Wildcats upset state-ranked De Soto



Sophomore Bailey Belcher heads the ball away from a De Soto player Tuesday in Louisburg. Belcher and the Wildcats knocked off No. 3-ranked De Soto 2-1 to give Louisburg its fifth consecutive win.

If you look at the rankings, the history and the fact the Louisburg girls soccer team is in its first year of the program, the Wildcats were right where they were supposed to be.

Louisburg was down a goal to No. 3-ranked De Soto late in the second half Tuesday in Louisburg – an admirable place to be all things considered. Coming into the match, De Soto was undefeated in Frontier League action and it is a team that has been to the state tournament two of the last three years.

Everything pointed to De Soto coming to Louisburg and getting a win.

It didn't happen.

Louisburg kept attacking and broke through for two late goals to upset De Soto 2-1 and give the Wildcats their biggest win in the program's brief history. It was also the Wildcats' fifth consecutive victory.

"The game was like a roller coaster," Louisburg coach Kyle

Conley said. “It was back and forth and had plenty of action. I feel we played pretty decent in the first half with a decent amount of



Louisburg sophomore Savannah Reinhart shields a De Soto player from the ball Tuesday in Louisburg. Reinhart scored the game-winning goal with five minutes left in the match.

pressure. The start of the second half we had no energy and I was worried playing Baldwin the night before might have caught up with us, but the girls just pushed forward and kept playing hard.

“After their goal, we started to push more and play way more direct. It was a great game to be part of and words cannot describe this team’s moxie and heart. They are truly playing for this town and community.”

Following the win, the Wildcats also took a big leap in the KPI rankings. According the rankings, which were released Thursday, Louisburg jumped up to the No. 1 spot in De Soto’s goal midway through the second half certainly seemed to spark the Wildcats. Louisburg, which had a couple shots on goal in

the first half, went on the attack in the final minutes of the match.

Sophomore Bailey Belcher got the ball with some space, raced down the sideline and beat her defender. Belcher's shot toward the far post went in and tied the match.

"That goal gave us the big boost in the arm we were looking for and we were alive," Conley said.



Louisburg junior Bryn O'Meara clears the ball out of the back Tuesday against De Soto.

The Wildcats (10-2-1) weren't done.

With five minutes left in the match, junior Lily Cook got a through-ball from the midfield and had a 2-on-1 situation with sophomore teammate Savannah Reinhart. The De Soto goalie was caught out of position and Cook passed the ball off to Reinhart who had a clear look at the net for the game-winner.

"That was exactly what we have been working on in practice and it was fantastic to see it happen in a game," Conley said.

Louisburg's defense also limited De Soto's shots on goal as it played with a bend but don't break attitude. Sophomore goalie

Shay Whiting had a handful of saves, while the defensive backfield didn’t give De Soto good looks at the goal.

“Our goal was not to give them uncontested shots,” Conley said. “We wanted to stand them up and contain them and I feel we did a pretty nice job of that. If we didn’t remain disciplined then it would have led to a lot of chances for them. I was happy with the way our entire team played defensively.”

With three games left in the regular season, the Wildcats have put themselves in prime position for a good seeding come postseason play. Add momentum onto the record and Louisburg seems to be playing its best at the right time.

“Beating a team like De Soto gives us a ton of confidence,” Conley said. “They are extremely talented and are one of the best teams we will play all year. They are actually a program with a rich tradition in soccer that I hope we can strive to emulate.”

Following the game, the Wildcats also took a big leap in the KPI rankings. The rankings, which were released Thursday, had Louisburg as the No. 1 ranked team in Class 4-1A.

Louisburg will try to keep that ranking when it returns to action Monday at Ottawa and then will follow up with another match Tuesday when it hosts Baldwin.

Louisburg pulls away from Baldwin

Louisburg ventured to Baldwin on Monday in hopes of continuing its season-best three-game winning streak.

The Wildcats had some obstacles to overcome as they had some players out with an injury and others were gone to an FFA competition. It meant players had to play in different spots.

That all didn’t seem to matter to Louisburg. The Wildcats jumped out to an early lead and never looked back in a 3-1 victory over the Bulldogs.

Louisburg sophomore Bailey Belcher provided the offensive punch as she finished with a hat trick to account for all three goals. Belcher had two breakaway goals and another that was assisted by senior Lilly Scott.

Baldwin had a chance to get back into the match as it awarded a penalty kick. However, Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting saved the attempt and kept Baldwin off the board.

“The first half against Baldwin was one of the best halves we played in several weeks,’ Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We played with confidence and moved the ball quickly. We jumped on them early and stayed on them. We only gave up three shots and two of them were from fouls.

“The girls played very organized and disciplined. We had a lot of kids fill roles and get playing time that would not regularly get some because of two students (Georgia Wilde and Hallie Hutsell) excelling at FFA dominating their competitions in Manhattan. We were slightly caught off guard by how direct Baldwin played and had to make some adjustments.”

The junior varsity also pulled a shortened 1-0 victory over Baldwin.

Freshman Kaitlyn Lewer scored the game’s lone goal on an assists from Camdyn Clark and the Wildcats got a lot of help from its defense. Sophomore goalie Sarah Wilson recorded the shutout and kept Baldwin scoreless with a save on a penalty kick.

