Lady Cats fall to Andale in first game of state tourney



Louisburg senior Karson Griggs tags out an Andale runner Thursday during the Class 4A state softball tournament in Salina.

SALINA – The Louisburg softball team was still riding high into the state tournament after the Lady Cats' regional championship victory a week earlier.

Louisburg's only problem was the
Lady Cats were the No. 8 seed going into tournament action and had to face off
with No. 1 seed Andale/Garden Plain.

The Lady Cats had hoped to pull off another surprise after knocking off two higher seeds at regionals a week prior. Unfortunately, Andale used one big inning to pull away from Louisburg and handed the Lady Cats a 10-0 loss Thursday at the Bill Burke Complex in Salina.

Andale scored eight times in the
third inning and the Wildcats were never able to catch up as the Indians
eventually knocked Louisburg out of the state tournament with two runs in the
sixth inning to complete the shutout.

"Andale is a team, where if you
give them a little opening by making mistakes here and there,

they are going to
make you pay for it and that is kind of what happened," Louisburg coach John
Ozier said. "We talk about winning as a team and losing as a team and these
girls were so supportive of each other, even after we had a couple hiccups
there."



Louisburg senior Madison Svoboda makes contact with a pitch Thursday in Salina.

Louisburg got off to a good start in the top of the first inning to try and put some pressure on Andale after a single from Madison Svoboda and a walk from Molly Rison. The Lady Cats weren't able to get a hit to bring home a run, and as it turned out, that was their best chance to score.

Lady Cat starter Brooklyn

Diederich held Andale scoreless through the first two innings, but with one out
and no one on in the third inning, Andale reached with nine straight batters
and took an 8-0 lead

August Daniels and Mia Wilson came
in for relief against Indians, and while Andale went scoreless the next two
frames, it scored two more runs in the sixth to get the win. Andale went on to
advance to the championship game, but it fell to Augusta, 5-2.

Alyse Moore and Svoboda had the
lone hits for the Lady Cats, while Rison walked two times to lead the Louisburg
offense.



First baseman Molly Rison runs into foul territory to make a catch against Andale.

“I think the most important thing for us was to come out early in the game and show them that we were not going to be intimidated and we were not going to back down,” Ozier said “That is exactly what we did. We made some nice plays and we had a chance to make some noise there in that first inning and just couldn’t get that hit to get it going.”

With the loss, Louisburg had to say goodbye to its three seniors in Karson Griggs, Rison and Svoboda. They helped give the Lady Cats (8-15) a memorable final run to its season that included their first regional championship since 2014.

“When they started off, Karson and Molly both started as freshmen and they didn’t know any different and didn’t know they were supposed to be anxious or nervous,” Ozier said. “They just always had that attitude. We got Maddie her sophomore year, and even though they were our underclassmen, they have led our team these last few years. They came out and played so hard, especially in that regional tournament and they didn’t want to go home.

“It was hard for them to address their teammates after this was over, but we issued a challenge to the underclassmen that this is a taste of what it is like and we were just so proud to represent our school and community.”



Outfielder Paige Eccher runs into to make a catch Thursday during the state tournament in Salina.

Although the Lady Cats' season ended with a loss, it was still a memorable run for Louisburg, and one many of the players won't soon forget after their wins in regionals against No. 2 seed Ottawa and No. 7 Chanute.

"I wish I could have predicted this," Ozier said. "To see these kids walk out there as one of the top eight teams in 4A is really just a great moment for us coaches. It was a great moment for me as well, going through some of the lean times, and we reached the goal that I had for this team. We have some degree of respect and credibility back, and that will be up to the younger kids to take that and run with it and keep it going."

Moore to compete at state in two sports in same season



Louisburg sophomore Alyse Moore is competing at state this weekend in both softball and track this weekend and is the first Wildcat athlete to do so in recent memory.

Alyse Moore was filled with excitement after she and the Louisburg softball team qualified for state last week.

As the team's starting shortstop on the 5-win team, it was an unexpected, yet a fantastic feeling for the Wildcat sophomore. Just three days later, however, Moore's excitement level reached a new level.

Moore qualified for state in the javelin after she won a regional title in the event last Friday in Paola. So, for the first time in recent school history, she is the first Wildcat athlete to head to state in two sports in the same season.

"It is such an honor," Moore said. "I am so thankful because I couldn't imagine do it without my teammates in softball and my coaches in track. I am just very thankful and

it is a great
opportunity for me.”

After the Lady Cat softball team won the regional title on May 14, Moore took to the javelin runway last Friday in Paola during regional track and she had an outside shot of earning a spot at the state track meet.

She knew she was going to have to have her best throw of the season to have a chance. Moore had competed in just two meets all season prior to regional due to her softball schedule.

So in her final throw of prelims, Moore let it fly and she shattered her old personal record by 25 feet with a throw of 129 feet, 11 inches. That mark jumped her to the top of the leaderboard and it was good enough win regionals by three feet.

She held off Baldwin senior Kayla Kurtz, who recently signed with the University of Oklahoma. When Moore’s personal record mark was read out, her javelin coach, Alex Gentges, got a little excited himself.

“I knew she was capable of a big throw but 129-11 exceeded expectations so I let out some excitement after they read off the distance, that’s for sure,” Gentges said. “The great thing is that she is capable of more, but walking away a regional champ after the first year ever throwing is incredible.”



Alyse Moore was all smiles after she won regionals with a personal best throw of 129-11.

