

Louisburg stays perfect in league with win over Spring Hill



Louisburg juniors Erin Lemke (left) and Haley Cain team up for a block Tuesday at Spring Hill High School. The Lady Cats defeated the Broncos, 3-1, and have a 3-0 league record to start the season.

SPRING HILL – When the Louisburg High School volleyball team ventured to Spring Hill on Tuesday for a Frontier League dual, not only were the Lady Cats trying to protect their No. 2 state ranking, but they also wanted to preserve their perfect league mark.

The Lady Cats were able to do both against a tough-minded Spring Hill team.

Louisburg went on to defeat the Broncos 25-18, 21-25, 25-18 and 27-25 to earn its third straight league win to start the season as the Lady Cats aim for a league title.

“Overall we did alright,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “Spring Hill is tough. We saw them play at Lansing last week and we knew they were going to be a tough team and they made some improvements in the offseason. For our girls, it is a game of momentum. We will go on rush and then we dive back down. It is like a roller coaster for us at times.

"In that second set, we made quite a few mental errors and that was the difference in the game is making those non-negotiable mistakes and errors. Spring Hill just capitalized on those mistakes. We do have experience on our side, and our girls have been down before and we have picked ourselves back up. We just haven't been able to come out strong and stay that way. We definitely need to work on that because as we go through the season, teams will be getting better."

The Lady Cats (9-5) opened up strong as it took the first set, but faltered in the second after the Broncos took advantage of some Louisburg mistakes. In a road environment, Louisburg picked itself back up and played well at the net, and on defense, to win the third set and take control of the match.

"I told the girls that they can't expect to come into their house, play on their court and expect things to be easy," Compliment said. "They have to earn every point and they have to want it more than they do. For them, they answered back with a couple key plays and we needed to get our serve receive back to where it needed to be. We stepped that up a little bit and we passed it a little better there. We served a lot more aggressive in that one as well."



Senior Anna Dixon goes up for one of her team-high 18 kills Tuesday against Spring Hill.

Louisburg had the advantage in the fourth set as it took a 21-16 lead late, but the Broncos fought back to tie it at 21-all. The two teams traded points till it got to 25-all and then Lady Cat senior Anna Dixon finished it off with a pair of kills to end the match.

Dixon led Louisburg in kills on the night with 18 and junior middle hitter Haley Cain had a strong night as well with 11 kills. Senior outside hitter Carson Buffington finished with six in the win.

Freshman setter Rinny McMullen had a big night running the offense as she led the Lady Cats with 27 assists and fellow freshman Davis Guetterman had eight.

Defensively, junior Riley Kallevig had a busy evening as she recorded a team-high 24 digs and Dixon was second on the team with 16. Junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher also had double figure digs with 13.

Sophomore middle blocker Carleigh Pritchard and Dixon each led Louisburg with three blocks on the night, while Cain and Kallevig each recorded two.

The Lady Cats will try for another league win Tuesday when they host Ottawa for another Frontier League dual. Varsity is set to begin at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Lady Cats rally to finish second at Lansing Invitational



Members of the Louisburg volleyball team (from left) Carleigh Pritchard, Carson Buffington, Anna Dixon, Rinny McMullen and Riley Kallevig celebrate a point Saturday during the Lansing Invitational.

It had been six years since the Louisburg High School volleyball team found itself in the championship match of the

Lansing Invitational.

The tournament, which features several state-ranked teams every year, is always a test for the Lady Cats and this time around was no exception. If they wanted to get there this time, the Lady Cats had to get through three Class 5A teams, two of which were ranked.

Louisburg put together some of its best volleyball of the season when it needed it most.

The Lady Cats advanced to the championship match for the first time since 2012 as they knocked off No. 3 De Soto in the semifinals and faced Topeka Seaman in the title round. Louisburg ended up losing to Topeka Seaman in three sets, 22-25, 25-16 and 25-21.

Although the Lady Cats came up short of their ultimate goal, they still realized they play strong volleyball throughout the 10-hour tournament.

"It was great to see the girls get back into the championship game at such a tough tournament," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "We had opportunities to make some plays against Topeka Seaman and win it all, but we just didn't capitalize on some plays when we needed to. The girls played really strong and really well. I was so proud of what they accomplished at Lansing."

The Lady Cats had a good start to its day as they had four rounds of pool play. Louisburg opened with a rout of Piper (25-14, 25-5) to start the day and then won a tough match against Olathe West (28-26, 25-20).



Riley Kallevig goes up for a kill Saturday in Lansing. Kallevig and the Lady Cats finished second overall during the tournament.

Louisburg then downed Shawnee Mission West (25-8, 25-14) to face Lansing, the No. 2-ranked team in Class 5A, for the right to finish first in the pool. Unfortunately, the Lady Cats struggled in their 25-16 and 25-10 loss to the Lions, but still advanced to the championship bracket.

That set up a rematch with De Soto in the semifinals, who the Lady Cats lost to just a week before.

De Soto came out strong in a 25-18 win in the first, but Louisburg rallied thanks to its defense as it came back to take the match 27-25 and 25-18 and beat the state's No. 3-ranked team in Class 5A.

"It is just big for them confidence-wise," Compliment said. "It was a match that they really wanted and it was one they were fired up for the whole time. It was huge the way that we rebounded. Our serve receive and our digging was great and defensively we were really getting after it.

"The girls made a lot of really good plays. All the hitters were stepping up as well, and it wasn't just one or two, everyone was stepping up and making plays when they needed to."

Junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher provided a defensive presence in the back row with 17 digs and senior outside hitter Anna Dixon was strong at the net with 17 kills in the match.



Junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher gets down on the floor for a dig Saturday at Lansing.

Freshmen setters Corinna McMullen and Davis Guetterman both ran the offense well with 15 and 14 assists, respectively. Senior Carson Buffington, juniors Haley Cain, Riley Kallevig and Erin Lemke, along with sophomore Carleigh Pritchard, all provided key kills throughout the match.

The Lady Cats used all that momentum into their championship match with Topeka Seaman as they took the first set, before falling in the final two.

"Topeka Seaman is a very good team and they seem to get better every time we see them," Compliment said. "Our girls played well together on Saturday and it was a long day. For the girls to have that much energy and drive at the end was good to see, but they were just pushing through at the end and we just made a few too many mistakes."

Dixon led the Lady Cats at the net once again as she finished with a team-high 61 kills over the six matches, while Cain was second on the team with 27. Buffington was next with 16, Lemke finished with 14, Kallevig had 13 and Pritchard ended up with 10.

Louisburg also served well at times as Guetterman led the Lady Cats with eight aces. Kallevig and Dixon had seven and six, respectively. McMullen had a big day setting with a team-high 78 assists and Guetterman finished with 56.