Lewer’s game-winner lifts Wildcats in double overtime



Louisburg freshman Kaitlyn Lewer (middle) celebrates her game-winning goal against Kansas City Christian with teammates Madisen Simpson (left) and Lily Cook on Thursday at Johnson County Community College. The Wildcats improved their record to 8-2-1 on the season.

Kaitlyn Lewer came off the bench to give her team some much needed minutes Thursday against Kansas City Christian, but she did more than give the Wildcats minutes – she won them the game.

In a scoreless game in double overtime, Lewer sent a shot over the head of the K.C. Christian goalie that found the back of the net and gave the Wildcats a 1-0 win at Johnson County Community College.

“I could just feel it was going to go in,” Lewer said. “I am just thankful for the team and for getting me the ball and working their butts off.”

The Louisburg freshman provided the Wildcats a much needed lift when the match appeared as it was going to end on a tie. Louisburg had several shots on goal throughout the contest,

but couldn’t get it in the net.

However, the Wildcats didn’t seem to panic as they continued to push at the attack on the Panthers’ defense, which led to Lewer’s game-winning shot.

Lewer received a pass from junior Madisen Simpson and she took a touch near the sideline. She took the shot with her left foot and the shot sailed toward the far post for the goal.

“The second half Kaitlyn had a couple chances there but she kept going toward the endline and I told her to just go toward the goal, make one touch and play it to the back stick and see what happens,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “She did that exact thing in the second overtime and it worked out well for all of us. It was just fantastic.

“I am very happy for her. She has been playing very well and quite honestly, by needing numbers for JV, it has kind of been hurting her varsity time because she is definitely earning the time.”

The Louisburg defenders also played a big role in the double overtime win. The Wildcats limited the K.C. Christian shots on goal, and although there were a couple close calls, the defenders were in the right place.



Senior Rylee Bergh heads the ball away from a Kansas City Christian player Thursday.

Rylee Bergh, Georgia Wilde, Camdyn Clark, Simpson, Lewer and Lilly Scott were all six involved on keeping the game tied, while sophomore goalie Shay Whiting made several saves to earn her second consecutive shutout and fifth on the season.

“I think we did a good job,” Conley said of his defense. “Except for their corner kicks, the shots they had were from distance or contested and that was our whole goal. We don’t want to give up free looks and the girls are doing a good job of containing and not giving up a good look.”

The Wildcats (8-2-1) had their fair share of good looks.

Sophomore Bailey Belcher crossed the ball into the box midway through the first half to teammate Savannah Reinhart but her shot near the goal was saved. Late in the first half, Belcher had a shot hit off the crossbar, but bounced away.

“It is the first time that I have had to yell at them after the first half because we just went through the motions and let them dictate the pace,” Conley said. “In the second half and the overtimes, we just came out like gangbusters. We were playing hard, we pressured all over the place and we had countless chances we just couldn’t put it home. I thought we did well in the back as well. The girls just played so stinkin’ hard.”

Louisburg came close to scoring its first goal in the second half as Belcher went on a breakaway in the opening minutes, but her shot was saved by the Panther goalie.

A few minutes later, Clark nearly scored on a header off a corner kick, but her shot was knocked away and Belcher’s

follow up attempt was stopped by a trio of Panther defenders.

After a scoreless first overtime, the Wildcats finally broke through on Lewer's shot early on in the second overtime.

"We just kept going at them and going at them and you could tell their backs were getting tired,"
Conley said. "The whole overtime thing was if you had a chance to go past their backs, just go and that is what Kaitlyn did."

Louisburg returns to action today when it travels to Baldwin for what is a makeup game after its postponement last week. The Wildcats were supposed to play at home today against Baldwin, but that match has been moved to May 10.

The Wildcats will host Frontier League leader De Soto on Tuesday.

Belcher's lone goal enough to beat Basehor-Linwood



Louisburg freshman Camdyn Clark tries to settle the ball in the air Friday during the Wildcats' home match with Basehor-Linwood. The Wildcats scored an early goal in the first half and it was enough to get a 1-0 win.

Bailey Belcher raced down the field with the ball at her feet.

She made one defender miss. Then another. A third defender tried to poke the ball away from Belcher, but it wasn’t going to happen.

The Louisburg sophomore made her way through the Basehor-Linwood defense and put a goal away 10 minutes into Friday’s contest. As it turned out, it’s all Louisburg needed.

The Wildcat girls soccer team racked up its seventh win of the season with a 1-0 victory over the Bobcats in Louisburg. Thanks to a timely goal and stingy defense, it was enough to give the Wildcats their second straight win and they have won four of their last five matches.

Louisburg is now 7-2-1 in its inaugural year as it gets ready for the final few weeks of games.

“I don’t think anyone in their wildest dreams thought we would be where we are right now,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “But the girls are playing well right now and working hard. I couldn’t be more proud of them.”

The Wildcats faced a Basehor-Linwood team that plays a similar style and made for an even match as neither team had many shots on goal.



Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting dives to stop a Basehor-Linwood shot Friday in Louisburg.

