Offensive explosion keys Lady Cats in sweep



Louisburg sophomore Bailey Kern sprints down the line as she tries to reach on a bunt Tuesday against De Soto at Lewis-Young Park. The Lady Cats swept De Soto and have now won four consecutive games.

The Louisburg High School softball team continued to pile up the runs Tuesday at home against De Soto, and those hot bats have led to four straight wins for the Lady Cats.

Louisburg scored 20 runs in the doubleheader at Lewis-Young Park – including four home runs – and left with an 8-5 comeback win in the opener and then responded with a 12-2 run-rule victory in the second game.

In the their last four games, the Lady Cats have tallied 38 runs, which averages out to more than nine runs a game, and has been a big reason for their success.

Early on in game one, Louisburg struggled to get the big hit they were looking for and De Soto actually built a 4-0 lead. However, senior Allyssa Griggs gave the Lady Cats the spark they were looking for.

Griggs hit a pair of two-run home runs, one in the third inning and the other in the fifth to cut the De Soto lead to one.

The Lady Cats (7-7) put four runs on the board in the sixth on an RBI single from Emalee Overbay and then Griggs drove home two runs after she hit a line drive to the outfield and reached on an error that allowed two runs to score. Madison Svoboda sacrificed home another run and all but sealed the win.

Along with Griggs' big day at the plate, Overbay had a team-high three hits, including a double and Svoboda also finished with three hits.

On the mound, Griggs started the game and pitched five innings and struck out five before giving way to reliever Allison Boles, who pitched the final two frames.

"The wins against Desoto were huge, especially since we had to battle back in game one to pull it out," Louisburg coach John Ozier said. "We hit the ball hard all night, without much to show for it. Allyssa kept us in it with a pair of two-run homers. The hard hit balls finally started to drop and we put together a great finish.

"Allie Boles came in and did a fantastic job in relief when Allyssa began to wobble. Bailey Kern and Hailey Crowder turned in a couple of great catches in the outfield as well."

Louisburg left no doubt on which team was going to win the nightcap. The Lady Cats batted around in the first inning and scored nine runs to take a lead it would never relinquish.



Louisburg second baseman Madison Svoboda tags out the De Soto runner Tuesday at Lewis-Young Park.

Karson Griggs and Overbay provided a big punch at the top of the lineup as they tallied two hits and 3 RBIs. Griggs recorded a double and triple, while Overbay tripled and hit a 2-run home run in the first inning.

Two batters later, sophomore Molly Rison cranked a 2-run home run to give the Wildcats a 4-0 advantage.

Still in the first inning with the bases loaded, Karson Griggs had a bases-clearing triple and later scored herself on a triple from Overbay.

Svoboda also finished with two hits and double to join in the offensive parade. Kennia Hankinson added 2 RBIs in the win.

“This was the performance I have been looking for out of this group,” Ozier said. “We came out with strong pitching, great

defense and hit the ball very well. Emalee Overbay's bat is really beginning to heat up, and Karson Griggs' bases loaded triple was the shot we have been looking for all season. It was a great game because everyone did something to contribute to the win."

Allyssa Griggs pitched four innings in the nightcap and gave up two unearned runs, two hits and had five strikeouts. Boles pitched the final inning and got a strikeout to seal the win.

Louisburg will try and keep its winning streak going today when it travels to Garnett for a doubleheader with Anderson County. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

Griggs ready for opportunity with Missouri Western



Louisburg senior Allyssa Griggs signed her letter of intent on April 14 to play softball at Missouri Western University. Sitting next to Allyssa are her parents Bert and Tiffani Griggs. Standing is Louisburg assistants Lynsey Sheely, Karlie O'Hara, Louisburg head coach John Ozier and club coach Lee Storrer.

Allyssa Griggs has spent the last four years with the

Louisburg High School softball team as one of the Lady Cats' main pitchers.

However, it is her bat that is helping her achieve a dream she has been building toward since she first started the sport – a chance to play collegiate softball.

All of Griggs' hard work came to fruition on April 14 when she signed her letter of intent to play at Missouri Western University next season in St. Joseph, Mo.

"I have been waiting for this day for a long time and I am pretty excited about it," Griggs said. "I have been looking for a while to find a good college for me and this seems to be a good fit. It is pretty exciting."

Griffon softball coach Jen Bagley Trotter told Griggs they liked her potential at the plate and it all seemed like the perfect situation for the Louisburg High School senior as she hopes to help the Division II program in the near future.

Griggs, who earned second team all-Frontier League honors last season as a pitcher, is ready to leave that part of her game behind and focus her energy in the field.

"They see me as first baseman at some point," Griggs said. "They wanted me because they said I had potential with the bat and I have a lot of things to work with in that aspect. I like pitching, but they told me I am probably not at that level right now, but I am solid in the field and it is something that I enjoy."