The idea of participating in two sports was brought to Moore's attention before the start of the season, and after talking with coaches from both sports, she was given the go-ahead to compete in both, with softball being the priority.

It made for some busy afternoons and evenings after school as she would attend softball practice and then made her way over for track workouts.

"It is definitely a challenge sometimes, but at the same time it is super fun and it is fun to be around different people," Moore said. "Most of the time I will go to softball first, practice there, and then Gentges comes over and we will put in the time after softball practice working on throwing. It

means a lot that he created extra time for me to get better.”



Alyse Moore, the Lady Cat starting shortstop, competed in the state tournament Thursday in Salina.

Moore grew up playing softball and the thought of throwing javelin hadn’t even entered her mind until before the season when the Wildcat track coaches brought the idea to her parents. They knew she had a strong arm as a shortstop, and they thought it would translate well into the javelin.

Although there were some growing pains early, Moore has taken off with the javelin as she threw over 100 feet in just her second meet earlier this month at Wellsville. She then followed it up with the regional-winning throw.

“I’m very impressed about her success in both sports,” Gentges said. “She comes to practice with a great attitude and takes criticism well. She is a competitor and anyone that watches her compete knows that. This is the

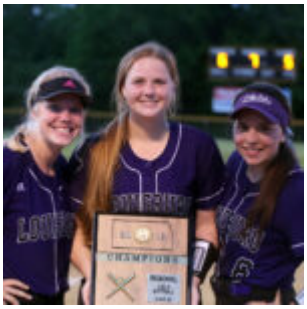
first time in a long time that someone has played two sports at once and to
have this success this early is a special thing.”

Moore and the Lady Cats softball team competed in Salina on Thursday and left with a 10-0 loss to No. 1 seed Andale-Garden Plain. It is
just the first part of what is a busy weekend as Moore will throw the javelin
at 9:45 a.m. on Saturday in Wichita at the state meet.

Whatever happens, Moore has enjoyed the experience of being able
to participate in two sports and is hoping for good things on Saturday.

“Although this is my first year throwing javelin, I am expecting to go out there and place,” Moore said. “There are a lot of good
throwers out at state, but hopefully I can go out there and throw well. It will
be a lot of fun.”

OPINION: Difficult years molded Lady Cat seniors into regional champions



Louisburg seniors (from left) Molly Rison, Karson Griggs and Madison Svoboda pose with the regional championship trophy following the Lady Cats' Cinderella run through Class 4A regional tournament last week in Ottawa.

In 2015, the Louisburg softball team had hit rock bottom just one year after its best finish in school history.

There was no gradual decline. It went from one of the best in the state to one of the worst in less than a year's time.

The Lady Cats finished the 2015 campaign with an 0-21 record after finishing fourth at state the previous year, and there wasn't a lot of momentum going with the program.

Playing softball at Louisburg High School wasn't something a lot of athletes had aspirations of doing, especially following a winless season. The losing streak reached 33 games halfway into 2016 and things looked bleak.

Louisburg did manage to get five wins out of the year and then had a nice bounce back year in 2017 as the Lady Cats picked up 10 victories and nearly finished with a .500 record. Things appeared to be looking up.

Instead, things took a dive once

again and Louisburg managed just three wins in 2018. It wasn’t the easiest time to be a Louisburg softball player and then-juniors Madison Svoboda, Karson Griggs and Molly Rison knew it.

They watched as teammates came and went. Some graduated, others figured it wasn’t for them and didn’t come back out.

Having a winning season, much less a regional championship, seemed out of reach for all three players. What would they have to gain by going out for their senior season?

“Honestly, going into my sophomore year, I wasn’t sure that we would ever get to state,” Svoboda said. “We had just come off a 0-21 season and it was hard to come back from that. I just wanted to come out and have fun and see what happens.”



Madison Svoboda shows the umpire the ball after getting an out against Chanute in the regional title game.

It wasn’t a lot of fun early for
any of the Lady Cats as they lost their first six games to start the season.
Louisburg totaled five wins going into its Senior Night matchup with Paola, and
on what was supposed to a special evening, the Lady Cats fell to their rival in
two games by a combined score of 31-1.

“Our lowest point came against Paola,” Louisburg coach John Ozier
said. “I felt like we were too caught up in all of the emotional events that go
on that night, and completely lost focus. Paola delivered a wake-up call, early
and often that night.

“It turns out that it was just what we needed. We re-committed our efforts in practices leading up to the playoffs, approaching each game with

a ‘we’re not ready to be done’ mentality.”

It could have been easy for the three seniors and the rest of the Lady Cats to just hang it up for the rest of the year.

They were matched up with Parsons in the play-in game of the Class 4A regional tournament, and with No. 2 seed Ottawa looming, the road to a regional title was a difficult one.

The Lady Cats, though, flipped a switch and became a different team. Louisburg went on to rout Parsons, 17-2, and set up a matchup with Ottawa the next day.

Ottawa had swept Louisburg earlier in the season and it was going to be a tough task to advance to the regional championship. Fate had other ideas.

The Cyclones took a 7-4 lead into the top of the seventh and the Lady Cats had two outs with the bases loaded. They were one out away from elimination.

Instead, the Lady Cats went on to reach on an Ottawa error to score a run, drew a walk for another and then Lauren Cutshaw gave Louisburg the lead with a 2-run single.



Karson Griggs was all smiles after she hit the go-ahead double in the regional championship against Chanute.