Defensively, Ratliff-Becher had a busy day with 43 digs and Dixon was second on the team with 33. Pritchard led Louisburg with six blocks.

Lady Cats get back on winning track at Bonner Springs



Louisburg junior Haley Cain goes up for a kill during the Lady Cats' Frontier League dual Thursday at Bonner Springs High School. The Lady Cats stayed perfect in the league with a 3-0 win over the Braves.

BONNER SPRINGS – Ever since its season opening win over Paola, the Louisburg High School volleyball team has been missing a little something.

Since that time, the Lady Cats have gone 2-3 in their last five matches and something hasn't seemed right to head coach Jessica Compliment. Her team just wasn't the same.

"The last week-and-a-half we have been missing a little bit of energy and fire," Compliment said. "We came out with so much energy in our first match of the season against Paola, and then we seemed to lose some of that excitement. We have struggled a little bit since then and I told the girls that we need to find the fun in the game."

The Lady Cats definitely had fun Thursday.

Louisburg traveled to Bonner Springs for a Frontier League dual and the Lady Cats seemed to get some of that fire back as they rolled the Braves in a 25-13, 25-20 and 25-18 win to move to 2-0 in league play and 4-3 overall.

“I think overall we did pretty well,” Compliment said. “We were able to get some of that excitement back against Bonner and it showed. We were having fun again, we were playing together and trusting each other.”

Serving was a big factor for the Lady Cats on Thursday as they tallied 14 aces on the night and had an 89 percent serving percentage. Louisburg was able to go on big runs in each of the three sets thanks to their strong serving.

Riley Kallevig got it started as she served five straight points to give Louisburg a 15-8 lead in the first set behind kills from Anna Dixon, Carson Buffington and Haley Cain.

Davis Guetterman kept going as she served seven straight points of her own late in the match, including three aces, to help give the Lady Cats a 23-10 advantage and would eventually ease to a win in the first set.



**Freshman Davis Guetterman goes up for
a serve Thursday at Bonner Springs.**

"We have been trying to clean up our serves again and be more consistent," Compliment said. "We have been serving aggressive and getting a lot of aces, but at the same time we have been missing some key serves. We did a lot better job of that as several girls went on big runs. I thought Davis found her serve and I think the whole team did a good job of that."

It was Dixon's turn in the second set as she reeled off five straight points from behind the service line, including three aces, to give the Lady Cats a 12-6 advantage. When Bonner Springs tried to creep back in it, Louisburg answered as Kallevig reeled off another five points, including three aces. Carleigh Pritchard and Dixon finished off the set with three straight kills.

Cain got Louisburg off to another big lead in the third set with six straight points before Bonner Springs got back into the match and trimmed an 11-3 Louisburg advantage to just one. The Lady Cats kept the Braves at arm's length the rest of the way to get the sweep.

Dixon had a big day at the net with a team-high 17 kills, while Buffington finished with five and Cain added four. Dixon and Kallevig tied a team-high with four aces. Guetterman and Cain added three and two aces, respectively.

Kallevig also had a big day defensively with 11 digs and libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher finished with six of her own.



Sophomore Carleigh Pritchard sends the ball over the net for a point Thursday at Bonner Springs High School.

Rinny McMullen and Guetterman ran the offense well for Louisburg. McMullen had a team-high 15 assists in the three sets and Guetterman also reached double figures with 10.

The competition will heat up again for Louisburg on Saturday when the Lady Cats travel to the Lansing Invitational. Louisburg will start with pool play against Lansing, Piper, Olathe West and Shawnee Mission West at 9 a.m. Lansing is currently ranked No. 2 in Class 5A, while the Lady Cats are No. 3 in 4A.

“I think the girls are looking forward to playing Lansing because they know they are good competition and they are a good team that we try to beat every year,” Compliment said. “I really like the competition level of the tournament. De Soto and Basehor-Linwood are on the other side and I think the

girls would like a rematch against De Soto after losing to them earlier in the year. It will be a fun day and we need to come ready to play.”

LADY CATS SPLIT ON THE ROAD AT BURLINGTON

On Tuesday, Louisburg made the long bus ride to Burlington to compete in a triangular with Santa Fe Trail and Burlington – both teams who were ranked in their specific classes at the time.

The Lady Cats had a difficult time with both teams, but were able to get one win. Despite falling in the first set, 25-23, to Santa Fe Trail, the Lady Cats responded nicely with a pair of 25-15 victories to defeat the Chargers, 2-1.

Louisburg had a little tougher time with Burlington, which was ranked No. 2 in Class 3A. The Lady Cats won the first set 28-26, but couldn't get another win as Burlington stole the next two, 25-23 and 25-22.

“Burlington played really, really well,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “We lost our focus and we made a lot of unforced errors on our side and Burlington was able to capitalize on those. We had too many missed serves, we had miscommunication on serve receive and we had a lot of net fouls. I think the girls just got frustrated, and instead of refocusing, we just couldn't find our game and Burlington played really well.”

Senior Anna Dixon was a force at the net with 18 kills against Burlington, while Cain finished with five. Freshman setter Rinny McMullen had 19 assists for the match and freshman teammate Davis Guetterman had 14.

Junior libero Reilly-Ratliff Becher had 13 digs to lead the Louisburg defense.

Against Santa Fe Trail, Dixon once again led Louisburg with 14 kills and junior Riley Kallevig was second on the team with four. Guetterman finished with 14 assists to lead Louisburg and McMullen was second with nine.

Dixon also led the Louisburg defense with 16 digs, while Ratliff-Becher and Guetterman each added seven.

Former Lady Cat volleyball players thriving at collegiate level



Former Louisburg High School volleyball players (from left) Bailey Dvorak, Lauren Dunn, Madison Turner, Sophie McMullen and Sydney Dixon have either had a lot of success on the collegiate level or are just getting started following strong careers with the Lady Cats.

Louisburg High School volleyball has certainly had a run to remember in recent years.

The Lady Cats advanced to the state tournament five of the last six seasons and have finished runner-up on two occasions. Louisburg has also recorded third and fourth-place finishes

along the way.

In a program that has a history filled with state tournament appearances and top four placings, Louisburg has had several good players that were big contributors in that run.

Now those same players are either currently making an impact on the collegiate level, or are about to make their mark.

Sydney Dixon (Fort Hays State), Bailey Dvorak (Lindenwood), Madison Turner (Arkansas State), Lauren Dunn (Pittsburg State) and Sophie McMullen (Northwest Missouri State) are all former LHS players that have gone on to play Division II level volleyball or higher.

