.

Wertz, the team's leading scorer, made his first appearance in almost a month after sustaining an injury and finished with four points in limited minutes. One positive is it gives the Wildcat underclassmen an opportunity to grow at the varsity level.

"Corbin still isn't 100 percent so it will take him a while, but we feel he's moving in the right direction," Nelson said. "Injuries really have hampered us, but the benefits that all our sophomores will see from having to step up in what should be their 'learning' year will be huge moving forward. I'd think even as we progress this year that we'll see the tangible benefits of our younger guys being forced into action."

Louisburg will try to get back on the winning track tonight when it hosts Baldwin. The Wildcats have defeated the Bulldogs twice this season. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG	8	10
4	9 – 31	
OTTAWA	12	15
16	21 – 64	

LOUISBURG (4-12): T.J. Dover 9; Sam Guetterman 5; Brady Lambeth 4; Corbin Wertz 4; Grant Harding 4, Korbin Hankinson 3; Nathan Moore 2. 3-point field goals: 2, (Guetterman, Hankinson)

Rally comes up short for Lady Cats



Louisburg sophomore Madisen Simpson drives around an Ottawa player in the Lady Cats' 60-51 loss Friday on homecoming.

For the first 23 minutes, the Louisburg girls basketball team couldn't seem to get in any kind of rhythm during Friday's homecoming contest against Ottawa.

The Lady Cats eventually found it, and for the final nine minutes, turned a 21-point deficit to just five, but couldn't get over the hump in a 60-51 loss to the Cyclones. Louisburg came close to pulling off an improbable comeback.

"It was good to see the girls battle back, especially being down 21, but we have to be smarter at this point in the season," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "We had four days to prepare for Ottawa and defensively we were just out of position. The homecoming game is always filled with distractions and other things, so I am sure that was part of it, but we have to be more focused."

The game started to slip away from the Lady Cats (9-7) in the third quarter as Ottawa went on a 14-3 run to build a 47-26 lead with just under a minute left. Louisburg built some momentum when Natalie Moore hit two free throws and then a 3-pointer at the buzzer to make it a 15-point deficit.



Louisburg junior Natalie Moore drives past an Ottawa player to the basket Friday in Louisburg. Moore finished with 27 points in the 60-51 loss

Moore, who finished with a game-high 27 points, scored 14 of those points in the fourth quarter to help bring Louisburg back. She hit a runner in the lane to cut it to 53-48 with 1 minute and 28 seconds left in the game.

Louisburg couldn't get the stops it needed in the final minute and was forced to foul. Ottawa's Corie Fischer hit the final seven free throws to keep the Lady Cats at bay.

Lady Cat senior Kirstin Lowry also hit a big 3-pointer during the run and finished in double figures with 12 points.

To get the rally started, Louisburg junior Megan Lemke dove on the floor late in the third quarter for a loose ball and forced an Ottawa turnover which seemed to give the Lady Cats

new life.

"I think Megan's play there really woke us up a little bit," coach Lowry said. "It was a great hustle play and was a springboard into getting that rally going. It is those plays that can change a game and it did in our case."

Louisburg had to deal with foul problems early as forward Kallie O'Keefe picked up two fouls with three minutes left in the first quarter and Moore picked up two fouls in the second.

Ottawa gave the Lady Cats fits in the first three quarters from all over the floor. Fischer and Brette Moore each finished with 16 points for the game.

However, Cyclone freshman Kamryn Shaffer provided the biggest impact as she scored 18 points, including four 3-pointers.

"The fact was Ottawa was on fire for a while and just made shots," coach Lowry said. "For the freshman to come in and hit four 3s was big for them plus Fischer and Moore are always good players. I talked to those two before the game and I just wanted to let them know how much I appreciated them because I have watched them the last six or seven years and watched them grow. I try to do that with a lot of the seniors in the league."

Louisburg will try and rebound from the loss Tuesday when it hosts Baldwin. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m.