Louisburg knocked Ottawa on its heels and the Lady Cats delivered the knockout blow when pitcher Brooklyn Diederich silenced the
Cyclone bats in the bottom of the seventh to secure one of the biggest upsets
in the last five years.

“We knew we could do it, but we just had to believe in ourselves,” Svoboda said. “Ottawa was a pretty high seed, but it also gives us
an advantage because they were looking down at us and we had nothing to lose.”

If there were any doubters in the
Lady Cats’ dugout when the tournament started, they all became believers when they

advanced to the title game against Chanute. This was not the same team that
managed just five wins in the regular season.

“From the Parsons game on, these
girls just had a different look in their eyes,” Ozier said. “They had a fire
that I hadn’t seen before and you could tell that they believed they could
win.”

Chanute was the last team standing
in Louisburg’s way of a regional title and the Blue Comets had every intention
of spoiling Louisburg’s Cinderella run.

The game was tied at 3-all going
into the seventh inning and Chanute had all the momentum after a rally in the
last frame. Again, fate stepped in when the Lady Cats needed it most.

Svoboda hit a routine fly ball to
centerfield to open the inning, and it appeared to be an easy play. However,
before the Chanute centerfielder could make a play on the ball, she tripped and
fell and allowed Svoboda to reach on a single.

The rest as they say – is history.

Griggs doubled to scored Svoboda,
while Paige Eccher and Diederich each had RBI singles to give Louisburg a 3-run
lead. It was just enough as Chanute rallied to score two in the seventh, but Diederich
came in for relief and struck out the final Blue Comet batter to secure their
first trip to state since 2014.

The three Louisburg seniors, who had suffered through three straight losing seasons (technically four if you count 2019), have now found themselves in the state tournament after a memorable run through regionals.

“Especially with the last three years that we have had, just to be able to get this far is just an unbelieveable feeling,” Rison said.

It allowed the three seniors to be able to suit up one final time with each other. Once it is all said and done, all three will be moving in different directions.



First baseman Molly Rison looks in a throw from teammate Karson Griggs last week during regionals.

Griggs will continue her softball career at Highland Community College, while Svoboda is leaving the sport behind

as she focuses on academics at Kansas State. As for Rison, she enlisted in the
U.S. Navy and will be shipping out in less than a week.

“I want to cry, but at the same
time I am just really happy,” Griggs said. “It is exciting because I never
thought something like this could happen, especially this year.

“This means a lot to all three of
us, especially because Molly is going to be leaving really soon for the Navy.
Maddie is going to K-State and I am going my separate way to Highland. It will
be an amazing experience out at state to be able to play with those girls one
last time.”

The Lady Cats had its two best
days of softball in half a decade, and all of sudden, those years of losing
records were gone. They didn’t matter anymore.

For the three Louisburg seniors,
the difficult times and run-rule losses were a thing of the past. They, and the
rest of the Lady Cats, got a chance to celebrate for a change.

“It means everything,” Rison said.
“I think I have played ball with Karson since we were like four and Maddie
plays next to me on the diamond all the time and I wouldn’t be half the ball
player I am without those two. They are my best friends and I can’t believe I
get to play one more week with them.”

It all begins today when No. 8

Louisburg will face off with No. 1 seed Andale/Garden Plain in the first round
of the Class 4A state tournament – a game where Louisburg will once again be a
big underdog.

It's nothing the Lady Cats aren't
used to and they hope to use some of that momentum from regionals into a
special run at state.

"Winning is fun," Griggs said with
a smile.

And Louisburg hopes to have a lot
of fun in Salina this weekend.

UPSET SPECIAL: Lady Cats win regional title to advance to state



Members of the Louisburg softball team hold up the Class 4A regional championship trophy Tuesday in Ottawa following the Lady Cats' 6-5 win over Chanute in the regional title game.

OTTAWA – Madison Svoboda could

feel her heart starting to come out of her chest.

Karson Griggs was a feeling a
little nauseous.

Those are some of the same feelings that were flooding the Louisburg softball's team dugout during the final inning of the Class 4A regional championship game against Chanute on Tuesday in Ottawa.

Louisburg held a one run lead, but Chanute had the tying run on third, two outs, and a trip to the state tournament was on the line. On the mound was sophomore Brooklyn Diederich, and with two strikes, the Chanute batter fouled five straight pitches.

The tension was mounting.

Finally, on the 10th
pitch of the at-bat, Diederich got what she was looking for – a swing and miss.

The strikeout sealed the Lady Cats'
trip to state with a 6-5 victory over No. 7 seed Chanute and sent shockwaves
throughout Class 4A softball.



Sophomore Brooklyn Diederich celebrates after she recorded a strike out to get the final out of the regional championship game against Chanute.

“I want to cry, but at the same time I am just really happy,” Griggs said. “It is exciting because I never thought something like this could happen, especially this year. It feels really nice and now maybe people will actually start taking us seriously.”

Not many gave people gave the Lady Cats a chance as they entered the Class 4A regional tournament with just five wins and were forced to begin tournament action in the play-in game.

After a 17-2 win over Parsons last

Monday in the play-in game, No. 15 Louisburg advanced to the regional semifinals and upset No. 2 seed Ottawa, 9-7, which helped set up the Lady Cats' first state tournament appearance since 2014.

"I think a lot of other teams underestimated us," Diederich said. "The fact that we came out and played our hardest ball showed what type of team we actually are. It is just crazy."

The Lady Cats (8-14) weren't without their obstacles in both games.