However, junior Lily Cook had a couple early opportunities for Louisburg as she had two shots on goal that just missed the back of the net and the Wildcats dominated possession early.

Following Cook's opportunities, Belcher had an opportunity of her own with a goal in the 10th minute to put the Wildcats up early.

"She just kept going down the field," Conley said of Belcher. "Basehor was flat-footed and they dove at her. She just made a few quick touches and she was through. That is what we try to do by laying the ball and moving the ball because then we have the momentum going forward because those defenders are always on their heels. If you have any speed burst at all, you are going to go right by them and Bailey took full advantage of that."

Louisburg continued to control possession into the second half before Basehor-Linwood saw a few cracks in the Wildcat defense as they put three shots on goal in the final 20 minutes of the second half.

Sophomore goalie Shay Whiting made two diving saves to keep Basehor out of the net and preserve her fourth shutout of the

season.

“(Basehor) didn’t have many good chances, but I was a little worried that they might put one in because we didn’t have many chances ourselves,” Conley said. “It was just a good game that was played 18 (yard line) to 18 and those are tough games to play. We haven’t had many games like that, but the girls played well. We had a couple chances in the first half and had one that hit the crossbar later, but we couldn’t get many to go in.

“We controlled the first 20 or 25 minutes of that second half but then we started to fall apart a little bit. I think we got tired. I was just worried that we were going to get comfortable with that lead, but the girls did a good job and they fought.”

JV blanks Basehor-Linwood

Louisburg’s junior varsity soccer team had a little easier time finding the back of the net against Basehor-Linwood as it jumped out to an early lead and didn’t look back in a 3-0 win.

Freshman Camdyn Clark opened the scoring in the game’s opening minutes on an assist from Peyton Shaffer and fellow freshman Hayli Detherage followed it up with a goal of her own.

Kaitlyn Lewer, another Wildcat freshman, sealed the win with a goal in the second half. Sophomore goalkeeper Sarah Wilson earned the shutout.

The Wildcats now have a 7-1-1 record on the year.

Louisburg bounces back to rout Wyandotte



Louisburg senior defender Rylee Bergh (left) kicks the ball away from a Spring Hill player and out of the box while goalie Shay Whiting and defender Georgia Wilde (right) look on Thursday in Spring Hill. On Monday, the Wildcats defeated Wyandotte 6-1 and fell to Spring Hill 3-2 on Thursday.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – Coming off a tough loss against a ranked team in Spring Hill last week, the Louisburg girls soccer team needed a little pick-me-up.

The Wildcats got that Monday.

Louisburg traveled to Wyandotte for its second straight road contest and left with an easy 6-1 victory at Wyandotte High School. The Lady Cats scored four goals in the first half and never looked back.

“The girls were a little lackadaisical to start the game and that is to be expected after the Spring Hill game and prom weekend,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We were waiting on the ball and slightly passive for the first 20 minutes or so.

“I feel even though that we only scored two goals in the second half that we played much better. We controlled the pace of play and played much better soccer. We played to feet and

changed the attack regularly. We tried to use the game to work on some things and improve our formation and build up."

Sophomore Bailey Belcher made things difficult for the Wyandotte defense as she finished up with the best offensive performance in the team's short history. Belcher had a hat trick before halftime and ended up with four of the Wildcats' six goals.

"Bailey played very aggressive with the ball," Conley said. "She was very motivated and played at a high level. It almost seemed like they were defending our other midfielders and choose to give her space.

"Bailey is improving each day and still learning the game. You can see she is starting to put it together and it is reflecting in her play. She took advantage of what the other team gave her."

Along with Belcher's three goals in the first half, Louisburg senior Maddie McDaniel added to the scoring effort when she put a shot away off an assist from sophomore Savannah Reinhart.

The Wildcats (6-2-1) added to their lead in the second half with another goal from Belcher and one from junior Lily Cook.

Louisburg also got a good effort from its back line as it limited Wyandotte's chances on goal. Also, the Wildcats have several players out with injury and Conley used more of his bench and younger players to help out.

"I was very pleased on how the underclassman played," Conley said. "They did a nice job filling in and playing a very nice game. I was also very pleased with how we defended. Those six girls in the back play their tails off and are doing well to improve their chemistry each and every night out."

The junior varsity also improved their record to 6-1-1 on the

season with a 3-0 victory. Louisburg picked up two goals from Quincy Rice and another by Reinhart. Goalie Sarah Wilson recorded the shutout.

The Wildcats return to action Friday when they host Basehor-Linwood. The varsity is set to begin at 4 p.m., with the junior varsity to follow.

Louisburg rally comes up short against Spring Hill

Down three goals at halftime to the No. 5 ranked team in Class 4A, Louisburg faced an uphill battle on the road Thursday against Spring Hill.

Instead of hanging their heads at halftime, the Wildcats put together a comeback to cut Spring Hill's lead. Although the rally came up short in Lousburg's 3-2 loss, it gave the Wildcats confidence moving forward.

"The first half was a little disappointing, but I think the second half showed our true grit and what this team was made of," Conley said. "They battled back when it would have been very easy to give up or go through the motions. I was proud of our effort and fight in the second half. We are a team that is going to be resilient and battle regardless the situation."