Griggs will join a Missouri Western program that is the defending MIAA regular season and tournament champion, and currently has 36 wins this season. Following her visit to the school, she felt right at home.



Allyssa Griggs hopes to compete for a spot at first base for Missouri Western next season.

“I really enjoy the girls on the team,” Griggs said. “I really think I can get a good education there and I am excited about the coaching staff and what they have to offer for me.”

She is looking forward to learning from Trotter, who has been with Missouri Western for 16 years and has led the Griffons to two MIAA regular season championships and nine NCAA regional appearances.

Although Griggs is looking forward to the opportunity to play the sport she has grown up with, she knows a lot of work lies ahead.

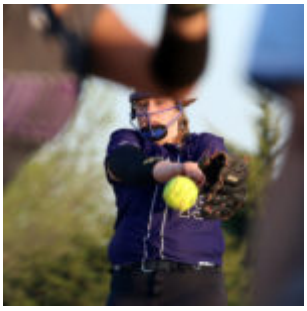
“I can put into words how much that I love the sport,” Griggs said. “You obviously have to love it if you are going to stick with it that long. I have made a lot of new friends along the

way and it has been great.

“It is almost surreal. I am glad I can continue to play softball because I feel that I have a lot to learn and I am really excited to see what the future holds.”

Griggs, the daughter of Bert and Tiffani Griggs, plans to major in biology while at Missouri Western, with the hopes of becoming dentist.

Lady Cats shine in sweep of Osawatomie



Louisburg pitcher Kelsey Higginbotham brings a pitch home during an April 18 game in Baldwin. Although the Lady Cats lost two games in Baldwin, they responded with a sweep of Osawatomie on Thursday.

OSAWATOMIE – The Louisburg High School softball team was just waiting for its offense to turn around.

The Lady Cats had scored 12 runs in its last four games – all of which resulted in losses. They were hitting the ball hard, but couldn’t put together the big innings.

All that changed Thursday in Osawatomie.

Louisburg used a five-run third inning to propel it to a 7-1 victory over the Trojans in the doubleheader opener. The Lady Cats then followed it up five-run fifth inning in the nightcap that helped them to an 11-5 win.

It was a pair of wins the Lady Cats needed and it bumped their record to 5-7 on the season.

Sophomore Karson Griggs had a big day at the plate in the opener as she was 3-for-4 with two runs scored and also had as solo home run, while fellow sophomore Madison Svoboda had a pair of hits and 2 RBIs.

Svoboda had a key hit in the Lady Cats' big third inning as she singled with the bases loaded that scored a pair of runs. Molly Rison, who was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded and drove in the first run, came around to score on an error, while Svoboda scored on a ground ball to complete the five-run frame.

Freshman Allison Boles and senior Hailey Crowder also had RBI hits to add to the scoring for the Lady Cats.

The offense provided more than enough run support for Allyssa Griggs. The Louisburg senior pitched a complete game and gave up just one run on two hits and had four strikeouts.

"We played the most complete game of the season thus far in the first game," Louisburg coach John Ozier said. "Our pitching, defense and hitting all came together at the same time. Allyssa was very efficient with her pitches and the defense turned in some nice plays. We finally were able to put together some timely hitting."

That timely hitting came through again in the nightcap as the Lady Cats racked up seven extra base hits, some of which gave them a 3-0 lead in the first inning. They totaled 17 hits for the game.

Osawatomie battled back to take a 5-3 lead going into the fifth inning, when the Lady Cats grabbed the lead back with five runs in the fifth and three more in the seventh to seal the win.

Senior Emalee Overbay led the charge with a 3-for-5 performance with a pair of doubles to go along with 4 RBIs.



Louisburg first baseman Allyssa Griggs lunges forward to snag a line drive during the Lady Cats' game against Baldwin on April 18.

Allyssa Griggs also finished the day with three hits, including a double, a home run and 2 RBIs. Karson Griggs added three hits herself and scored twice.

Crowder, Kennia Hankinson and Svoboda also had two hits each. Svoboda recorded a double and a triple, while Crowder and Hankinson each notched an RBI.

Allyssa Griggs came in for relief in the final five innings and picked up her second win of the night as she gave up just one earned run to go along with four strikeouts.

“In the second game, we scored early, but missed some golden opportunities to put the game out of reach early,” Ozier said. “Osawatomie is a young, but scrappy team that you just can’t let hang around in a game. We did just that. They actually had a 5-3 lead going into the fifth inning.

“I really challenged our hitters to put together some quality at bats, and they responded with five runs. Allyssa was running on empty, but dug deep to finish the game for a much-needed sweep.”