Louisburg needed seventh inning rallies in both games to get the victories. Against Ottawa, the Lady Cats trailed 7-4 going into their final at-bat and they answered that call with five runs in the seventh.

With the bases loaded, Diederich reached on an Ottawa error to score Griggs and then Kayla Willey worked a walk to force in another run. Junior Lauren Cutshaw delivered the biggest hit of the inning with a 2-run single that scored Paige Eccher and Diederich.

Svoboda added another insurance run as she singled home Willey and the Lady Cats took a 9-7 lead into the bottom of the seventh.



Paige Eccher slides safely into third against Chanute on Tuesday.

Diederich then worked around a two-out single from Ottawa and picked up her second win in as many games as she was also the winning pitcher against Parsons.

“We knew we could do it, but we just had to believe in ourselves,” Svoboda said. “Ottawa was a pretty high seed, but it also gives us an advantage because they were looking down at us and we had nothing to lose.”

As big as that rally was, it was the second time in the game where the Lady Cats had to stop Ottawa’s momentum. The Cyclones scored three runs in the fourth inning to tie the game and Louisburg didn’t waste any time to respond.

Griggs cranked a solo home run to

centerfield that hit the top of the fence and bounced over and gave the Lady
Cats the lead right back.

Ottawa answered with two runs in
the fifth and two more in the sixth to take the 3-run lead and set up the big
seventh-inning rally from Louisburg.

“We just have guts,” senior Molly
Rison said. “We showed a lot of resiliency in both games. When we were down in
both games, I don’t think any of us ever thought the game was over. Even in the
first game when we were down by three runs, it just shows that when we come
together then we can get it done.”



Kayla Willey makes contact with a pitch against Ottawa to reach on a single.

Against Chanute, the Lady Cats got
off to a good start again as they led 3-0 going into the

bottom of the fourth,
but the Comets took advantage of two Louisburg errors to score two in the
bottom of the fourth and another in the fifth to tie the game.

Defense kept the game close for Louisburg as Svoboda caught a line drive at second base that turned into a double play and shortstop Alyse Moore had a couple leaping catches to halt a Chanute rally.

The game remained tied going into the top of the seventh when Svoboda opened the inning with a routine fly ball to center. The Chanute center fielder slipped and fell while trying to make the catch, allowing Svoboda to reach with a single.

That play opened the flood gates for the Lady Cats. Griggs followed with a double that scored Svoboda and Eccher singled home pinch-runner Jordan Mynsted to put Louisburg up two. Diederich singled home Eccher with two outs to give the Wildcats an insurance run that they ultimately needed.



Alyse Moore lets out a big scream as the rest of her Lady Cat

teammates come together to celebrate their regional championship.

Freshman Mia Wilson started the game for Louisburg and held the Comet bats in check as she gave up just one earned run through five innings. August Daniels came in for relief and went into the seventh inning and gave up just one run in her inning of work.

Diederich then entered the game with one on and no one out in the seventh to close out the game. She gave up a hit and a run in the inning of relief – but her biggest stat was her one strikeout to end the game. Diederich finished the regional tournaments with a pair of wins and a save.

“Our pitching staff did a fantastic job in both games,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “Coach (Megan) Balke has done a fantastic job with them all season. Brooklyn was really hitting her spots, and forcing Ottawa to hit a lot of ground balls to locations we were able to handle. My message to her is always think about the great defenders around her, and don’t feel like she has to strike anyone out.

“I can’t say enough about the job that Mia and August put forth
in the second game. Both were chomping at the bit to get into game one, but the
time had not yet arrived for them to contribute. Mia gave her team a strong
performance before she gave way to August. When August entered the game, she
really threw some quality pitches before she gave way to Brooklyn.”



Louisburg coach John Ozier talks with his team following the Lady Cats' win regional title win.

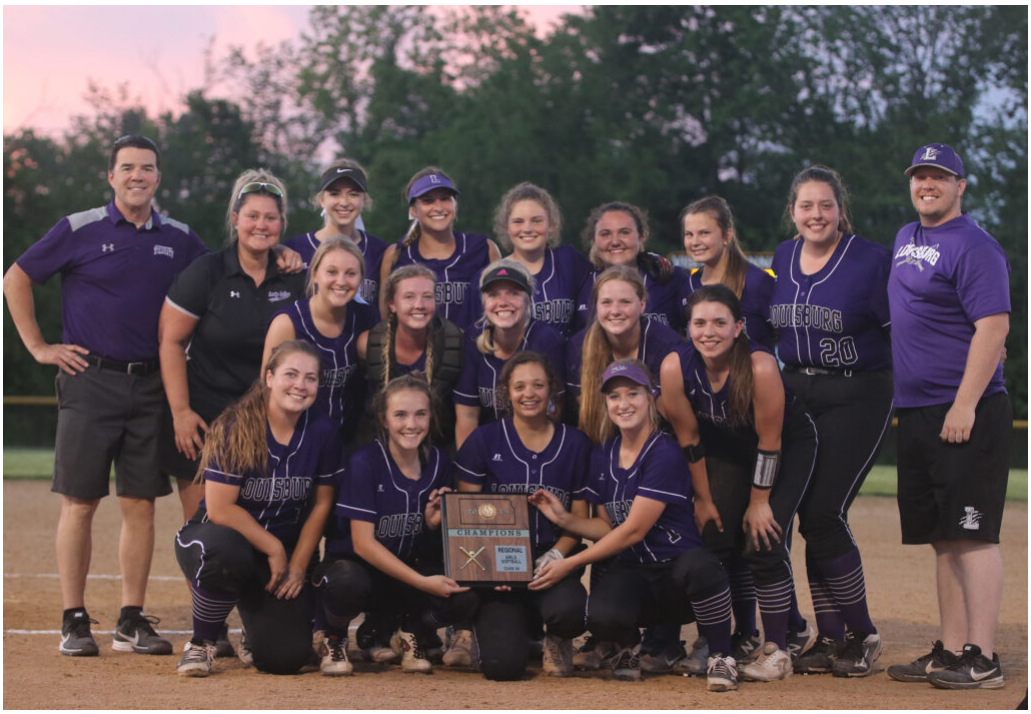
The end of the game dramatics was a special way for the Lady Cats to end their run as Diederich's final strikeout emptied the Louisburg dugout as the player ran to the middle of the diamond for their regional championship celebration.