Each player has a different journey that led them to their respective destinations, but the one thing they have all in common is they helped Louisburg volleyball continue its strong tradition. Now they are trying to do the same thing in college.

SYDNEY DIXON

Volleyball has always been in Sydney Dixon's blood.

Her mother Beth, and aunt Amy, are both currently in the LHS Hall of Fame and both went on to play college volleyball themselves. Like many other college volleyball players, Sydney grew up on the sport.

In high school, she helped lead Louisburg to a second place state finish in 2013 and the outside hitter eventually signed on with Fort Hays State – a Division II program in the MIAA.

Although some players take a while to get acclimated in the collegiate level, Dixon made her mark on the program as a freshman in 2015. She earned honorable mention All-MIAA honors as an outside hitter as she finished with 190 kills, which was

fourth on the team.

“College volleyball is a different world for sure,” Dixon said. “It is more of a job than it is in high school and really was a huge change for me. But I got to know a lot of different players and developed a lot more relationships along the way and the experience was a great.”

Her success as a freshman gave her more playing time as a sophomore as she made 22 starts and finished with 173 kills and had six double-figure kill matches, including 16 against Missouri Western.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Prickett / Fort Hays State
Sydney Dixon played for three seasons with the Fort Hays State volleyball team.

“My sophomore season was probably the most memorable for me because the team was doing so well and the team had such good chemistry,” Dixon said. “It was a good squad and I just

remember the energy surrounding the team and we were able to win some big matches.”

Dixon was on pace to have a career year as a junior in 2017 as she racked up 185 kills through just 24 matches, including a 17 kill performance against West Liberty. Unfortunately, a knee injury derailed the rest of her season.

As she went up at the net, Dixon felt her knee start to buckle and had to take herself out. It turned out that she had a 60 percent tear in the patella tendon in her knee and had to have knee surgery in the offseason.

That injury also forced Dixon to make a tough decision as she decided to say goodbye to the sport she loved a year earlier than she had hoped.

“It was hard, so hard,” Dixon said. “They said if I didn’t have surgery that the tendon could completely rupture and obviously I didn’t want to take that chance. I just love the sport so much. I don’t regret anything though. I loved playing here and I have met so many great people. Playing college volleyball was a rewarding experience for me and one that I don’t regret.”

Dixon will graduate with a degree in exercise science in December and did work in the classroom after earning a spot on the MIAA Academic Honor Roll each of the last three years.

She also hasn’t left volleyball behind either and is still involved in the Fort Hays program as a student assistant coach.

“I am not sure exactly what I want to do after I graduate, but the one thing I do know is that I want to coach either on the club or high school level,” Dixon said. “I had the chance to coach a club team earlier and I thought it was a great experience. I just want the opportunity to be able to teach and help others. It was very rewarding for me.”

BAILEY DVORAK

When Bailey Dvorak accepted the opportunity to play college volleyball at Lindenwood University, she wasn't quite sure what to expect.

The transition from high school to college volleyball was a big one, and for the 2015 Louisburg High School graduate, it seemed to be an easy one on the court.

Dvorak made a big impact with the Division II Lions as a freshman as she earned second-team All-MIAA honors as an outside hitter. She played in 30 matches and started in 22 of them and led the Lindenwood team with 290 kills, including a season-best 19 kills against Central Oklahoma.

She also thrived in the classroom as Dvorak earned the MIAA Scholar Athlete Award.

"My experience at Lindenwood has been great," Dvorak said. "I love the area and the people that I have met. Lindenwood has over 50 sports teams so that brings in a lot of diversity to the school and it has introduced me to people from all over the world. I am happy that I chose to come to Lindenwood to play volleyball. The program has really changed these last few years and I am thankful to be a part of that."

As a junior, Dvorak had another solid season for Lindenwood as she played in 29 matches and recorded 176 kills as the Lions finished with a 20-13 record and an 11-7 mark in the MIAA.



**Photo
courtesy of Lindenwood University
Lousiburg grad Bailey Dvorak is off
to a strong start to her senior
season with Lindenwood.**

In her final season with the Lions, the team is picked to finish seventh in the MIAA, but they are already off to a strong start after winning their home invitational. Dvorak was a big factor for Lindenwood and was named to the all-tournament team for her efforts.

“It is a little bittersweet because I love my teammates and how much the program has changed,” Dvorak said of her final season of volleyball. “I wish I could play a few more seasons

with my coaches and continue to compete in the MIAA. My expectations this year is for us to compete and win.

“We have a pretty solid group of freshmen and quite a few returners that make practices very competitive and my hope is to do well this year so we will have a higher ranking next fall.”

She also has one more opportunity to compete against some of her former Louisburg teammates. Dvorak will face off with Lauren Dunn (Pitt State) and Sophie McMullen (Northwest) later this season and also ran up against Sydney Dixon in prior seasons.

“It has been pretty fun playing against them these last few years,” Dvorak said. “I am glad that all of us were able to compete at the highest level we could. Playing against my old teammates has made me realize how much talent we had during high school. I am thankful that Coach (Jessica Compliment) brought us together on the court and I think that she has done a great job building up the program.”

Dvorak is also excelling on the academic side as well. She will graduate with a major in psychology and a minor in sociology next May.

LAUREN DUNN

Lauren Dunn had her fair share of success during her time with the Louisburg volleyball program.

Dunn was a part of a senior class that helped the Lady Cats to four straight state tournament appearances and placed in the top four each year. She amassed more than 500 kills in her final two seasons and earned all-league and all-state recognition her senior year.

It was a fun four years for Dunn, and it was that time that helped her take that next step – collegiate volleyball.

Dunn signed on with Pittsburg State and the 2016 Louisburg High School graduate has made the most of her time with the Gorillas as she saw playing time as a freshman.

“My experience at Pitt has been amazing,” Dunn said. “The coaches, teachers and community are all on your side to help you, especially student athletes. It reminds me of small town Louisburg, so it felt like home as soon as I got here. As far as the transition, I think that’s what helped me, as well as having a very supportive team and family to help out whenever I needed them.”

Now entering her junior season with the program, Dunn has accomplished a lot since her arrival two years ago.

As a freshman, Dunn played in 19 matches and started in four as a defensive specialist. She had a team-high 15 digs against Northwest Missouri State that year and averaged close to two digs per set.



Photo courtesy of Pittsburg State University
Louisburg grad Lauren Dunn is entering her third season with the Pittsburg State volleyball program.

In her sophomore season, Dunn played in 30 matches and started 10 of those. She averaged close to 3 digs per set and had one of her best game's against Sydney Dixon's Fort Hays State team when she tallied 26 digs in the match.

At first it was a little different to play against Dixon or Bailey Dvorak's Lindenwood squad as they are all in the MIAA Conference, but Dunn enjoys the competition and a chance to get to reunite with her former teammates.