Louisburg will try and continue its winning ways tonight when it hosts De Soto for a doubleheader, before traveling to Garnett on Thursday for two games with Anderson County.

Lady Cats fall short in two losses to Baldwin

The Louisburg softball team hit the road on April 18 for a doubleheader with Baldwin, but the Lady Cats couldn’t come up with a win after pair of 6-4 and 7-2 losses.

In the opener, Louisburg scored three runs in the fourth to take a 4-3 advantage and took the lead into the bottom of the seventh inning. Baldwin though loaded the bases and scored three times in the final inning to secure the win.

Karson Griggs and Allison Boles each led the way with a pair of hits for the Lady Cats offense, while Allyssa and Karson Griggs each added a double and an RBI. Hailey Crowder also contributed an RBI.

“We came out in game one and really hit the ball hard,”

Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “Unfortunately, many of the balls were hit right at the Baldwin defenders. It was frustrating to see the game slip away in their last at bat.”

Louisburg took a 1-0 lead into the fourth inning of the nightcap, before Baldwin scored two runs in the fourth off starter Kelsey Higginbotham. The Lady Cats tied it in the top of the fifth, but Baldwin added two more runs in the fifth and three in the sixth to pull away.

Boles had two hits to lead Louisburg in the second game, while Allyssa Griggs added a double and Emalee Overbay finished with the team’s lone RBI. Higginbotham pitched 4 1/3 innings and gave up four runs and had two strikeouts and Allyssa Griggs came to pitch the final 1 2/3.

“The second game was almost a repeat of game one,” Ozier said. “We took an early lead, but could not hold on at the end of the game. We will continue to battle hard each night.”

Wellsville sweeps Louisburg softball



Louisburg shortstop Kennia Hankinson tags out a Wellsville runner as both players await the call from the umpire Thursday at Lewis-Young Park. The Lady Cats lost both games of the doubleheader, 4-3 and 7-3.

The Louisburg High School softball team was well on its way to a win in its doubleheader opener Thursday against Wellsville.

Louisburg had a two-run lead with three innings to go and seemed to have all the momentum. However, those final three innings didn’t go as well for the Lady Cats as they committed two errors and had a passed ball that led to a run in a 4-3 loss at Lewis-Young Park.

In the nightcap, the Lady Cats got out to an early lead again, but Wellsville scored five unanswered runs that led to a 7-3 loss for Louisburg.

“We were all disappointed with the results of both games, especially after having the lead through most of the first game,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “Our biggest problem as a team right now is timely hitting. We are getting some great scoring opportunities, but just can’t get that big hit. I know the girls are frustrated right now, especially some of our run producers from last year.

“What ends up happening is they begin to press and it significantly alters their at bat. I am totally confident we will break out of it soon. We have too many talented hitters on this team for it to continue.”

The Lady Cats (3-5) scored a run in each of the first three innings in the opener to jump out to a 3-1 lead. Allyssa Griggs tripled home Karson Griggs for a run in the first, Kennia Hankinson tripled and scored on a wild pitch in the second and Molly Rison doubled home Karson Griggs in the third.

Wellsville answered with a run in the fifth and then scored two in the sixth on a pair of doubles and two Louisburg errors to take a 4-3 lead.

Karson Griggs, who led Louisburg with three hits, got on base in the bottom of the seventh and represented the tying run, but couldn’t come around to score.



Senior Hailey Crowder lays down a bunt during the first game of the doubleheader Thursday.

Allyssa Griggs started the game and pitched four innings and gave up one earned run and struck out four. Freshman Allison Boles came in for relief and gave up three runs, but none of them were earned and struck out two in three innings.

Louisburg got off to another quick start in the second game as it scored two runs in the bottom of the first. Madison Svoboda led the inning off with a walk, Allyssa Griggs doubled and then both runners scored on a double from Rison.

Wellsville scored a run in the second, three in the third and another in the fourth to take a 5-2 lead and made it difficult

for the Lady Cats come back.

Rison, who finished the game 3-for-3 with three RBIs, hit a solo home run in the fourth inning to cut into the Wellsville lead. The Lady Cats had runners on base in the final three frames, but couldn’t get a rally going and Wellsville scored two more runs in the sixth to seal the win.

“Molly did a nice job at the plate,” Ozier said. “She seemed more relaxed and trusted her swing. However, most of our extra base hits as a team right now are with no one on base.”

Allyssa Griggs started the nightcap and went four innings and gave up four earned runs with three strikeouts, while Boles went the final three frames and gave up two runs – none of which were earned.

“Our pitching and defense were solid,” Ozier said. “We had some nice plays to get out of some innings. Trust is such an important part of this game, especially during a tough stretch like we are in right now. This is a great group of girls, and I am very confident they will continue to support each other throughout the remainder of the season.”