Louisburg's Madisen Simpson

(right) tries to fight off a Spring Hill player to win a 50-50 ball Thursday.

Spring Hill forward Mikayla Smith made it tough on the Wildcat defense early. Smith, who has signed to play soccer at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, recorded a hat trick in the first half to help give the Broncos a 3-0 lead.

The Wildcat defense buckled down in the second half and limited Spring Hill's shots on goal. Senior Rylee Bergh led the Louisburg defense as she helped mark Smith with the help of Georgia Wilde, Camdyn Clark, Bryn O'Meara and Kaitlyn Lewer, while goalie Shay Whiting had five diving saves in the second half to keep the game close.

"Defensively, it was a game of two halves," Conley said. "I was pleased with the limited opportunities they had in the first half but not how we over played Smith. In the second half, I was proud of how our team played more aggressive in the midfield which allowed our back four to be a little more isolated but they held up very well. Rylee, Cammie, Georgia, Kaitlyn and Bryn played very well.

"They had better scoring chances in the second half, but that was because of the limited help because we were pushing a lot of girls forward in the attack. Shay did a nice job of making some very nice reaction saves. She also did a nice job of making sure she got her hands to the ball and be as big as she can to take away as much of the goal as she can."

With 33 minutes left in the contest, senior Maddie McDaniel hit a shot from just outside the box that sailed just over the reach of the Spring Hill goalie to give Louisburg its first goal.

The Wildcats would have plenty of other chances as they had shots on goal from Savannah Reinhart and Bailey Belcher to

keep the pressure on.

Clark helped cut into Spring Hill's lead with 14 minutes left as she headed a corner kick from McDaniel into the goal to make it a 3-2 deficit, but the Wildcats could get no closer.

"I think it showed the girls that they can play with anyone, but also shows the importance of coming ready to play," Conley said. "It was a wild game that was back and forth and changing the formation slightly helped us become more offensive. I think a game like this greatly helps our confidence and showing us that we can play with anyone, but we need to come ready to play at the first whistle.

"The game was awesome. As a coach you could not be more impressed with our effort and never-say-die attitude. I was incredibly proud of every girl in their effort, attitude and belief in one another."

Louisburg puts Ottawa away early



Louisburg's (from left) Madisen Simpson, Hallie Hutsell and Lilly Scott celebrate the game's final goal Monday following the Wildcats' 10-0 victory over Ottawa in Louisburg. The Wildcats are now 5-1-1 to start the season.

One right after the other, the Louisburg shots found the back of the net – 10 of them to be exact.

The Wildcats wanted this one to be done early.

For the first time in its history, the Louisburg girls soccer team invoked the mercy rule and its unfortunate opponent was Ottawa. The Wildcats defeated the Cyclones 10-0 on Monday in Louisburg as their goals came in bunches.

Louisburg scored six goals in the first half and four more in just eight minutes in the second half before the game was called with 32 minutes remaining.

“The best part was watching them do the things we have been trying to work on instead of just running and playing the ball along,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We were trying to find feet and it looked better in the second half. It was nice to get out and go. Ottawa is a rebuilding team and they are well-coached, but a result like this is always nice.”

The Lady Cats (5-1-1) have been on a scoring onslaught these last two games. In their last two contests, they have accounted for 16 goals, which is six more than their five previous matches combined.

Sophomore Bailey Belcher led the attack for the Lady Cats as she recorded her first hat trick of the season with a pair of goals in the first half and another in the second.



Sophomore Bailey Belcher takes a shot on goal during Monday's contest against Ottawa in Louisburg.

Senior Maddie McDaniel also had a big day offensively as she finished with two goals and also added three assists. Freshman Camdyn Clark also contributed two goals in the win, while junior Madisen Simpson notched two assists and a goal.

"Bailey is doing a good job along with Maddie," Conley said. "They are really wanting to be offensive right now and push, but we are trying to get them to find a little balance. I am really excited on how they are getting better and today was just icing on the cake. "

Belcher got the scoring started early in the opening minutes with a goal, and a few minutes later, Clark got into the action. Clark scored on an assist from McDaniel to put Louisburg up two goals.

McDaniel made it 3-0 on an assist from Simpson and Belcher made it a four-goal lead. Simpson found McDaniel again on another scoring opportunity for an assist and Clark made it 6-0 with a goal shortly before halftime.

The Lady Cats weren't satisfied with their lead as they continued to play hard in the final half.

“Being an inexperienced team, I am worried about them getting complacent or being satisfied with what they have, then giving up and all of sudden giving up a couple goals,” Conley said. “It is easy to get lax in a game like this, but every game we have to be ready to go because a team can sneak up on you at any time. I was proud of the way they continued to play though and it was good to see.”

Less than four minutes into the second half, Belcher completed her hat trick to put Louisburg up 7-0 and the Lady Cats scored quickly after.

Sophomore Savannah Reinhart put the Lady Cats up eight with a goal thanks to an assist from junior Lily Cook. McDaniel assisted the game’s final two goals by Simpson and freshman Hallie Hutsell.