"Playing against Syd and Bailey is always fun," Dunn said. "Being past teammates, it's almost sad that we can't play together anymore, but it leads to more competition against them because it's kind of battle of Louisburg as well as our college team.

“After the games we always go say hi and see how everyone is doing and check up on them. With Sophie playing this year it will be interesting how she fits into her team (Northwest Missouri) and get to see another familiar face on the other side of the net.”

Pittsburg State, which was picked to finish eighth in the MIAA this year, is off to a good start as is Dunn. The Gorillas won seven of their first nine matches to begin the season and won the Christian Brothers Invitational title, in which Dunn was named to the all-tournament team.

So far this season, Dunn has racked up 154 digs on the year to go along with 21 aces.

Along with her success on the court, Dunn is also winning the classroom. She is a member of the MIAA Academic Honor Roll and currently has a 3.65 GPA as a nursing major.

Dunn realizes she has accomplished a lot so far during her time at Pittsburg State, but the program she came from, along with hard work, helped her get to this point.

“The MIAA is a hard conference and having 4 ex-Louisburg volleyball players playing in it says a lot about the Louisburg program,” Dunn said. “Also, the fact that Madison (Turner) is playing D1 at Arkansas State and Anna Dixon being committed to play at K-State is awesome. A lot of talent comes out of Louisburg and it’s because of all the time athletes put in during the season and in the off season. It also helps to have so much support from the whole town.”

MADISON TURNER

During her time at Louisburg, Madison Turner seemed to stand out among the rest when it came to volleyball and for good reason.

Turner, who stands at 6 feet, 4 inches, was a force at the net for the Lady Cat program as she led the team in blocks (266) and kills (327) her senior season in which the Lady Cats finished third at state in 2015. She was also a part of a senior class with Lauren Dunn that helped Louisburg to four state tournament appearances.

All that success brought her all-Frontier League and all-state honors, which eventually catapulted her to Division I volleyball when she signed with Arkansas State. Turner, who graduated from Louisburg High School in 2016, has enjoyed her time with the Red Wolves program.

"My time at Arkansas State has been really good for me because it has pushed me in everything that I do," Turner said. "Playing Division I volleyball and have school on top of that requires a lot of hard work and discipline. I still have a lot of fun being around my teammates and even meeting people in the community has been a great experience for me so far."

Turner's time at Arkansas State has had its challenges as she has had to deal with injuries that has limited her playing time.

As a freshman, Turner didn't see the court, but she changed all that in 2017 where she played in 11 matches and totaled 42 kills and 23 blocks. She had a career-best 11 kills against Little Rock and a career high six blocks against Troy in the first round of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

Playing volleyball in college is a challenge for a lot of athletes around the country, but one that Turner enjoys, despite dealing with nagging injuries from time to time.

"I've had to deal with a lot of injuries throughout my college career," she said. "I try not to let the pain keep me from playing and I do my best to push through it so that I don't have to miss matches."

“College volleyball is very different than high school because it requires a much higher commitment. It requires you to have better management skills because you have to travel a lot and still do academics on the road, which can be hard at times. The game is also much more competitive because everyone on your team, and the teams you play against are just as committed as you are and want to compete at this high level.”



Photo

courtesy Arkansas State

Madison Turner is hoping for a big junior season for the Arkansas State volleyball program.

So far this season, Turner has seen a lot of playing time with Arkansas State. Through six matches, she has played in 18 sets and recorded 20 kills and 14 blocks as the team's middle blocker.

The Red Wolves are 2-4 to start the season and have wins over Arkansas Pine-Bluff and Memphis.

"I have high expectations for myself to be the best I can be to finish out my career," Turner said. "I have had a lot of injuries which has been tough, but it has made me grow as a player because I push through it all so that I can keep playing volleyball."

Turner, who is currently majoring in accounting, is also thankful for being a part of Louisburg program that has sent so much talent to the collegiate level.

"I think it proves that even small programs like Louisburg can produce talent through hard work and dedication," she said. "It isn't all about being known in a big program."

SOPHIE MCMULLEN

In her final season with the Louisburg High School volleyball team, McMullen and the rest of the Lady Cats nearly pulled off the best finish in program history.

The Lady Cats lost a close match to Rose Hill in the Class 4A-Division I state championship in 2017 and eventually settled for second place. Once the season was complete, honors starting rolling in for McMullen as she was a first team All-Frontier League and all-state selection.

She had a busy career in which she was a four-year varsity player and helped the Lady Cats to three state tournaments. McMullen compiled some lofty stats during that time in which she finished with 1,141 digs, 783 kills and 272 aces.

That success eventually sent McMullen to Northwest Missouri State, where she is just beginning her collegiate career.

"The season is going great," McMullen said. "We have gotten

into a schedule where we are practicing every day and lifting Monday and Wednesdays. We are getting into the real swing of things and focusing a lot on technique and the little things.

“I just love it here. The atmosphere is amazing and so are the girls. Coming from the little town of Louisburg, my eyes have been opened. Everything is so different, the grind, the people, the difficulty and most definitely the level of intensity.”



Photo courtesy Northwest Missouri State

Northwest Missouri State freshman Sophie McMullen is excited for her first season of collegiate volleyball after helping Louisburg to a second place state finish.

McMullen will begin her Bearcat career as an outside hitter,

but is currently working behind a pair of upperclassmen at the same spot, so she realizes she will need to keep working hard to get to where she wants to be.

"I could not be more excited for this season to finally begin," McMullen said. "I am very hard on myself because of the amount of experience I have had in this sport, therefore my expectations for myself are very high. I came here in the summer and really worked hard in the weight room. I hope to find more of myself this season and to really truly push myself to be that better person, not just as a player.

"I hope to work hard and grind through the struggles and to get on the court and make an impact and contribute all that I can. These girls are my new family and I am so blessed to be a part of this program."

Throughout the season, McMullen will see some of her previous volleyball family along the way as well as the Bearcats will face off with Pittsburg State and Lindenwood, along with her former teammates Lauren Dunn and Bailey Dvorak.

"I could not be more excited to see my girls that I played with just 3-4 years ago," McMullen said. "That is one of the main reasons that I picked Northwest so that I could see my girls on the other side of the net rather than on my side.

"I think that the Louisburg program speaks for itself, seeing the amount of girls and talent that leave that gym and go on to become collegiate athletes. For me to be a part of that program for 4 years was honestly just a blessing. I loved all my girls and teammates and I can't wait to go back home to see my little sister (Rinny McMullen) and the girls kill it on the court. It warms my heart knowing that is where I get to say I played and where I grew up."