Louisburg has two road doubleheaders this week and the Wildcats begin play tonight when it travels to Baldwin. The Lady Cats will then travel to Osawatomie for two more games Thursday.

Lady Cats rally to shutout

Eudora in nightcap



Louisburg catcher Emalee Overbay makes a throw to third base during the Lady Cats' doubleheader with Eudora on Tuesday at Lewis-Young Park. The Lady Cats won the nightcap 2-0 after falling 12-4 in the opener.

Fresh off a disappointing loss in the first game of its doubleheader, the Louisburg High School girls softball team could have let them affect for the nightcap.

The Lady Cats allowed a nine-run seventh inning that resulted in a 12-4 loss to Eudora on Tuesday at Lewis-Young Park and they had just a few minutes to put that behind them and focus on the next one.

It didn't take Louisburg long to forget as the Lady Cats shut down the Eudora offense and earned a 2-0 victory to salvage the doubleheader and end the night on a positive note.

"I challenged the girls to put that one bad inning behind us and move on," Louisburg coach John Ozier said. "They did just that with a great shutout victory. All parts of our game came together in the nightcap."

A big part of that was pitcher Allison Boles. The Louisburg freshman earned the complete game shutout as she allowed just six hits to go along with four strikeouts.

Boles also had a good defense behind her as the Lady Cats

didn’t commit an error and made some big plays in the process. The biggest came in seventh inning when Eudora threatened to tie the game, but third baseman Emalee Overbay caught a line drive and then dove to tag out a Eudora runner to end the Cardinal scoring threat.

“Allie Boles came in and pitched a great game when we needed it most,” Ozier said. “She has demonstrated great composure for a freshmen against three really good teams. She is consistently around the plate. Knowing that the defense behind her is solid, also allows her to pitch without a lot of pressure. Emalee had a defensive gem there and was one of the biggest plays of the game.”



Freshman Allison Boles makes contact with a pitch during Louisburg’s contest with Eudora on Tuesday.

The game was scoreless in the fifth, but the Lady Cats broke the game open with a pair of runs in the bottom of the inning.

Sophomore Karson Griggs led off with a double and then scored on a single from fellow sophomore Madison Svoboda. Overbay followed with a single and moved pinch-runner Lauren Cutshaw

to second. Cutshaw later scored on a Eudora to make it 2-0.

In the top of the sixth, Eudora had a runner at third as it tried to cut into the lead, but was caught trying to steal home when she was tagged out. The Wildcats then ended another threat with Overbay's play in the seventh.

To start the doubleheader, Louisburg (3-3) trailed 3-0 going into the bottom of the sixth inning in the first game, but scored a pair of runs to get back in it.

Svoboda doubled to start the inning and then scored on a wild pitch. Allyssa Griggs did the same two batters later she also doubled and scored on the passed ball.

Although the Lady Cats cut into the lead, Eudora responded in a big way with nine runs in the top of seventh, thanks to four Louisburg errors and the Lady Cats weren't able to recover.

Svoboda led Louisburg with three hits – all doubles – in the opener. Allyssa Griggs and Boles each added two hits as Louisburg outhit Eudora 10-6 in the game.

Louisburg didn't go down without a fight as Kennia Hankinson led the bottom of the seventh off with a triple and later scored on a sacrifice from Karson Griggs.

Svoboda followed with another double and moved into scoring position on a single from Overbay. Allyssa Griggs followed with a single to score Svoboda to gain a little confidence heading into the nightcap.

Allyssa Griggs started the game for Louisburg and gave up seven earned runs, but also had eight strikeouts.

"After the rough top of the seventh inning we experienced, we did come back and put up some fight in our last at bat," Ozier said. "I think some of that momentum carried over to the second game.

“We actually played well in game one. Allyssa battled hard to keep us in the game. I feel that we had our scoring opportunities, but just could not get the key hit to give us some momentum in the game. I felt like everyone stepped up in game two and did something productive to help us get out of the night with a split.”

Louisburg returns to action today when it hosts Wellsville in a doubleheader at Lewis-Young Park.

Griggs leads Louisburg to sweep of Prairie View



Louisburg senior Allyssa Griggs (8) earned the complete game victory in the Lady Cats’ home opener Friday at Lewis-Young Park. Griggs and the Lady Cats won 2-1 in the first game of the doubleheader and 6-5 in the nightcap.

The Louisburg High School softball team had to wait an extra day to play in its home opener, but it was well worth it for the Lady Cats.

Everything came together for Louisburg as it picked up its first win of the season in a two different fashions. The Lady Cats won a 2-1 pitcher’s dual in the opener and then followed

it up with a 6-5 victory in the nightcap Friday at Lewis-Young Park to get the sweep of the Buffalos.