"Honestly I was just in shock at that moment," Diederich said. "I was thinking to myself, 'Are we really state bound?' There were just so many thoughts going through my head – it is crazy."

Ozier loved the determination he saw from his team throughout the tournament and their ability to make big plays when they needed them most.

"The battle at the end of the game between Brooklyn and the Chanute hitter was epic," Ozier said. "It had everyone from both sides on the
edge of their seats. When she finally won the battle, a flood of emotions hit
our players and coaching staff hard. It was the ending that I was hoping for.

“The girls all deserved this moment. We have worked so hard over
the past four years to give this program respect and credibility. I am so proud
of each and every one of them.”



The Louisburg softball team poses with their regional championship trophy following their 6-5 win over Chanute. Members of the team (from row, from left) are: Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Brooklyn Diederich, Mia Wilson, Kayla Willey; (second row, from left) Paige Eccher, Lauren Cutshaw, Molly Rison, Karson Griggs, Madison Svoboda; (back row, from left) head coach John Ozier, assistant Megan Balke, Jordan Mynsted, Alyse Moore, Jada Frazier, August Daniels, Jenna Terry, Kat Coolidge and assistant coach Nick Chapman.

Louisburg will try and keep that momentum going Thursday when the Lady Cats begin play in the Class 4A Kansas State Softball Championships in
Salina. Louisburg, the No. 8 seed, will open with No. 1 Andale/Garden Plain
(21-1) at 5 p.m. at the Bill Burke Complex.

No matter what happens, the Lady Cat players are excited for their first state experience.

“I am super excited, but I am know that we are all going to have to put in a lot of work and show everyone what we are actually made of and it is going to be a lot of fun,” Diederich said.

Lady Cats lose two to Paola on Senior Night



Louisburg catcher Reilly Ratliff-Becher receives a throw home Thursday against Paola. Ratliff-Becher hit her first home run, but the Lady Cats lost both games on Senior Night.

It wasn’t the Senior Night the Louisburg softball team was hoping for when it hosted rival Paola last Thursday at Lewis-Young Park.

Paola dominated both games in a pair of 15-0 and 16-1 victories over Louisburg. Despite the outcomes, the Lady Cats still had something to celebrate as they honored their three seniors for their commitment to the program.

Karson Griggs, Molly Rison and Madison Svoboda were all recognized with their parents in-between

games and have been a big part of the Wildcat team the last four seasons.

All three have been All-Frontier League players for the Lady Cats, while Rison was a first-team all-state selection a year ago.



Louisburg seniors (from left) Molly Rison, Karson Griggs and Madison Svoboda were honored in-between games Thursday on Senior Night.

Paola’s offense was
just too much for the Lady Cats as the Panthers got a pair of home runs from
Halle Schindler and Hannah Menefee to lead the way in the opener.

In the nightcap, Schindler again caused more problems for Louisburg as she hit two more home runs and Jenna Collier added another for Paola as the Panthers jumped out to another big lead.

Louisburg got a run

of its own late in the second game as junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher hit her
first career home run to left field that gave the Lady Cats their lone score.

EUDORA DOWNS LOUISBURG IN MAKE-UP GAME

On May 6, the
Louisburg softball team traveled to Eudora for a make-up contest and the Lady
Cats couldn’t keep up with the Cardinals in a 10-1 loss.

Alyse Moore and
Reilly Ratliff-Becher each recorded two hits each to lead the Lady Cats, while
Karson Griggs added a double. Moore also had the team’s lone RBI.

Madison Svoboda,
Paige Eccher and Brooklyn Diederich also had hits for Louisburg.

Lady Cats get road sweep of Osawatomie



Louisburg shortstop Alyse Moore stretches out to get a ground ball last week at home against Ottawa. On Thursday, the Lady

Cats beat Osawatomie in two games on the road.

OSAWATOMIE – It wasn't always easy for the Louisburg softball team on the road Thursday in Osawatomie, but the when the Lady Cats needed runs, a pair of Louisburg seniors came to the rescue.

Molly Rison collected seven hits in the two games, including three doubles, as she helped the Lady Cats to a 6-5 win in the opener and later came through again as Louisburg took the nightcap, 6-4.

Karson Griggs, along with Rison provided a lot of the spark offensively in the second game as she tallied three hits, including a double and a solo home run.

"Offensively, our seniors were able to ignite their younger teammates with great at-bats," Louisburg coach John Ozier said. "We stranded runners all night, but were able to get just enough run support to pull off two much-needed wins. Karson broke out of a mini-slump with a towering home run in game two that got us going. Molly was consistent all night with her great hitting."