Lady Cats fall to pair of state-ranked teams at De Soto



Senior Anna Dixon records a kill during Louisburg's match with Olathe West on Thursday at De Soto High School. The Lady Cats defeated Olathe West in two sets, but fell to state-ranked Manhattan in three and De Soto in two.

DE SOTO – It didn't take long for the schedule to ramp up for the Louisburg High School volleyball team.

In just its second outing of the season, the Lady Cats squared off against three larger schools, including a pair that were state-ranked. Louisburg nearly knocked off one of those ranked foes, but came up short as it finished 1-2 on the night in a triangular at De Soto High School.

After the Lady Cats defeated Olathe West 25-23 and 25-11, they took Manhattan (No. 8 in Class 6A) to three sets before falling 25-17, 22-25 and 26-24. Louisburg, the No. 3-ranked team in Class 4A, then fell to De Soto (No. 4 in Class 5A) 26-24 and 25-14.

"Overall, we played pretty well," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "We came out a little slow and sloppy against Olathe West in the first set, but the team increased their

level of effort and came out strong in the second set. We knew going in to the evening that De Soto and Manhattan would be tough, and the team was ready for the competition.”

Against Olathe West, Louisburg (2-2) took a little time to get going in the first set, but the Lady Cats eventually found its footing as it dominated the second set and performed well at the net and in the back, defensively.

Senior hitter Anna Dixon led all Lady Cats with 12 kills in the match and the entire team served well as it recorded 10 aces. Junior Riley Kallevig led the way with four, while Dixon had three and junior Haley Cain had two.

Freshman setter Rinny McMullen led the way with nine assists and also played well defensively with a team-high six digs. Junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Dixon both also added five digs.

Louisburg was forced to play from behind against Manhattan from the start as it struggled early, but responded well to win the second set and even the match. The third set went back-and-forth, with some key plays that didn't favor the Lady Cats, and eventually they came up short in a 26-24 loss.

“We played pretty well against Manhattan,” Compliment said. “In the third set, there were a few situations where things didn't go our way, but the team rebounded and continued to fight. I've been talking to the players about playing smart, aggressive and to play to win rather than play to not lose. The last few points in the third set, the players were doing just that. They continued to swing aggressively and played to win.

“We did manage to dig ourselves into a few holes at the beginning, which made it an uphill climb to get back to even or come out ahead. We've talked a lot about coming out strong from the first play and never letting up.”



Junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher makes a pass Thursday against Olathe West.

Dixon certainly didn't let up at the net as she recorded a team-high 15 kills and also played well defensively with a team-high 11 digs. Cain and Kallevig had six and five kills, respectively.

The Lady Cats also had eight aces from behind the service line and McMullen led the way with four of those and also had nine assists. Freshman Davis Guetterman had a big match setting with 14 assists.

Defensively, Cain, Dixon and sophomore Carleigh Pritchard each had a pair of blocks, while Ratliff-Becher was second on the team with eight digs.

Although Louisburg fell to Manhattan, they still used some of that momentum in its final match against a former Frontier

League opponent – De Soto. The Lady Cats took De Soto to extra points in the first set, but the close losses took its toll as they couldn't keep up in the second.

“I think after losing the third set to Manhattan, and then the first set to DeSoto, I think the team was a little defeated,” Compliment said. “Rebounding from those two close losses wore them down mentally, I think. We didn't come out as strong, and we made too many errors on our side. De Soto is a good team, and one we look forward to playing. Against a team like De Soto, you can't let them get the edge early.”

Dixon once again led Louisburg at the net with 10 kills, while McMullen and Guetterman each recorded seven assists. Junior Erin Lemke and Pritchard each had a pair of blocks and Kallevig led Louisburg defensively with seven digs.

Louisburg returns to action tonight and it will see two more ranked teams when it travels to Burlington High School. The Lady Cats will compete in a triangular against Santa Fe Trail (No. 4 in 4A) and Burlington (No. 2 in 3A). The first match is set for 7 p.m.

Lady Cats blank rival Paola to start season



Freshman setter Davis Guetterman celebrates a point with her

teammates Tuesday during Louisburg's season opening victory over Paola at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats defeated the Panthers, 3-0.

It may only be one match, but the Louisburg High School volleyball team showed exactly why it was worthy of its No. 3 preseason ranking Tuesday in the Lady Cats' season opener against Paola.

The Lady Cats were dominant and never let up in their 25-14, 25-15 and 25-12 victory over the Panthers and started their season off with a victory at home.

Louisburg played like a team that finished as the state runner-up a season ago and wanting to take it a step further this year.

"We were ready to play for sure," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "We wanted to take a look and see where we are at offensively, defensively and what we needed to focus on for practice next. It was nice to play against someone other than ourselves and the girls were excited, especially with it being Paola, who is our league rival. They came out ready to play and they are a very cohesive group."

Chemistry didn't seem to be a problem on the court Tuesday, especially for a team running a new offense, defense and several players playing different positions than a year ago.

"It is a little rare to see a team that is so close so early in the year, especially when you add three new players to the mix, and two of them being freshmen setters," Compliment said. "Then you go and change the offense and the defense – they are just accepting their roles. We have made some changes from last year to this year, position-wise, but they understand the big picture and we are going to do what is best for the team. As a group they have decided what they wanted to accomplish

this year.”



Senior Carson Buffington (left) and Sydni Keagle go up for a block Tuesday against Paola.

The Lady Cats are running a two-setter offense this season and freshmen setters Rinny McMullen and Davis Guetterman stepped in to take charge of the offense. Both players provided several assists on the night to all their hitters, including Anna Dixon, Carson Buffington, Haley Cain, Riley Kallevig, Erin Lemke and Sydni Keagle.

“Both Davis and Rinny did a great job stepping in and running the offense,” Compliment said. “We worked on spreading the offense around and giving all our hitters a chance to go swing. They did a good job of connecting with all the hitters at different times. In my mind, you couldn’t tell that they were freshmen out there. They did a very good job.”

Serving was a big key for the Lady Cats against Paola as McMullen finished with a team-high four aces and Kallevig added three of her own. Dixon, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Cain also recorded aces on the night.

Not making mistakes from behind the service line was key for Louisburg as it scored eight of the first nine points in the first set to take control early after kills from Buffington and Dixon.

"We worked a lot on improving our serve receive in practice, and with that I told them that they have to serve tough," Compliment said. "I think they really stepped up in practice and were more aggressive. They are finding more spots, more zones and are just pushing the serve a little bit. We had a few errors, but we were serving aggressive."



Freshman Rinny McMullen skies for a serve Tuesday against Paola.