The game was originally scheduled for Thursday, but had to be moved up a day as the fields were unplayable due to the recent rainfall. The delay didn't seem to bother the Lady Cats much as they picked up their first wins of the season.

"I was very proud of the composure the girls demonstrated in both games, especially in game two when Prairie View loaded the bases with no outs," Louisburg coach John Ozier said. "These were the games last year we had a tough time finishing. The girls seem to be supportive of each other, whether they make a dynamic play, or commit an error."

Senior Allyssa Griggs carried Louisburg in the opener as she contributed with the bat and on the mound. Griggs pitched a complete game and held Prairie View to just one run on four hits to go along with eight strikeouts.

Griggs also had a big day at the plate as she broke open a scoreless game with a solo home run in the second inning and then reached on an error in the third to score teammate Madison Svoboda for a 2-0 lead. Griggs also had a single two innings later.

"Allyssa really demonstrated great senior leadership in her pitching and hitting," Ozier said. "I thought my other seniors stepped up their game as well. Emalee Overbay called a great game, and had some critical stops with runners on base with some balls that were in the dirt. Hailey Crowder delivered a big hit later in the evening."

Sophomore Molly Rison also had a double for the Lady Cats, while Karson Griggs, Kennia Hankinson and Emalee Overbay also had singles in the winning effort.



Sophomore Molly Rison sends a ball to the outfield Friday in the Lady Cats' home opener at Lewis-Young Park.

Prairie View added a run in the sixth to cut the Louisburg lead in half, but Griggs struck out the side in the seventh inning to secure the win.

Offense became a more prominent feature in the second game as the Lady Cats (2-2) got on the board early with three runs in the second, a run in the fourth and two more in the fifth to help build a big lead.

In the second inning, senior Hailey Crowder singled to score Hankinson, then one batter later, Karson Griggs singled to score Kayla Willey and Crowder to give Louisburg a 3-0 lead.

Prairie View added a run third, but Louisburg got that run back in the bottom of the fourth. Overbay singled home Willey after she led the inning off with a single.

The Buffalos cut the Louisburg lead to one in the top of the fifth, but Lady Cats used the long ball to extend their lead again. Rison hit a 2-run home run in the bottom of the fifth in what turned out to be just enough offense for the win.

Prairie View scored two more times in the seventh after loading the bases with no outs, but Allyssa Griggs got the final out to get save. Freshman Allison Boles pitched 4 1/3 innings to keep the Lady Cats in the game before Griggs came on in relief.

“In the second game, we got out to a three run lead with Allie on the mound,” Ozier said. “When she ran out of gas, Allyssa stepped back in and finished things up. Obviously Molly’s home run gave us a huge lift since we were only up by one run at the time.”

Overbay and Griggs finished the game with a pair of hits each, while Karson Griggs and Rison each had 2 RBIs. Svoboda also had a double in the victory.

Louisburg returns to action today when it hosts Eudora for a doubleheader. The Lady Cats will also play at home Thursday against Wellsville.

Frontier League shakeup could happen soon



In a few months – or even weeks – the Frontier League as it currently stands could have a different look.

Since March, meetings have gone on within member schools of the Frontier League and Kaw Valley League to discuss possible realignment of both leagues.

The Frontier League currently has seven members – Louisburg, Paola, Spring Hill, De Soto, Ottawa, Baldwin and Eudora – and a meeting between the schools took place on March 28 to discuss where each school stood as far as their happiness in the league.

Brian Biermann, superintendent of USD 416, and Louisburg High School athletic director Darin Gagnebin attended the meeting on Louisburg's behalf and both relayed the fact that every school stated they were happy with the way the league is currently set up, but a couple schools came to the realization the Frontier League might not be able to offer what they are looking for.

De Soto and Spring Hill currently have growing enrollment numbers are interested in playing Class 5A competition. De Soto moved up to 5A this school year and Spring Hill will look to make the jump in the coming years with its larger enrollment. The rest of the schools all compete in Class 4A.

Both schools stated they would like more competition at the sub-varsity level that schools like Louisburg, Baldwin and Eudora cannot provide. Competing in a mainly 5A league would relieve some of those problems.

"De Soto said they will probably open next year with 950 kids

and they would grow by 100 the year after that," Biermann said. "They are happy in the Frontier, but they feel like they need 5A competition and they feel like it could hurt them in football with seedings and tie-breakers. They could potentially get penalized by competing in a mainly 4A league.

"Spring Hill wants to be proactive. Their growth is coming. Their classes in the middle school are pretty good size. They won't grow a lot next year, but they will in the next few years."

What started the meetings is due to the fact that the Kaw Valley League is looking to rework their situation or create a brand new look altogether. The Kaw Valley currently has seven schools in Lansing, Turner, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bishop Ward and Basehor-Linwood, but one member – Bishop Ward – is leaving for a new league beginning next school year.