LOUISBURG		8	9
15	19 - 51		
OTTAWA		14	12
21	13 - 60		

LOUISBURG (9-7): Natalie Moore 27, Kirstin Lowry 12, Megan Lemke 6, Madisen Simpson 5, Kallie O'Keefe 1. Totals 19 8-13

51. 3-point field goals: 5, (Moore 2, Lowry 2, Simpson)

State-ranked Eudora rolls past Louisburg



Louisburg senior Brady Lambeth and the Wildcats couldn't keep up with Eudora on Friday in a 77-34 loss. Lambeth finished with nine points.

EUDORA – For the second straight game, the Louisburg boys' basketball team faced off with a state tournament team from a year ago and had to do so with two starters on the bench with injuries.

Eudora, the No. 5 ranked team in Class 4A-Division I, had the Wildcats' number from the opening tip Friday as the Cardinals took care of Louisburg 77-34 in Eudora. Earlier in the week, the Wildcats fell to Paola on the road as well.

The Wildcats (4-11) were without starters Corbin Wertz and Mitchell McLellan again due to injury. McLellan is out for the season with a broken leg, while the Wildcats hope to have Wertz back soon from a leg injury.

“When you’re as inexperienced as us, to play without two starters is a tremendous negative and we knew without Corbin and Mitchell finding points would be tough,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said.

It was difficult, especially early as Eudora put together a huge run to outscore Louisburg 29-2 in the first quarter and the Wildcats were never able to recover.

Eudora sophomore Mitchell Ballock, one of the top players in the state, put on a show in front of his home crowd as he finished with a game-high 25 points, including six 3-pointers.

“The resiliency of our boys was commendable,” Nelson said. “Playing in Eudora, against a state ranked team, with the best player in the state is a daunting task for the most seasoned of varsity players. We consistently had three [or] four sophomores on the court and despite the slow start for us and lightening quick start for them, the boys never backed down.

“In the near future, when we look back at our improvement, I suspect that this game will be watershed for us. Our sophomores played in a high intensity, hostile environment and despite the score, they never backed down.”

One of those sophomores, Grant Harding, led the Wildcats in scoring for the second straight game with 10 points to go along with six rebounds. Senior Brady Lambeth added nine points for the Wildcats, while fellow senior Nathan Moore led the team with eight rebounds.

The Wildcats will try and rebound this Friday when they host Ottawa for homecoming. Louisburg also expects to have Wertz and his 20-plus points per game back in the lineup.

“Our boys are awaiting Corbin’s return with open arms and we are all eagerly anticipating his return,” Nelson said. “I know he’s tired of listening to our staff on the bench.”

Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG	2	12
11	9 – 34	

EUDORA	29	18
21	9 – 77	

LOUISBURG (4-11): Grant Harding 5-10 0-2 10; Brady Lambeth 4-8 0-1 9; Jacob Welsh 2-6 2-2 6; T.J. Dover 2-5 1-2 5; Sam Guetterman 1-4 0-0 3; Nathan Moore 0-1 3-4 3. Totals: 14-39 6-11 34. 3-point field goals: 2, (Guetterman, Lambeth)

Lady Cats pull away from Eudora



Louisburg guard Kirstin Lowry was one of three Lady Cat players in double figures Friday in Eudora. Lowry scored 16 points in the 59-40 victory.

EUDORA – There was some worry about how the Louisburg girls basketball team would react to a tough loss earlier in the

week to rival Paola.

After a shaky first half Friday at Eudora, the Lady Cats shot down any doubt about how they would bounce back. Louisburg took control against Eudora in the second half on its way to a 59-40 victory.

It was the fifth victory in the last six games for Louisburg after it started its season with a 4-5 record in its first nine games. The Lady Cats are now 9-6 overall.

"I am always a little concerned about a game following one in which the kids gave so much," Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said of the Paola game earlier in the week. "However, our seniors did a good job of leading and setting the tone for us in the second half against Eudora."

The three seniors certainly did their part as they combined for 50 of the 59 points as each player made an impact on different parts of the floor.

Point guard Natalie Moore had her way with the Eudora defense as she finished with a game-high 24 points to go along with eight rebounds, three assists and three steals. Moore did a lot of damage from the free-throw line as she knocked down 12-of-15 attempts.

Guard Kirstin Lowry made an impact from beyond the arch as she totaled 16 points, including two 3-pointers. Forward Kallie O'Keefe worked hard underneath the basket as she nearly ended up with a double-double with 10 points and nine rebounds and also added two steals.