Louisburg jumped out on top in the opener as it scored two runs in the third inning on an RBI single from Rison that scored Madison Svoboda and Brooklyn Diederich followed that up with an RBI single that scored Rison.

Osawatomie answered with three runs of its own in the bottom of the third to take the lead, but it wouldn't stay that way for long.

The Lady Cats tied the game in the top of the fourth on an RBI double from Rison that scored Laruen Cutshaw and then took the lead in the top of the fifth. With Kayla Willey on third, Reilly Ratliff-Becher bunted on a squeeze play to score Willey and then Alyse Moore scored on a fielder's choice a batter later to give Louisburg a 5-3 advantage.

"There is no more exciting play in softball and the girls executed it to perfection," Ozier said of the squeeze play.



Louisburg senior Molly Rison makes contact with a pitch last week at home against Ottawa.

Eight of the nine Lady Cat players

recorded a hit in the opener. Rison finished with three hits, while Cutshaw and
Svoboda each had two hits.

Diederich kept the Lady Cats in the game
on the mound as she pitched a complete game and gave up just two earned runs on
seven hits and struck out three.

Pitching was strong again in the second
game as freshman Mia Wilson started and allowed one earned run in five innings.
Diederich came on to pitch the final two innings as she gave up two unearned
runs on three hits.

“I thought Coach (Megan) Balke did a nice job calling pitches all
night long,” Ozier said. “Brooklyn had a great night locating her pitches in
game one. She really battled when Osawatomie made a few runs at us.

“In game two, Mia came out firing and had great stuff, keeping their hitters off balance through five innings. When she wavered late, Brooklyn
picked up where she left off in game one. She was able to get their hitters to
hit her pitches to certain locations that gave our defense a chance.”

Louisburg (5-10) got out to a great start
in the nightcap as it scored four runs in the top of the first inning and added
another in the third to go up 5-0.

Rison had a two-run double, Diederich had
an RBI double and Willey had an RBI single to account for the runs in the first

inning. Griggs hit a solo home run in the third to keep the momentum going.

The Trojans tried to rally as it scored two runs in the fourth and two more in the seventh, but the Lady Cats were able to hold off the Osawatomie charge.

“Overall, our defense was outstanding,” Ozier said. “There were so many great plays turned in by our infielders, outfielders, and catchers that it would take all day to recognize each one of them. We did have to battle to the final out in both games. Osawatomie had runners in scoring position at the end of both games that could have won it for them. Our defense and pitching dug in and finished strong.”

Along with Rison’s and Griggs’ performance at the plate, Paige Eccher and Alyse Moore each had two hits to help the cause and Eccher added a double.

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

OTTAWA SWEEPS LOUISBURG

The Louisburg softball team had its hands full with a power-hitting Ottawa program when the Lady Cats hosted the Cyclones on April 16.

Ottawa scored nine runs to begin the opener, and the Cyclones got out to an early lead in the nightcap, as they handed the Lady Cats a 13-8 and 7-4 defeat.

In the opener, the Cyclones scored four runs in the first and five in the second to take a 9-0 lead, but the Lady Cats didn’t back down as they scored three in the bottom of the third to try and get back in it.

Ottawa answered with three more in the fourth to all but seal the win for the Cyclones despite a four-run fourth inning from Louisburg.

Louisburg senior Madison Svoboda led the Lady Cat offense with a pair of hits and an RBI, while Molly Rison and Karson Griggs both finished with a hit and 2 RBIs. Griggs and Kayla Willey had the lone extra base hits as each finished with a double, while Willey scored three runs.

Lauren Cutshaw also had an RBI base hit and scored two runs along with Svoboda.

In the nightcap, Ottawa took a 3-0 lead in the second inning and never looked back. The Lady Cats did try to rally in the bottom of the seventh with three runs, but couldn’t get any closer despite pounding out 14 hits.

Rison had three hits and a double to lead the way for Louisburg, while Alyse Moore, Paige Eccher, Cutshaw and Svoboda all added two hits each. Brooklyn Diederich, Moore and Willey each had RBIs.

Lady Cats win nightcap to split with Bonner Springs



Louisburg freshman Mia Wilson makes a pitch during the Lady Cats' game with Bonner Springs on Tuesday at Lewis-Young Park.

It was a tale of two games for the Louisburg softball team Tuesday when it hosted Bonner Springs for a Frontier League doubleheader.

Coming off their first sweep of the season, the Lady Cats fell to Bonner Springs in the opener, 6-1, and had hard time getting things going offensively. Louisburg turned things completely around in the nightcap.

The Lady Cats put together an offensive barrage in the second game at Lewis-Young Park as they rolled the Braves, 12-2, to get their third win of the season.

Louisburg's three seniors, Madison Svoboda, Karson Griggs and Molly Rison, got the Lady Cats going offensively. Svoboda led the way with a pair of doubles to go along with 3 RBIs and Griggs had three hits, including a double, and 2 RBIs. Rison also had two hits, 2 RBIs and a double herself.

The Lady Cats (3-7) scored two runs in the first and third innings, three in the fourth and five more in the fifth to complete the run-rule win in the fifth inning.

Sophomore pitcher Brooklyn Diederich got the win for Louisburg as she allowed one earned run on seven hits. Juniors Lauren Cutshaw, Kayla Willey and sophomore Alyse Moore also had RBI hits for Louisburg.