According to report in March from the *Tonganoxie Mirror*, Lansing wants to create a larger league that would contain all or some combinations of Lansing, Blue Valley Southwest, De Soto, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs, Basehor-Linwood, Tonganoxie, Ottawa, Piper, Spring Hill, Turner and Topeka schools Seaman, Shawnee Heights and Topeka West.

Many of those schools are either in Class 5A already or are close based on enrollment numbers. The idea of competing against bigger competition is intriguing to De Soto, Spring Hill – and possibly Ottawa – the three largest schools in the Frontier League.

An idea was thrown around of creating a league of two divisions between the Kaw Valley and Frontier. One division would be 5A schools and the other would be 4A.

"We visited with our board of education and we are not in favor of a mega-league," Biermann said. "That has been talked about – having a league of 5A and 4A schools. We don't want to invite new 5A schools. We are ok with Spring Hill and De Soto

staying in the league, even though they are growing, but we don’t want to invite other 5A schools or have a mega league so they can have better competition.

“Our stance is if De Soto and Spring Hill feel like they need 5A competition and leave, then they can work towards that and we can work on filling those spots with 4A schools.”

Both Biermann and Gagnebin feel like the Frontier League needs to be proactive as changes could be made sooner rather than later.

“We aren’t panicking as a league as much as the Kaw Valley schools are because they know they are headed for a break up,” Gagnebin said. “We could easily stay with the seven schools we have. Pretty soon, De Soto will have close to 1,000 kids. It is more on them if they want to be in our league, and if they are happy, by all means stay. We are not saying they have to leave, but they have to do best what is for their school, and if this league isn’t the best option for you, then you have to look elsewhere.”

Due to the fact De Soto and Spring Hill could be moving on, the Frontier is being proactive and inviting some members of the Kaw Valley League to come make presentations at a meeting Wednesday to see if they would be a fit in the Frontier.

According to Biermann, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bonner Springs and Basehor-Linwood High Schools will all make presentations at the meeting and then schools from both the Kaw Valley and the Frontier will meet to discuss options at a later date.

“I led the (March 28) meeting and I wanted to make sure everyone was as honest and open as possible,” Biermann said. “There were no hurt feelings. Collectively we don’t want a mega-league, no additional 5A schools and that is firm from us, Paola, Baldwin and Eudora. Spring Hill and De Soto left the meeting, I think, that they need to start looking for potential 5A competition.

“The easy fix would be for De Soto and Spring Hill to join the bigger league and we take someone like Tonganoxie and Piper to replace them. Every school said they loved the Frontier League and competition, but it is time there has to be some conversations. They biggest thing is we don’t have three baseball, softball or soccer teams to schedule, but De Soto and Spring Hill want that. We can’t field C teams in some cases.”

The leagues are on a sort of a time crunch. With football reclassifications and scheduling beginning this October for the next two years, it would be the best case scenario to get the reshuffling done before then so they can schedule for the 2018-19 season and beyond according to Gagnebin.

The Louisburg activities director also believes keeping the right number of teams is also imperative for a healthy league.

“We want to maintain the integrity of our league, whether that is with seven or even eight schools,” Gagnebin said. “We want to maintain that number. Nine is a scheduling nightmare, and if you only have six teams, you are opening up a can of worms where if you leave an open spot, then the state could come in and assign certain schools to us that aren’t a good fit.

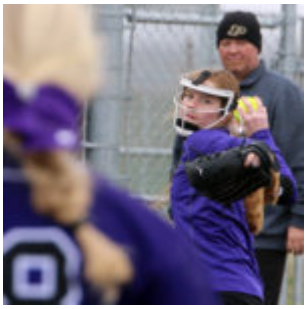
“I don’t necessarily want them to leave the league, but we need to be told if they are. I am more afraid of them leaving our league than them staying in our league. I am not afraid of the competition we face with them. We can compete with them in all the sports, but I am more afraid of us dropping from a seven to a five-team league.”

However, one hiccup remains. The Frontier League bylaws state that a member school must give two years notice before leaving the league.

“If the dominoes start falling fast, the league could pass a bylaw amendment to allow for movement for De Soto or whoever, which is something I think they will have to do,” Gagnebin

said. “Not much is happening now, but when it does it is going to happen quick. You better be ready to move with it and have a plan in place or you could be stuck on the outside.”

Paola knocks off Louisburg softball to start season



Louisburg third baseman Karson Griggs reaches back to make a throw to first base last Tuesday during the Lady Cats’ doubleheader in Paola. Louisburg fell to the Panthers 9-0 and 7-3.

PAOLA – Although the season opener didn’t go as the Louisburg softball team had hoped – a 9-0 and 7-3 loss to rival Paola – the Lady Cats were still able to pull away positives.