Offensively, the Lady Cats got off to a strong start as they scored 17 first-quarter points, but went into a lull in the second quarter and took just a 28-22 lead into halftime.

"Our level of energy and intensity wasn't what it has been at the beginning of the game," coach Lowry said. "In the first

half we seemed to be doing just enough to compete and weren't as disciplined as we needed to be."

The Lady Cats got the message in the second half as they outscored Eudora 31-18 in the final two quarters. Louisburg did so because of its work at the free-throw line as it converted 19-of-25 attempts.

Free throws have been up and down for the Lady Cats this season and is a vital part to their success.

"We continue to put a lot of work in on getting better at the free-throw line," coach Lowry said. "Because of how we play, we expect to get to the line a lot and it's crucial that we finish."

Next up for Louisburg is a home matchup with Ottawa at 6 p.m. this Friday and it will try to avenge a loss earlier in the season. It is also homecoming for the Lady Cats.

"Homecoming week is a fun and exciting week for the kids," coach Lowry said. "However, when it comes to preparing there are a lot of distractions so it will be important that we have good practices as we make our final push."

LOUISBURG	17	11
15	16	59

EUDORA	10	12
8	10	40

LOUISBURG (9-6): Natalie Moore 6-14 12-15 24; Kirstin Lowry 7-13 0-1 16; Kallie O'Keefe 4-7 2-2 10; Madisen Simpson 0-4 4-4 4; Emalee Overbay 2-3 0-0 4; Paige Buffington 0-3 1-2 1. Totals: 19-45 19-25 59. 3-point field goals: 2, (Lowry 2)

Upset-minded Lady Cats come up short



PAOLA – Scoring just two points in a quarter against the No. 2 ranked team in Class 4A-Division I, on its home floor no less, usually means blowout city.

Instead, the Louisburg girls basketball team nearly put together the upset of the season. The Lady Cats had undefeated Paola down with 5 minutes left in the contest, but couldn't hold on in a 51-39 loss Tuesday in Paola.

The Lady Cats took the lead with 5 minutes and 29 seconds left in the contest on a pair of Natalie Moore free throws, but Paola answered with a 17-4 run to end the game, with many of those points coming at the free-throw line late.

Even with the loss, Louisburg (8-6) knows it will get a chance to see Paola one, if not two more times before the end of the season.

“To be honest, yes it was a loss and we don't like to lose, but at the same time this was big for our girls,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. “They needed to get the confidence that we can play with teams like Paola and we did. It really helps us take that next step and hopefully we can keep building on this.”

It was a sluggish start for both teams as the first four minutes of the game was scoreless and was littered with turnovers on both sides. Paola found a little rhythm to take a 7-0 lead and Louisburg just missed getting shutout of the frame but Moore hit a runner with 20 seconds left.

The basket seemed to carry over into the second quarter as the Lady Cats outscored Paola 17-9 and took a 19-16 lead into halftime. Louisburg took advantage of some Paola foul problems and charged back.



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Louisburg sophomore guard Madisen Simpson drives to the basket on Feb. 3 against Paola. The Lady Cats fell to No. 2 Paola 51-39. (Top) Louisburg junior Megan Lemke battles for a rebound in Paola.

Senior Kirstin Lowry connected on two 3-pointers, including one that tied the game, while senior Kallie O'Keefe tied the game again on a basket with 1:33 left in the game. Moore and O'Keefe each hit free throws down the stretch to give the Lady

Cats the halftime lead.

"I think both teams were playing hard at first, even though it was a little sloppy, but I think both were just feeling each other out," coach Lowry said. "We made a nice run in the second quarter and felt pretty good at halftime. Even when we were down early, it was good to see the girls battle back and feel like they can play with Paola."

The third quarter went back and forth, but the Lady Cats seemed to seize the momentum heading into the fourth when Kirstin Lowry knocked down another 3-pointer to put Louisburg up 31-29 with under 10 seconds left.

However, Paola's Taylor Williams took the ball down the floor, scored, was fouled and converted the 3-point play with 1 second left to put the Panthers back up by one.