Junior Kayla Willey runs back in to make a diving catch Tuesday against Bonner Springs.

“I challenged the girls to move on from game one and strike early,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “We did just that, scoring two in the first,

and never really looking back. Brooklyn did a nice job of locating her pitches.
Neither she or Mia (Wilson) have overwhelming velocity, so they have to pitch
to contact and avoid bad pitches in key situations.

“Our defense in game two was outstanding both in the infield and
outfield. Our three seniors really stepped it up with their hitting,
especially with runners in scoring position.”

In the opener, the Lady Cats had a
tough time getting going offensively against starter Emily Ashford. The Bonner
Springs sophomore struck out 10 batters, but the Lady Cats did have
opportunities as they walked seven times, including three from Svoboda.

Louisburg just couldn’t string
hits together as Griggs and Moore had the Lady Cats’ only two hits in the loss.
Bonner Springs broke open a scoreless game in the third with three runs and
added three more in the fourth to pull away.

Freshman Mia Wilson started the
game for Louisburg and gave up three earned runs on six hits over seven
innings. She also struck out three batters.

“I was hoping we would come out with some
momentum from our games last week,” Ozier said. “Unfortunately, we were as flat
as a pancake. We did squander some great scoring opportunities early that came
back and really hurt us. I thought Mia pitched a great game.

We had a couple of
defensive lapses that lead to some unearned runs.

“Their pitcher did a nice job of locating
her pitches against all of our hitters. Softball is a game where timely hitting
and solid defense can produce wins. That is exactly what Bonner Springs was
able to do in game one.”

Louisburg will return home tonight for a
single game against Frontier League foe Tonganoxie. First pitch is set for 4:30
p.m. at Lewis-Young Park.

Lady Cats get first wins of season with sweep of Wellsville



Louisburg senior Karson Griggs slides safely into home plate Thursday during the Lady Cats’ doubleheader against Wellsville at Lewis-Young Park.

The Louisburg softball team had a lot of pent up frustration after losing its first six games to start the year.

Louisburg decided to take it out on Wellsville on Thursday during the Lady Cats' home opener at Lewis-Young Park – more specifically the Eagles' pitching. The Lady Cats exploded for 25 runs in the two games as they rolled to an 11-1 and 14-4 victory.

Not only were the Lady Cats able to get their offense going, but they got good pitching performances in both games and the Lady Cats played solid defense in the process.

"After getting through the extremely difficult front end of the schedule, we continued to work very hard in our practices, and for the most part, kept a positive frame of mind," Louisburg coach John Ozier said. "A huge weight was lifted after the victory in game one. The girls played more aggressively and relaxed in every aspect of the game once we established some breathing room. We were able to put together some great at-bats in key situations with runners in scoring position. We had struggled mightily with that in our first three double-headers."

The Lady Cats (2-6) got things going early in the opener as they used a 7-run second inning to stake them to an early lead they wouldn't give up.

Louisburg got a lot of production from the top of its order as the first five batters combined for nine of the team's 12 hits in the contest. Senior Madison Svoboda led the way with three doubles and an RBI, while Lauren Cutshaw and Karson Griggs each added

a pair of
singles. Griggs also drove home two runs and Cutshaw added another.

Senior Molly Rison provided the Lady Cats with a big hit in that second inning as she connected on a 2-run home run over the centerfield fence. Junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher also had a 2-run single in the inning and junior Kayla Willey added an RBI hit.



Members of the Louisburg softball wait on Molly Rison to step on home plate to celebrate her home run Thursday.

Freshman pitcher Mia Wilson kept the Wellsville hitters in check most of the evening as she allowed one earned run on three hits to go along with four strikeouts in the complete game effort.

“Mia demonstrated great focus and tremendous resolve in battling
through some tough situations in game one,” Ozier said. “The coaching staff has
emphasized the importance of trusting the defense, and

aggressively attacking
the hitters. She did just that.

“Our defense all night was tremendous. Instead of playing to not
make mistakes, we attacked the ball and made plays.”

In the nightcap, the Lady Cats actually found themselves down a
pair of runs in the third inning before tying it. Wellsville answered with a
run in the fifth to take the lead again, but the Lady Cats made sure they ended
it in the bottom of the inning.

Louisburg responded with 11 runs in the bottom of the fifth to secure the run-rule victory as they took advantage of several Wellsville errors
in the frame.



Louisburg junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher makes contact with a pitch Thursday during the Lady Cats’ doubleheader.

Rison had another big performance for the Lady Cats as she recorded a single, a double and 4 RBIs in the win. Cutshaw also had a pair of hits, while junior Paige Eccher had a two-run double.

Svoboda, Griggs, Willey and Jordan Mynsted each added a single in the win, while Griggs, Willey, Mynsted and Brooklyn Diederich each drove home a run.

Diederich picked up the win in game two for the Lady Cats as she pitched a complete game. The Louisburg sophomore gave up one earned run on eight hits.

“Brooklyn battled through some tough situations, allowing us to stay close until we got our bats going,” Ozier said. “Like Mia in game one, she maintained a warrior like mentality throughout the game. Up and down the lineup in both games, we had timely hitting, great base running and great discipline at the plate.”

Louisburg will try and keep its winning ways going today when it hosts Bonner Springs for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m., at Lewis-Young Park.

LOUISBURG DROPS PAIR TO SPRING HILL

On April 2, the Louisburg softball team traveled to Spring Hill for a Frontier League doubleheader and the Lady Cats had hard time getting its offense going in a 7-0 and 11-1 loss.