Despite getting shutout in the opener, Louisburg responded in the nightcap and actually held a lead into the fifth inning before Paola used the long ball to go back on top to complete the sweep.

“I was very encouraged with our play in the second game,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “It was tough to face a team

like Paola right out of the gate, but once we got past the jitters, I felt like we settled down and began to play at the level that we coaches have seen thus far in practice.”

The Lady Cats (0-2) had a tough time getting going against Paola starter Jordan Johnson and allowed just two hits through six innings and struck out five. Sophomores Madison Svoboda and Bailey Kern had the lone hits for Louisburg.

Paola scored a run in the first, three in the third, two in the fourth and three more runs in the sixth to pull out the nine-run win.

Louisburg starter Allyssa Griggs gave up six hits and only four of those nine runs were earned. She also struck out four against a veteran Paola lineup.

“Allyssa had some great battles with many of the Paola hitters,” Ozier said. “They are very opportunistic, so any defensive or pitching lapses, they will capitalize. Once she pitches a few more games, we will see the pitching rhythm that she demonstrated last year.

“Our hitters had a tough time getting comfortable at the plate in the first game. It is hard in practice to replicate the velocity of the pitches coming at them in real game situations.”

The nightcap got off to a positive start for the Lady Cats as they took a 3-0 lead in the third inning. Karson Griggs led the inning off with a double, Svoboda reached on an error and Emalee Overbay reached on a fielder’s choice.



Louisburg shortstop Kennia Hankinson jumps in the air to bring down a throw Tuesday against Paola.

The bases were loaded for Allyssa Griggs and she drove all three runners home on a long single to centerfield.

Paola responded with two runs in the third inning to cut into the Louisburg lead and then answered with four runs in the fourth inning. Johnson, who also started the second game for

Paola, broke open the tie game with a 3-run home run.

The Panthers added another run in the sixth to secure the sweep over Louisburg.

Freshman Allison Boles started her first game on the mound for the Lady Cats and she was able to keep her team in it for much of the contest. Boles had three strikeouts and gave up eight hits.

“Boles did a great job in pitching her first game at the high school varsity level,” Ozier said. “She showed great composure, even through the one rough inning when Paola took the lead. I believe that she will continue to grow this season and put together some quality appearances.

“In the second game, I was very proud of how the girls adjusted at the plate, and developed better timing. In fast pitch softball, much of your success in hitting is all about timing.”

Karson had the lone extra base hit for the Lady Cats, while Svoboda, Overbay, Allyssa Griggs and Kern all had singles.

The Lady Cats will use this week in practice to help shore up their defense that committed seven errors over the two games as they get ready to face Prairie View on Thursday in their home opener at Lewis-Young Park.

“We will continue to work out some of the kinks with our defense, which was shaky at times against Paola,” Ozier said. “We did make some nice plays on the defensive side, but like any team, we have to avoid giving up the big innings.”

Returning starters look to lead Louisburg softball



Louisburg senior Allyssa Griggs will serve as the Lady Cats' starting pitcher last season after earning second team all-Frontier League honors last season.

It may have had a below .500 record last season, but for the Louisburg softball team, it was a year where the Lady Cats took several steps forward.

After not winning a game in 2015, the Lady Cats responded with five wins in 2016 and were on the doorstep of winning a few more – losing five games by two runs or less. Now in 2017, Louisburg hopes it can improve even more as it returns several starters from last season.

"Even though we have battled the weather, illness and other high school commitments, the girls have been working extremely hard each day at practice," Louisburg coach John Ozier said.

The Lady Cats will have a veteran look and they will be led by their three seniors in Allyssa Griggs, Emalee Overbay and Hailey Crowder. Louisburg also returns six players who saw significant varsity time a year ago.

Griggs will be the team's starting pitcher this season after earning second team all-Frontier League honors last year. She started 12 games for Louisburg and struck out 66 batters to 39

walks in 93 innings.

Along with her arm, Griggs is also one of the Lady Cats' top returning bats. She finished with a .352 average last season and had 25 hits that included five doubles, three triples and a home run to go along with 21 RBIs.

Her battery mate is Overbay as she returns as the team's starting catcher – a position where she earned honorable mention all-league honors in 2016. Overbay was second on the team in with a .400 average and had 32 hits with a team-high 10 doubles, five triples, a home run and 20 RBIs.



Senior Emalee Overbay is one of three seniors on the Lady Cat roster and one the top returning bats for Louisburg.

The defense behind Griggs will look familiar as well as three of the four spots return. Sophomores Molly Rison (first base), Kennia Hankinson (shortstop) and Karson Griggs (third base) all hope to take a step forward.

Rison had a strong freshman season last year as she earned

honorable mention all-league honors after she batted .368 with 25 hits. She also added five doubles, a home run and 17 RBIs.