Moore hit four straight free throws in the fourth quarter to give the Lady Cats the lead at 35-34, but Paola would take control after that. Moore led the Lady Cats in scoring with 16 points to go along with six rebounds and was 8-for-10 from the free-throw line.

Kirstin Lowry also finished in double figures for the Lady Cats with 13 points. O'Keefe added six points, but also pulled down a team-high 12 rebounds against a big Panther front line.

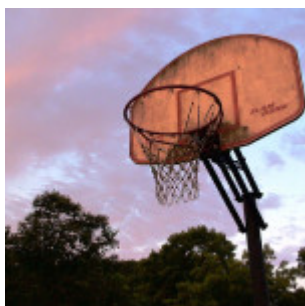
"I thought Kallie really battled in there and played smart," coach Lowry said. "She was going up against some big girls and she did well. She was very aggressive, which was good to see."

LOUISBURG	2	17	12	8 – 39
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PAOLA	7	9	16	19 – 51
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LOUISBURG (8-6): Natalie Moore 4-13 8-10 16; Kirstin Lowry 4-11 2-2 13; Kallie O'Keefe 3-14 2-5 6; Megan Lemke 2-3 0-0 4. Totals: 12-35 12-21 39. 3-point field goals: 3, (Lowry 3)

Welcome to Louisburg Sports Zone!



Leave it to a children's movie to solve all of life's problems – well, at least my problems anyway.

It was a movie that led me to create the Louisburg Sports Zone website and start my own action photo business to coincide with it.

Before I get to that, let me take you back to seven years ago when I arrived in a small quaint town called Louisburg. It was a town I was familiar with as I grew up in Paola, but I never envisioned myself coming back to Miami County to raise a family.

Coming out of college, my goal was to make it big one day by getting a job at a large, daily newspaper and become a beat writer for a college team or professional team. I knew with hard work and practice that I could get there one day.

Well, two kids later and my priorities quickly changed – for the better. After stops at newspapers in Leavenworth and

Atchison, my wife Jennifer and I wanted to move closer to family and when a newspaper job in the county opened up, I was offered the job and took it.

After I was hired, my family and I bought a house in Louisburg and decided to make this our home. The place where we were going to raise our two kids, that eventually became three several years later, was a place we fell in love with.

Louisburg was our home, and at the same time, covering Louisburg athletics became my responsibility and one I didn't take lightly. Living in the same town I worked in was a first for me.

I got the chance to get to know the community and they got the chance to know me through my articles. I was lucky enough to cover Louisburg High School's first state football championship in 2010 and several other state title runs in other sports.

Getting a chance to know the kids, coaches and parents was something I will never forget. Unfortunately, all that ended for me a month ago when I was let go from my responsibility of writing about Louisburg sports.

I honestly didn't know what to do. It was my life for seven years and then all of a sudden I was going to have to find something else to do, something I probably wasn't going to like.

Trying to figure things out, I remember watching an animated movie called Big Hero 6 with my kids. It talked about when a problem arises, and you can't figure out a solution, try looking at it from a different angle.

So, ladies and gentleman, Louisburg Sports Zone is my different angle.

This site gives me the opportunity and privilege to write

about athletic achievements in the area and continue doing what I love to do. It is a free service that I provide to you and one I hope you appreciate.

Hopefully, down the road, not too far, businesses in the area will want to advertise here so that this can grow into something even bigger. For those who want to buy photos from events I cover, they can visit louisburgsportszone.smugmug.com and search through what I hope becomes several galleries.

I plan on covering athletic events at Louisburg High School and Louisburg Middle School, along with elementary-age activities. This page is going to be updated on a regular basis to give you the most up-to-date sports news and you won't have to wait 5 days or even a week to read about it.

Oh, and did I mention...IT IS FREE!!

I just want to say a big "Thank you" to my family for all the support and encouragement they have given me. I want to thank all the members of community who reached out to me on Twitter, Facebook or just picked up the phone during what was a difficult time in my life.

Also, I want to give a big shout out to Mr. Kenneth Sweeney, a senior at Louisburg High School who helped design this site for me and was there to answer all my weird questions. I appreciate everything and all the hard work you put into it.

When I moved here seven years ago, I figured I was never going to make it "big." I couldn't have been more wrong. I have definitely hit it big and this community is the reason why.