Louisburg will try for its third-consecutive win Thursday when it travels to meet undefeated, and state-ranked Spring Hill. The Lady Cats will have to do it without a couple players who are out with an injury.

“The kids are just busting their butts right now and their goal is to get better every day,” Conley said. “There are some games where you are going to have a result like this and there are some where it is going to be a dogfight. We are playing a Spring Hill team that is ranked No. 1 in our region by one ranking so it is a good game for us. Since we are down some bodies, this result helped us out a lot and we were able to rest our legs a little bit.

“We are a little bit ahead of where I thought we would be. I don’t know that anyone could have fathomed us being 5-1-1 to start the season. Ultimately, we are doing a great job of being ready to go and working. We are ahead of schedule, but our league is incredibly difficult. Spring Hill and De Soto are ranked right now and Baldwin is much improved. A lot of nights we are going to be playing a powerhouse so we have to

be ready to go. I couldn’t be prouder of them right now.”

JV rolls Ottawa

The Louisburg junior varsity picked up right where the varsity left off as it defeated Ottawa 8-0 on Monday in Louisburg.

Megan Anderson led the way for Louisburg as she recorded her first hat trick of the season with three goals. Savannah Reinhart recorded two goals on the day as well.

Peyton Shaffer, Leia Shaffer and Hayli Detherage each scored a goal for the Wildcats.

Second half sparks Wildcats over Heritage



Louisburg sophomore Georgia Wilde wins a 50-50 ball during the Wildcats’ game with Piper earlier in the season. The Wildcats scored four second half goals to defeat Heritage Christian 6-1 on Thursday in Louisburg. Wilde scored one of those goals, which was her first of the season.

The game was never truly in doubt, but Louisburg girls soccer

coach Kyle Conley saw that something was missing from his team in the first half.

Louisburg held a one-goal lead over Heritage Christian at halftime, but it could have been more. The Wildcats found whatever was missing in the second half as they scored four goals to get a 6-1 victory Thursday in Louisburg.

“We were playing a very well-coached and short-sided Heritage team, but I feel we executed well on the offensive end,” Conley said. “In the first half we struggled to make that last pass to our feet and did more one on one, but in the second half we completed a lot more passes to feet. I was very pleased with our possession and ability to complete that final pass in the final third of the field.”

The Wildcats were still able to find the net in the first half as senior Maddie McDaniel scored the team’s first goal on an assist from freshman Hayli Detherage. Louisburg was able to take a 2-1 lead at halftime when junior Lily Cook scored off an assist from sophomore Savannah Reinhart.

Louisburg (4-1-1) had no problem making that extra pass in the second half and it led to several goals.

Sophomore Bailey Belcher got the scoring started early to double the Wildcats’ lead. Senior Lilly Scott followed suit with a goal of her own off an assist from McDaniel.

Belcher scored her second goal of the match to give Louisburg a 5-1 lead late in the contest and then sophomore Georgia Wilde scored her first goal of the season off an assist from Belcher to seal the win for the Wildcats.

Heritage Christian didn’t have many opportunities to score in the second half thanks to a Wildcat defense that made it difficult as Heritage was held to just five shots on goal for the game.

“Our defense did a very nice job of limiting their scoring opportunities,” Conley said. “I am very pleased with how our defense is building off each other and developing a strong chemistry among that group.

“It was also nice to be able to play some kids that usually don’t get much time at the varsity level. We are a team that is still learning and my goal is to keep getting better each game out, and for the most part, I believe we are.”

The Wildcats will try for their second straight win today when they host Frontier League foe Ottawa. Varsity is set to begin at 4 p.m. and junior varsity will follow.

Louisburg girls soccer rallies to tie Piper



Louisburg sophomore Isabella Ford heads the ball in for a game-tying goal with five minutes left in regulation against Piper on Tuesday in Louisburg. Ford and the rest of the Wildcats tied Piper 3-3 to move their record to 3-1-1 on the year.

There was 21 minutes left in the contest and the Louisburg High School girls soccer team had a comfortable two goal lead over Piper.

It took only 12 minutes for the game to be completely flipped on its head.

In those 12 minutes, Piper stormed back with three goals of its own to steal all the momentum. For a program in its first year, it could have been easy for the Wildcats to back down.

Instead, Louisburg came right back as Isabella Ford tied the game on a header off a corner kick with five minutes left in regulation. The match went into two overtimes, but it ended in a 3-3 tie Tuesday in Louisburg.

“It was like a roller coaster,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Having a 2-0 lead in soccer is the hardest lead to hold. It is enough of a lead to just get a little comfortable and relaxed, but teams need to do the opposite. We left some girls in the midfield or didn’t mark up quiet as well as we normally do. Once Piper got that first goal they went to a whole other level.

“Then getting down 3-2 with eight minutes left it was crazy. We showed posse and confidence. I was very impressed how level headed the girls stayed through those 30 minutes.”

For a game that was scoreless for the first 50 minutes, the last 30 minutes and two overtimes did provide quite a bit of drama.



Junior Lily Cook (right) tries to hold off a Piper defender Tuesday in Louisburg.