Paola made things interesting in the second set as it rallied to tie the match at 12, forcing Louisburg to call a timeout. Dixon recorded a kill right after the timeout and McMullen followed with three straight aces to give Louisburg a 17-12 advantage, and it never let up after that.

Louisburg (1-0) jumped out to a 10-1 lead to start the third set behind kills from Buffington, Dixon and Cain and also two aces from Kallevig. Dixon had a pair of aces and Lemke recorded two kills in the final five points to secure the win for the Lady Cats.

The Lady Cats will try and keep the winning ways going Thursday, but it will be tough as they travel to De Soto for a quadrangular with Olathe West and Manhattan. De Soto is currently ranked No. 4 in Class 5A and Manhattan is No. 8 in Class 6A.

“It will be a really good quad to play in,” Compliment said. “We wanted to keep De Soto on our schedule and they wanted the same thing even though they were leaving the league. I am excited to see how we match up. There will be some high-caliber teams that will be there and I will be looking forward to see how we play.”

State title game loss fuels Lady Cats for upcoming season



Louisburg senior Anna Dixon, the Class 4A-Division I Co-Player of the Year last season, returns to lead the Lady Cats as they embark on what they hope is another trip to the state tournament.

As the Louisburg High School volleyball team went through its summer workouts, visions of watching Rose Hill storm the court and hoisting a state championship trophy was a constant in its mind.

Last October in Salina, the Lady Cats were just one point away from winning their first ever state championship. Instead, Rose Hill rallied to take the match in three sets and left the Louisburg players with a hollow feeling the last 10 months.

It is that feeling that has fueled the Lady Cats over the summer, and now into the start of practice for the upcoming season.

“I think the nerves really got to us,” senior Anna Dixon said. “I think we had the physical ability to win a state title, but we didn’t have the mentality to win it there in the moment. That is what we have been working on in practice. I know for me, hitting it into the net at game point there – that hurt a ton. I know that each point matters and that is what we are focusing on – every point and every play.

“Every practice we always think about losing that match. We have had a lot of teams at Louisburg get second, third, fourth and I think we were the closest to ever win it. Hopefully, we can put it together this year.”

That focus is evident in practice as the players have returned with a renewed emphasis on getting better.

“We just want to go out and become a better team,” senior Carson Buffington said. “There are some people that don’t think we are going to be as good as last year, but I think we can even be better than last year. We are further ahead right now than at this time last year and I feel we are little more focused.”

Buffington and Dixon are the lone seniors on this season’s team that returns several key players from last year’s state runner-up performance. In fact, six players are back that saw time in the state tournament.

Although many of the same pieces are there, they are going to fit a little differently this year according to head coach Jessica Compliment.



Carson Buffington sets up teammate Haley Cain for a kill during last season's state tournament. Buffington, a senior, will make the move from setter to outside hitter.

Louisburg has switched to a 6-2 offense, which will run two setters. Buffington, who was the team's setter a year ago and a second team all-state player, has moved to outside hitter, while freshmen Corinna McMullen and Davis Guetterman will each take turns at the setter spot.

"Carson ran a 6-2 her sophomore year and has some hitting experience in her past," Compliment said. "She is a great vocal leader and someone I knew the team needed on the court. Switching her to a right side hitting position made sense and it was apparent during the KU camp that Carson fits in well there. The transition to the new 6-2 with Davis and Corinna is going well, and all of the players are working well together."

Another change is in the back row as junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher will take over as the team's libero. Last year's libero, Riley Kallevig, will take to the role of becoming a six-rotation outside hitter as the Lady Cats try and replace the production from Sophie McMullen – a first team all-state player that is now currently playing at Northwest Missouri State.

Junior Haley Cain also returns as the team's middle blocker and will be joined at the position by sophomore newcomer Carleigh Pritchard. Junior Erin Lemke is also back as a right side hitter.

"I stress to the players in the program to know multiple positions because it makes them versatile and easier to place on the court," Compliment said. "I also talk to them about being the type of teammate that's willing to adjust for the team and play where they will most benefit the team."

However, one thing that won't change for the Lady Cats is the presence of Dixon on the court. The returning Class 4A-Division I Co-Player of the Year, Dixon put together a strong season for Louisburg as she led the team with 613 kills and 61 blocks . The 6-foot-3 outside hitter was also third on the team with 58 aces and 329 digs.

Dixon, who will play at Kansas State next season and is currently ranked the 46th best prospect in the nation according to prepvolleyball.com, will be focal point for a lot of what the Lady Cats do this season.

"This will be Anna's fourth year as a starter on the squad," Compliment said. "She brings in a lot of experience. I'm sure she'll have a strong season and continue to lead the team vocally and by example."



(From left): Carson Buffington, Reilly Ratliff-Becher,

Haley Cain, Riley Kallevig and Anna Dixon celebrate a point during last season's state tournament.

Although a state title is the team's ultimate goal this season, the Lady Cats still have several boxes they would like to check off before they get there. Louisburg, which is currently ranked No. 3 in the Class 4A preseason rankings, has been working hard to get that accomplished.

"The difference with this group is we are motivated right from the start," Dixon said. "It took us halfway through the season last year for us to get the confidence that we can compete at state. After what happened last year, now we know we can do it and that we have the tools to do so. We just have to work hard from the start and we have been doing a good job doing that in practice.

"Our biggest goal right now is just going after the teams in our league. We have a few new teams, so we want to get a league title and get a good record going into sub-state."

Louisburg will kick off its season at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday when it hosts rival Paola for a Frontier League dual match.

It will be the first of many matches the Lady Cats hope to turn into a win this year as they try and erase the heartbreaking images from Salina.

"We think about it a lot," Buffington said. "It has motivated us to come back determined and ready to take it this year. It has really bugged us. We see pictures of Rose Hill winning it last year and they are already saying they want a 3-peat, so we can't let that happen.

"We just want to go out and become a better team. There are some people that don't think we are going to be as good as last year, but I think we can even be better than last year."

The Lady Cats would also like to finish what they started a

year ago.

“Placing second at state is a huge accomplishment and something the team is proud about,” Compliment said. “Few teams have the opportunity to play for a state title, but considering how close we were it left everyone feeling like we had some unfinished business. It’s definitely added some extra fuel this season.”

New rules create different vibe for first day of fall practice



The Louisburg High School football team opened the 2018 season with its first day of practice Monday and did so under different guidelines. Despite that, the Wildcats are excited for the start of the season.

On the horizon, it looked like a normal first day of practice.

More than 150 athletes took to their respective field, court or course to begin their journey to greatness Monday for the 2018 fall sports season. Excitement was abound and coaches were happy to be back with their players.