Joining the infield will be fellow sophomore Madison Svoboda, who missed all of last season with an injury, but Ozier hopes Svoboda and some other girls can step up and fill some holes.

“We have some additional sophomores and juniors that may be given an opportunity at the varsity level,” Ozier said. “In addition, we have a number of talented freshmen that may be called upon to contribute on varsity as well.”

Crowder and sophomore Bailey Kern will play in the outfield, while freshmen Paige Eccher and Allison Boles could see time there as well. Ozier also said freshmen Lauren Cutshaw, Kayla Willey and Reilly Ratliff might have an opportunity to crack the varsity roster.

The Lady Cats will also feature two new assistant coaches – Karlie (Stuteville) O’Hara and Lynsey (Randolph) Sheely – both who are former players themselves.

“This is my second year as head coach and I was fortunate enough to add two quality assistants,” Ozier said. “They have put in a lot of extra work in preparing for this season and the players have quickly determined the skill-base that both coaches bring to the field each day. I am excited to work with both of them.”

Louisburg opens its season at 4 p.m. today when it travels to Paola for a doubleheader. The Lady Cats will host Prairie View in their home opener on April 6.

The Lady Cats have spent the last couple of weeks working on fundamentals to get them prepared for the season and they are ready to see some live competition.

“One of our program’s emphasis is getting all of the ‘little things’ right,” Ozier said. “We drill and practice many of the

basic skills each day to embed those into their reactions during real game situations.

“As far as team goals are concerned, we don’t really have any ‘catchy’ phrases to describe our approach. The girls know that we expect hard work, focus and a true team effort each day at practice, and eventually, during the games.”

Overbay signs to play softball at Bethel



Louisburg High School senior Emalee Overbay signed her letter of intent on Jan. 4 to play softball for Bethel College. Sitting next to Emalee are her parents Tom and Donna Overbay. Standing is Louisburg High School softball coach John Ozier, summer team coach Dave Boles, Bethel coach Stacy Middleton, KC Crossfire coach Dan Delana and Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry.

Softball has been a part of Emalee Overbay’s life as long she could remember.

Whether it was when she first started playing T-ball in kindergarten on a Thanksgiving Day with her family or the numerous spring and summers she spent at the diamond with her

school or club team – her bat and glove have always been within reach.

Even with a past filled with memories, Overbay knows there are plenty more to come in the future.

Overbay fulfilled her dream of playing collegiate softball on Jan. 4 in front of her family and friends at Louisburg High School when she signed her letter of intent to play at Bethel College. She will begin her career as a Thresher under head coach Stacy Middleton.

“It is a real surreal moment for me,” Overbay said. “I never thought it would actually be happening right now. I never thought that I would be lucky enough to have a great coach like Stacy like I am going to have for college. I am excited for who I am going to be and what college is going to teach me. I have had such great support from everyone around me and I have had a great environment with team players and coaches that built me up and made me who I am today.”

Overbay will join at Bethel team that is still fairly new. The Threshers started their program in 2011 and are coming off an 11-win season – the best in their history.

Several other schools recruited Overbay, including Oklahoma Wesleyan, Central Methodist, Missouri Valley and Peru State (Neb.), but her relationship with her new coach was a big factor in her decision.

“The coach was the nicest woman I have ever met, honestly. She has huge heart and she cares about the kids and she wants you to do great things,” Overbay said. “I met coach Middleton at a camp this summer and instantly connected with her. She was so welcoming and spoke to me like an actual person and not just a coach and a player. The environment the school had, and the feeling that I had while I was there, made me feel like I could call this place home for the next four years.”



Emalee Overbay hopes to continue her catching duties next season at Bethel College.

The Louisburg High School senior has performed well for the Lady Cats in her time with the program as she has started since she was a freshman.

Overbay earned honorable mention all-Frontier League honors last season as a catcher and she performed well at the plate. She was second on the team with a .400 batting average, and recorded 32 hits with a team-high 10 doubles, five triples and a home run. She also finished with 20 RBIs and a team-high .688 slugging percentage.

After talking with the Bethel coaches, Overbay will get a chance to catch for the Threshers next season and possibly play some outfield as well as a second position.

“There is a lot that I still have to learn,” she said. “The game is going to be faster, but the coaches I have had have taught me well enough to be mentally prepared and expect things and be on my toes at all times. I am a hard worker and I will put all the effort I have to become a better player and the one coach Middleton needs me to be.”

Overbay’s new coaches believe the same thing.

“Emalee is a great addition to our campus, community and to our softball program,” Middleton said. “She brings a strong work ethic, pride in her academics and a willingness to do what is best for the team. We look forward to having her energy and competitive spirit on our team.”