After both teams had their fair share of shots on goal, the Wildcats converted in the 51st minute when Ford found the back of the net thanks to an assists from senior Maddie McDaniel to put Louisburg up a goal.

It took less than a minute for Louisburg to double its tally when sophomore Bailey Belcher hit a shot from 25 yards away, which caught the Piper defense out of place and scored to quickly put the Wildcats up 2-0.

It was then when Piper became more aggressive, and in the 59th minute scored a goal off a corner kick. Nine minutes later, Piper tied it up and in the 71st minute took the lead.

Louisburg (3-1-1) didn't let up as it continued to push the ball up the field and put together one of its more impressive goals of the season. In the 75th minute, McDaniel took the corner kick and placed it near the goal, which found the head of Ford who knocked it in.

"Izzie Ford played very well," Conley said. "She was getting

frustrated with not finishing like she wants to, but she did a great job of finishing and being our target up top.

“It was incredible how well the girls played to get that last goal back. They were incredibly focused and gave everything that they had to get that goal. Our formation is really coming together. We have focused a lot of practice time recently to improving our attack and being more balanced both offensively and defensively. That goal directly was created with how hard the girls are working at practice. It was an awesome goal and lifted our team spirits. It gave us belief again.”

The goal also lifted the spirits of the Louisburg defense which came together to turn away several Piper opportunities in the final minutes of regulation and in the two overtimes.



Senior Rylee Bergh clears a ball out of the back during the first half of Tuesday’s home contest with Piper.

Senior Rylee Bergh led the Wildcat defense from the centerback spot as she, along with juniors Madisen Simpson, Bryn O’Meara, sophomore Georgia Wilde and freshman Camdyn Clark rose to the occasion to help keep the game tied.

Junior goalie Shay Whiting also made a couple of big saves late in the match, including one in the final minute of the

second overtime.

“Piper did get those three goals, but they were due to minor things that can be fixed easily,” Conley said. “Communication lacked a little and we broke down, but overall I am very proud of how well the back line is playing. They really do a great job working with each other and complementing each other with their abilities and skill sets. I could not be more proud of them as a unit.

“Rylee is our leader back there and has accepted that role very well, especially since she has not really played centerback before. She is a very good leader and gives everything she had every night. Georgia and Madisen have working really hard and are great assets in the back. Bryn and Cammie are also working hard to improve every game and to anchor our back line. I am just proud how they work together and play so hard. Shay has played very well. She is doing a great job of working with Coach (Michael) Pickman and improving every day.”

The Wildcats return to action Thursday when they host Heritage Christian Academy for a varsity contest only. The match is set to begin at 4:30 p.m.

Wildcats use big second half to beat Sumner



Louisburg senior Lilly Scott reaches out with her leg to knock the ball down during the Wildcats' 3-2 victory over Sumner Academy on Thursday in Louisburg. Scott her first goal of the season in the second half.

On one night, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team put together a strong performance against one of the state's best teams, but unfortunately left with its first loss on the season.

Two days later, the Wildcats didn't have their best game but came away with a victory.

Go figure.

Although it was a wacky week, it marked a step forward in the progress of the Louisburg program as it defeated Sumner Academy 3-2 on Thursday in Louisburg. The Wildcats were able to put a team away despite not having their best performance.

"We struggled to play our game and I think some of that could be because of such an emotional game on Tuesday (against De Soto)," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "I was worried there might be a little let down. We showed in that second half how much heart and energy can play with. The girls showed their true character and responded very well after a lackluster first half.

"The girls do a fantastic job of picking each other up and

being a great support system for one another. I am very proud of how this team is growing each and every game.”



Sophomore Savannah Reinhart (right) battles for a 50-50 ball Thursday against Sumner Academy.

The Wildcats (3-1) had their backs against the wall in the first half after Sumner Academy scored the game’s first goal and the Sabres eventually took a 1-0 lead into halftime.

Louisburg had its chances early as Maddie McDaniel, Isabella Ford and Bailey Belcher all had shots on goal, but their chances just missed. The Wildcats didn’t miss many opportunities in the second half.

Those shots started to find the back of the net as the Wildcats scored three goals in the final 40 minutes to secure the win.

Early in the second half, Ford found herself 1-on-1 with the goalie and put the shot away to tie the match. Ford then found herself on the other end of the Wildcats’ second score.

Ford crossed the ball into the box and senior Lilly Scott knocked it in to give Louisburg the lead, and in the process, Scott scored her first goal on the year.

“Lilly’s goal was awesome,” Conley said. “She got a great ball served to her and she attacked it and scored it. It was a big time goal and a goal we needed. She has played incredibly well the past two games and I couldn’t be happier for her.”

The scoring continued a few minutes later when Belcher attacked the middle of the field and put a shot away for the Wildcats’ third goal. It was an important one as Sumner would score a second time, but Louisburg was able to hold on for the win.



Sophomore Bailey Belcher (left) knocks the ball up the field at home Thursday. Belcher scored one of the three goals in the win.

“It was clearly not our best game but they dug deep to find a way to win,” Conley said. “I was proud of how we responded at halftime. They are learning on the fly. We have a goal to never get out-worked in a game and I feel that we did in the first half, but they knew they were not out of the game.