However, the first day of practice was a little bit different this year as the Kansas High School Activities Association implemented new fall heat acclimation rules in late July. The rules, applied to all sports, includes:

- Only one practice per day is permitted during the first five days of practice. All individuals shall only practice once per day for the first five days the individual practices, no matter when the person joins the team or if the person misses days due to injury/illness.
- No single practice may last longer than three hours. All warm-up, stretching, conditioning and weight lifting is included as part of the three-hour limit.
- A separate walkthrough is permitted in addition to the single practice. The walkthrough cannot be longer than one hour and must be separated from practice by at least three hours of rest. A walkthrough is defined as a teaching opportunity with the athletes in which no protective equipment is worn. No physically exerting activity, including any conditioning or weight lifting, may take place during the walkthrough.
- Beginning on practice day six, double practice sessions are permitted for any individual who has completed five days of single practices. Double practice sessions cannot be held on consecutive days. The day following a double practice day would be either a single practice day or a rest/recovery day.
- On days of multiple practices, no single practice may last longer than 3 hours and total practice time combined shall not exceed five hours.
- To be deemed a practice, a majority of the squad members must participate in the organized team training session.

Those rules left most of the coaches at Louisburg High School having to readjust how they run their practices or tryouts.

The Wildcat boys soccer team, which normally conditioned in

the morning and worked on skills in the afternoon, were forced to cram everything into one practice.

“I am extremely frustrated with the new KSHSAA rule,” Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. “Before to protect the student athletes, we ran in the morning before the sun was up and when it was cooler out. Now we have to practice and condition in the afternoon in the heat of the day. Personally, I fill this will lead to more issues. It would be interesting to see who all was included in this decision and what the data said.”



Eli Minster passes a ball to a teammate during a drill Monday during the first official day of practice.

Louisburg volleyball, which also holds tryouts, had to split up the grade levels during the process. Senior and juniors had tryouts in the morning as a group, while sophomores and

freshman practiced in the afternoon.

“In the past, we were able to put every athlete, freshman through senior, on the court at the same time and separate out the tested areas,” Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. “Physical testing had been in the morning with volleyball skill testing in the afternoon. Due to the change in the rule, we could no longer use that set up.

“It has forced a ‘split’ in the athletes because they can’t all work out together like they have been all summer long. Because of our numbers, and the tests we feel are necessary in order to make cuts and squad roster decisions, we need to run the athletes through each test. We would not have enough time to do that if we had kept them all together and brought them in for only one session. Which means the athletes are that more anxious and excited to finish tryouts and start the season with their teammates.”

There were also specific rule changes in regards to football, which forced Wildcat coach Robert Ebenstein to adjust his practice schedule as well, including the removal of two-a-days for the first week practice. Other changes include:

- Players must have a minimum of one day of rest/recovery during any week (Sunday- Saturday). Only injury treatments are permitted on a rest/recovery day.
- Days No. 1 and 2 of practice: Helmets only (air and bags only are permitted.)
- Days No. 3 and 4: Helmets and shoulder pads are permitted (Day 3: control permitted; Day 4: thud permitted.)
- Days 5 through Saturday of third week of practice: Full contact (air, bags, control, thud and live action permitted) may begin with exceptions that on any day involving multiple practices, only one practice may involve thud and/or live action.

"The changes with KSHSAA policies are what they are," Ebenstein said. "I think they were created with good intentions. Personally I feel that our practice tendencies over the last few years have put player safety as the No. 1 priority always, so in that regard not a whole lot will change for us. You are allowed to do a separate 'walk-through' other than practice which we will still do every morning at 6 a.m., so we still have that old school two-a-day feeling just the approach of what we do and how we will do it has changed.

"The only thing that confused me is the purpose of the change is for heat acclimation, but the wording of it will force us to condition our players in the afternoon when it is hot instead of in the morning when it is typically cooler. But most all of our players have been working their tails off all summer and are already in pretty good shape."

Despite the changes in practice, all four Wildcat programs are excited for what their season has in store. LHS had a large number of participants for the first day of fall practice as 163 athletes participated.

Ebenstein had 70 players attend the first day of practice, which is the highest number the Wildcats have had since he joined the staff in 2012. Louisburg also hopes to improve off its 6-3 record last season as they return 18 seniors, including several starters on both sides of the ball.

"Practice went well and it was good to finally get back on the field with the guys," Ebenstein said. "We are very excited for this season, as in every team in the state. The thing that separates us is how players, managers and coaches alike all really enjoy our time together. I am excited to coach, but I'm honestly excited to be around these coaches and kids again and give this season the best run we can."



LHS freshmen and sophomore volleyball players gather at center court during tryouts Monday.

On the volleyball side, the Lady Cats had 34 athletes show up for the first day of tryouts, which will end on Wednesday as Louisburg begins its quest to get back to the state tournament after finishing second a year ago.

“The first couple days are focused on running each athlete through a set of volleyball skills and physical skills tests,” Compliment said. “The athletes did a good job for the first day, and we are looking forward to the next couple of days.

“Over the course of the summer, we had a lot of athletes participate in summer league matches, summer camps, team camps, open gym and weights. They are ready to get the season going. There is a lot of excitement among the athletes and a lot of anticipation for the season.”

Coming off a spot in the state quarterfinals, the Wildcat boys soccer team had 38 athletes compete for a spot on the team as they try to make another run in the playoffs.

“It was nice to see so many kids out for the team,” Conley said. “The boys work incredibly hard and we very supportive of each other. With having so many new players coming out for the team, we did a lot of teaching and developing expectations for the drills and why we do things. It was actually the first time in three years the majority of the team completed the mile under six minutes, which was fantastic.

“It is a great time of the year with a lot of optimism. The boys were very upbeat and very focused on getting better. With only four seniors, we are extremely young and we will need to do a lot of teaching.”



Trinity Moore (center) leads a pack of runners during the first day of practice Monday at LHS.

As for cross country, numbers have dwindled a little for head coach John Reece as he has close to 25 runners out this season, but he has a good group of runners coming back, including state medalist Trinity Moore.

The girls team is also hoping to make a return trip to state this season after qualifying for the first time in school history last year.

“The first practice was great,” Reece said. “We are going to have more girls than boys, but it seems like they are in shape and ready to start training for our first race.”

“The kids are jazzed about the season and the girls are wanting to do even better than last year. I believe success builds the team numbers.”

Hinkle ready to take on role as LHS activities director



Walking into Scott Hinkle’s office, it doesn’t appear he started a new job two weeks ago.

The moving boxes are mostly gone. His desk is organized with everything in its place, along with a calendar crammed full of upcoming events.

Hinkle is not shy to tell people about his love for the Boston Red Sox. Sitting on one wall are two older chairs from Fenway Park, along other memorabilia.