In the opener, the Lady Cats tallied just three hits from

Karson
Griggs, Lauren Cutshaw and Paige Eccher. Unfortunately, Spring Hill took
advantage of three Louisburg errors as the Broncos used a 5-run third inning to
pull away.

Runs were also hard to come by in the nightcap for Louisburg. The Lady Cats scored one run on four hits, while the Broncos scored four runs
in the third and five more in the fourth to help complete the sweep.

Sophomore Alyse Moore led the Louisburg bats with a pair of hits
and Griggs accounted for the Lady Cats' lone run with a solo home run in the
third inning. Rison also had a single for Louisburg.

Lady Cats fall on the road to defending state champs



Louisburg second baseman Madison Svoboda throws out a Baldwin runner from the ground last Tuesday in Baldwin City.

BALDWIN CITY – Coming off a doubleheader
against a tough Piper team, the schedule didn't get any easier

for the
Louisburg softball team last Tuesday when it had to travel to Baldwin.

Baldwin won the Class 4A Division
II state title last season and the Bulldogs return several members off of last
season’s championship squad. The Lady Cats had a difficult time quieting the
Bulldog bats as Baldwin handed Louisburg a 9-4 and a 16-3 loss in Baldwin City.

In the opener, Louisburg scored three runs in the first two innings to tie the game at 3-all going into the bottom of the second inning. Baldwin answered with four runs in the frame and two more in the sixth to seal the win.

The Lady Cats were able to scatter
10 hits in the first game, but had a tough time turning those into runs after
the second inning.

“We came out quick and scored in the
first inning and that got us going a little, but Baldwin turned in some great
defensive plays to keep us off the board time and time again,” Louisburg coach
John Ozier said. “We turned in some great defensive plays, but we could not
stop their hot bats. We made a run late, but they held us off.”

Louisburg (0-4) seniors Karson Griggs and Molly Rison each led the Lady Cat offense with two hits each, while junior Lauren Cutshaw, senior Madison Svoboda, junior Kayla Willey and sophomore Alyse Moore each drove home a run. Sophomore Brooklyn Diederich had the team’s lone extra base hit with a double.

In the nightcap, Louisburg got out to a 3-0 lead to start the game thanks to an RBI single from Rison that scored Svoboda. Diederich then drove home Griggs and Rison with a single of her own.

Baldwin answered with a run in the first and second inning, but the Lady Cats still had a 3-2 lead going into third. It was then when Baldwin blew the game open as it scored nine runs in the third and five more in the fourth to get the win.

Griggs led the Lady Cats offense with two hits, including a double, and Paige Eccher also had a hit for Louisburg.

“Baldwin’s hitting was just too tough on us,” Ozier said. “We had some innings where we gave up five outs through some defensive errors. Baldwin is a team that will make you pay for your mistakes. We’ve had a tough start to the season, but we are committed to keep working hard.”

Louisburg will return to action this Tuesday when it travels to Spring Hill for a doubleheader. The Lady Cats will host Wellsville on Thursday for their home opener.

Lady Cats lose season opener to Piper



It was a different start to the season for the Louisburg softball team.

Louisburg was scheduled to begin its season with a doubleheader at Piper last Tuesday – and they did. Well, half of it anyway.

The Lady Cats lost the opener 12-5, but jumped out to a quick 3-0 lead in the nightcap on a home run from Karson Griggs. Mother Nature had other ideas as inclement weather postponed the second game until Thursday.

Not only did the Lady Cats lose the first game, but lost the lead in the nightcap as well. The game was forced to start over and Louisburg was on the wrong end of a 16-0 loss Thursday at Piper.

“Our conviction in game two was evident when we came out and scored three runs in the top half of the first,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “During the bottom half of the first, the heavy rains put an end to our momentum and forced postponement until Thursday night. Unfortunately we were forced to begin the game over rather than resuming from all we had left off on Tuesday night.

“It was an unfortunate ruling, but we attempted to regain our momentum, and move on. We could just not regain our energy from Tuesday and ended up on the losing end of a very lopsided game.”

In the opener, Louisburg jumped out to an early 3-1 lead in the second inning after Griggs walked with the bases loaded and seniors Madison Svoboda and Molly Rison each came through with RBI singles.

However, Piper scored 11 runs in the next three frames to give the Pirates a 12-3 lead and the Lady Cats, despite scoring two runs in the fifth, couldn’t catch up.

Griggs led the Lady Cats with three RBIs, while Griggs, Rison, Svoboda and Alyse Moore each recorded hits. Griggs had the lone extra base hit with a double. Junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher and freshman Jordan Mynsted each walked twice and Mynsted scored two of the Lady Cats’ runs.

“After having only one practice outside this preseason, I thought we came out very solid in the first game,” Ozier said. “We experienced a few defensive hiccups and Piper began to hit the ball hard and had a big inning that really hurt us. After we regained our composure, we put a couple more runs on the board. We stranded nine runners, so we really missed some great opportunities to score in the first game.”

It got a lot tougher for the Lady Cats on Thursday in the second game. Piper scored 10 runs in the first inning to take an early lead and never looked back.

Sophomore Brooklyn Diederich had two hits to lead Louisburg, while Rison, Svoboda, Griggs and Kayla Willey each

had a single for Louisburg.

The Lady Cats (0-2) will try and
get back on track Tuesday when they travel to Baldwin for a doubleheader. First
pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.