“They increased their pressure and energy level and worked their tails off. I was worried because we did expend a massive amount of energy to come back, but we were able to hold on. We talk a lot about bending but not breaking and I think that fit how that game went for us.”

Louisburg will try for its fourth win of the year Tuesday when it hosts Piper. The game was originally scheduled to be played at Piper High School, but the game has been moved to Louisburg. Varsity is set to begin at 4 p.m. and junior varsity at 5:30 p.m.

JV rolls Sumner for third win

The Louisburg junior varsity had no problems scoring against Sumner Academy in its contest Thursday in Louisburg.

The Wildcats scored six goals in the first half to pull away for a 6-0 victory over the Sabres. The win improves their record to 3-1 on the season, with their lone loss coming to De Soto last Tuesday.

Five different players scored goals for Louisburg. Madisen Simpson led the way with a pair of goals, while Peyton Shaffer, Savannah Reinhart, Quincy Rice and Hayli Detherage added one each.

Wildcats fall to state-ranked De Soto

On paper, it might have been a mismatch with a first-year program in Louisburg going up against the No. 3 team in Class 4-1A in De Soto.

In fact, it wasn’t a mismatch at all.

Louisburg held its own against De Soto before eventually falling 2-0 last Thursday in De Soto. Ashley Panagakis scored a goal in each half for De Soto to hand the Wildcats their first loss on the season.

The Wildcats trailed 1-0 for much of the contest and had a few chances of their own to tie the match. Louisburg had four

shots on goal, while De Soto had 11.

Sophomore goalie Shay Whiting turned several shots away, while senior Rylee Bergh led the Wildcat defense to limit De Soto's chances.

"The girls played a very good game against a very good De Soto team," Conley said. "I am proud of how hard we played and how we didn't give up. We were focused and dedicated towards the game plan and playing such a good team. I feel that we all played a very solid game.

"We limited their quality chances and had several nice opportunities ourselves. We faced more shots from them then we did the first two games combined, but we did not break. Our back four and goalkeeper did a fantastic job. Rylee and Shay were especially good."

Louisburg girls soccer impresses in home opener



Louisburg sophomore Isabella Ford tries to cut past a Tonganoxie defender during Thursday's home opener. The Lady Cats defeated the Chieftains 2-0 to win their second straight game to start the year.

This wasn’t just any home opener.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team, already with an emotional-filled victory over Harmon on the road last Tuesday in the program’s first-ever game, tackled another milestone Thursday.

Louisburg played host to Tonganoxie for the Lady Cats’ first game on their home field and they didn’t disappoint their fans one bit.

A big second half gave Louisburg a 2-0 victory over the Chieftains and gave itself, ironically, a 2-0 record to start the year. In between the varsity and junior varsity game, those who helped with fundraising efforts to fund the team for three years were honored, many of whom were members of the Louisburg Soccer Club.

It was a start the players and coaches were hoping for.



Members of the Louisburg High School girls soccer team pose for a picture with the fundraising committee that helped raise money to fund the program for three years.

“It is fantastic,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “They have put in a lot of work to get here. Honoring everyone who made this possible between the games was a great thing as well and was deserving. It was a great start to the season for sure.”

The nerves didn’t seem to bother Louisburg too much as it was the aggressor early. Senior Lilly Scott nearly scored a goal in the first 10 minutes as her shot from just outside the box sailed just wide of the post as a cold, blustery wind pushed it away.

Louisburg’s next-best opportunity was thwarted on a nice save from the Tonganoxie goalie with nine minutes left as she jumped to knock a shot from senior Maddie McDaniel away. Sophomore Bailey Belcher also had two shots on goal that were just offline.

“In the first half, (Tonganoxie) just really crammed the

middle on us and we struggled to get the ball wide and play the ball a little quicker," Conley said. "We did well possessing the ball for two-thirds of the field, but that other third we just tried to go 1-on-1 and that wasn't successful for us. So we talked about that at halftime, then we finally started pinging some passes together and it worked out."

It certainly did as sophomore Isabella Ford facilitated the offense. Ford crossed the ball to Belcher from the right side and Belcher put the shot away for the game's first goal. It was the team's first-ever goal at home.



Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting slides on the ground for a save in front of a Tonganoxie player Thursday in Louisburg.

"I missed a lot early like I did (against Harmon), but to finally get that shot to go in made me really happy because it

gave us a boost," Belcher said. "It just gave us a little more umph to play on."

About 10 minutes later, the Lady Cats used that "umph" to all but seal the win. For the second time, Ford crossed the ball into the box and sophomore Lily Cook headed the ball in for the 2-0 advantage.

It was the second assist on the day for Ford, who was more than happy to set up her teammates.

"Honestly I think it feels better to give assists than it does scoring goals," Ford said. "I don't like to play very selfish. I do like to cut and stuff, but it felt really good to be a part of those plays. Lilly Cook's was an amazing header and I am really proud of her."



Lily Cook (right) celebrates with teammates (from left) Lilly Scott, Hayli Detherage and Savannah Reinhart following her

header goal.

The match was also the second straight shutout for sophomore goalie Shay Whiting as she handled three shots on goal, but Tonganoxie didn’t threaten otherwise as the Lady Cats controlled the possession most of the game.

Louisburg will face its toughest challenge to date as it will travel to De Soto for a 6 p.m. game on Tuesday. De Soto is considered one of the toughest teams in the Frontier League and Conley knows his team has to be ready.

“De Soto is the cream of the crop,” Conley said. “They are the best team in our league in my opinion and we will see how we measure up. It will be exciting.”

JV wins second in a row

The Louisburg girls junior varsity team didn’t have any problems scoring against Tonganoxie in its home opener Thursday.

The Lady Cats scored two goals in each half on their way to a 4-1 victory to give them a 2-0 record on the season as well.

Early on in the first half, Leia Shaffer opened the game with a goal to put Louisburg up early and then Quincy Rice added another goal on an assist from Hayli Detherage to give the Lady Cats a 2-0 lead at halftime.

Isabella Ford gave Louisburg a 3-0 advantage early in the second half with a goal, and then after a Tonganoxie score, Lily Cook sealed the win with a goal on an assist from Shaffer.

Opinion: Lady Cats want to make community proud



Louisburg head coach Kyle Conley speaks with the team shortly before the start of the varsity matchup with Harmon on Tuesday at Harmon High School. The Lady Cats won their opener 2-0.

One by one they made their way onto the field as their names were called. It was really happening.

Bailey Belcher…Camdyn Clark…Maddie McDaniel…Rylee Bergh…Bryn O'Meara…Savannah Reinhart…Lily Cook…Lilly Scott…Madisen Simpson…Georgia Wilde…Shay Whiting.

The Louisburg girls soccer team ventured onto the field for the first time Tuesday at Harmon High School and those girls in the starting lineup have the distinction to say they were the ones to start it all.

Yes, they were the ones to kick off the era of girls soccer at Louisburg High School and it will be something they remember for the rest of their lives. How cool is that?



(From left) Georgia Wilde, Shay Whiting, Madisen Simpson, Lilly Scott, Lily Cook, Savannah Reinhart, Bryn O'Meara, Rylee Bergh, Maddie McDaniel, Camdyn Clark and Bailey Belcher started the first game for Louisburg.

As many of you know, and I have written about it quite a bit, it couldn't have been done without the work and fundraising efforts of numerous parents throughout the community. Led by efforts from the Louisburg Soccer Club, they were able to raise $39,000 in a year to be able to fund the Lady Cat program for the next three seasons.

Fundraising leaders Diana Moore and Karin Olson were in attendance for the special day, as were several other parents who put in a lot of time to make this possible for the girls in Louisburg.

Let's face it – they were tired of playing on the boys team. It was hard for them to compete at such a physical level and the opportunity wasn't there to show what they could do.

On Tuesday, those girls wanted to return the favor to those parents and community members and prove that it wasn't a waste of their time. They did that by getting a hard-fought 2-0 victory over Harmon to get the program's first win.

"To me it shows that we are just not throwing the community's

money in the trash," Belcher said. "We are committing ourselves to do what it was meant for – to make us better and make sure that we have a soccer team in the future."

It is hard to imagine the emotion Diana and Karin were feeling watching those girls take the field for the first time wearing the Louisburg purple. I can't begin to fathom what the players' parents were thinking when their daughters officially became a part of history.

I have been in this business for 13 years and I have never had the opportunity to cover a program's first game or season. It was an awesome experience to be on the sideline Tuesday and watch the girls – and coaches – go through this wide range of emotions.

First there was nerves. Then overwhelming joy when the first goal was scored, then back to being nervous when Harmon threatened late in the match.

Heck, even I was a little nervous as I was taking pictures before the junior varsity game. I wanted to capture as many moments as I could, only to be told I was on the field of play and had to back up. And believe me, I was WAY on the field.

However, all those emotions were so pure and heartfelt. None of what they experienced Tuesday was fake. These girls wanted to win this game, not for themselves, but for the community.

It couldn't have been more fitting to watch senior Maddie McDaniel, who was one of the many to help raise money in hopes of being able to play just one year for her high school team, score the first goal in program history – on a header no less.



Maddie McDaniel (right) slaps hands with Savannah Reinhart after McDaniel scored the first goal in program history.

Bailey Belcher got the first-ever assist and goalie Shay Whiting recorded the first shutout. Camdyn Clark scored the first junior varsity goal and became the first junior varsity player to get a hat trick.

They all now have the distinction of becoming the answer to a cool trivia question down the road.

As it was pointed out on Twitter by LHS grad David Embers, head coach Kyle Conley is now the winningest coach in Louisburg High School girls soccer history.

Can’t really argue with that.

The emotion will no doubt be just as strong today when the Lady Cats play Tonganoxie in their home opener. These girls want to show what they can do in front of their home fans and make their town proud.

Whether they like it or not, these girls are already role models to young girls all over town who want to have the opportunity to play soccer when they get older. They are paving the way for a growing sport to become even bigger in a small town.

It doesn’t matter if they go on to lose their remaining 15 games – these Lady Cats still win because they took the field and worked hard for something that no one can take away from them.

This is their time to shine and they are enjoying every minute of it.