The one thing that Hinkle hasn't caught up on is his efforts to get some purple gear. An avid Kansas Jayhawk fan, he hasn't had need to purchase any purple flair in the past. Seems like that will change shortly as he was hired as the new activities director and assistant principal at Louisburg High School earlier this summer.

"I have been a Jayhawk fan all my life," Hinkle said. "It will be a little weird to wear purple that is for sure, but I am sure I will get used to it. Before I left my old job, people found out where I was going so they started giving me little gifts with purple on it, like markers and stuff like that. They definitely got a kick out of that."

Hinkle takes over for Jeremy Holloway, who was promoted to principal at LHS and becomes the third activities director in as many years to take over that spot.

"My wife has family in Kansas City and I have family in Wichita and so we were looking to come this way," Hinkle said. "I had a couple friends that told me that the Louisburg position had opened up. I had heard of Louisburg a long time ago. I actually coached at Ottawa University in the early 90s and was familiar with the area. I came up, interviewed and here I am. It has obviously worked out well."

"Everyone has been so helpful and friendly and it is a good time to be coming to Louisburg. I am excited to be here."

Before taking the job in Louisburg, Hinkle had spent the last 22 years in the Liberal school district in a variety of roles. He served as the boys high school basketball coach, along with nine years as an activities director, a year as the head girls basketball coach at the local community college and last year he served as assistant principal at the high school.

Hinkle graduated from Valley Center High School, and went on from there to earn his bachelor's degree from Friends University, where he played basketball, and his master's from the University of Kansas.

Basketball has always been a passion for Hinkle, but during his time as activities director at Liberal, he had a chance to learn the life of other sports as well.

"Liberal changed a lot from when I first got there in the mid 90s when they were a football and track powerhouse," Hinkle said. "There were just athletes galore, but the culture kind of changed. We were really good in soccer and decent in track and volleyball. We still had good kids and good athletes, but it was a big transition as far as sports go when I first got there. My kids grew up there and being involved and being able to watch their events was something that has always appealed to me.

"Basketball has always been in my blood. Other than my nine years as athletic director, I have coached in some capacity and I am a big basketball fan. Obviously, being an athletic director I am just a big sports fan in general."

Still new in town, Hinkle is still trying to get to know his coaching staff, but he is excited about the situation he is walking into with the Wildcats finishing as state runner-ups in volleyball and girls soccer last season. Several cross country, golf, wrestling and track athletes also earned state medals.

However, if there is one thing he wanted to relay to everyone is that he wants to give his coaches the freedom to run their programs.

"I want to let the coaches, coach," he said. "I am not going to be the guy that says this is how we did things in Liberal and I am not that type of leader. If it comes to the point where they need some advice, I want to be a resource for them.

I don't want to be someone that is looking for something.

"I have met a few of the coaches. I have let them know that I am here if they need anything. I have stopped by the weight room to speak to a few coaches and some have stopped by to introduce themselves. I am still learning names and faces. We have a coaches meeting on the 10th and I will see and learn a lot more about them then."

With all the success the Wildcats had last season in the sports arena, Hinkle is happy to be a part of the LHS family and is learning new things about the town every day.

"I have heard all types of things," he said. "I have heard they take football pretty seriously here. I know they were state runner-up in volleyball and girls soccer last year and that is an exciting thing to walk into. I think expectations are obviously high in those sports, but I think everyone always has high expectations. I am not going to do anything different than normal and I am just going to sit back and observe for a while and take it all in."

Hinkle will experience some different things along with his new position. This season, the Frontier League will welcome three new teams – Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie – and will say goodbye to De Soto.

Another big change will be the postseason formats with several sports as the Kansas State High School Activities Association reshuffled their classification system, eliminating Class 4A-Division II.

"With the changes in the league, the classification system and being a new AD, it is probably a good time to be coming on," Hinkle said. "The learning curve is going to be the same for all of us."

"I walked into a good situation for scheduling because (Holloway) already had everything all taken care of," he said.

“I think the dynamics of the league are going to change. Liberal’s former girls basketball coach is the coach at Piper and I know a little bit about them. As far as the programs and rivalries, that is something that is going to come with time.”

Even with all the changes in his life – moving, starting a new job, getting to know new faces – Hinkle is ready for what lies ahead and the staff at Louisburg has helped with that transition.

“It has been a whirlwind and it has been information overload,” he said. “It is a lot of the same things I did in Liberal as athletic director, I just haven’t done it for the last five years. Being an assistant principal at Liberal last year, I think, helped me prepare for the principal side.

“People have just gone out of their way to be helpful. From the administration to the custodial staff to the secretaries, everyone has been super helpful. When I was out around town, people have welcomed me and it has been a friendly feel everywhere I have been.”

Team, KU camp brings Louisburg volleyball together



Junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher makes a pass during a drill while freshman Chase Kallevig looks on during the final day of the

Louisburg volleyball team camp on July 11.

The Louisburg High School volleyball team is about nine months removed from one of the best – and most heartbreaking – finishes in school history.

In late October, the Lady Cats were a point away from winning the school's first state championship against Rose Hill, but came up just short in what was a memorable state title match. Louisburg is hoping to use that defeat to their advantage in 2018 and the Lady Cats came together over the summer to get back to work and try to get back to the state title game.

That work picked up on July 9 when the Lady Cats took part in a 3-day team camp in an effort to redevelop that team chemistry from a year ago. Louisburg also spent its summer competing in summer league action and open gym workouts.

"We had 35 athletes attend the summer camp, and I am anticipating around 40 will try out in August," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "We had a few who were unable to attend, but overall I was pleased with how the camp went. We've been running open gym sessions and league nights throughout the summer, so the players had already put in a lot of time on the court."

The purpose of the camp was to also bring everyone together to work on fundamentals since it had been 7 to 8 months since some of them had been on the volleyball court.

"This was the first time we had a solid week to just focus on volleyball and building individual and team skills and goals," Compliment said. "We really wanted to focus on areas we'd noticed during league matches or open gyms that needed strengthening, but we also wanted to strengthen up our basic skills. The camp allowed us to break up into smaller groups and focus more on specific skills."



Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment talks with her players during their team camp on July 11.

On July 12, 20 players ventured to the University of Kansas team camp for three days in Lawrence, where they competed against some other programs in the area, along with learning tips from some of the Jayhawk coaches.

According to Compliment, it was the perfect way for the team to end its summer competition.

“We worked a lot on team drills and competition play at KU,” Compliment said. “Over the course of the summer, we’ve had three different groups playing in summer leagues and lineups varied from week to week based on who was in town and able to play. The three days at KU allowed us to focus a little more on finding some consistency, but there were still changes to the line ups made during each session and day. It was helpful to see how the groups and individuals adjusted to the changes,

and it allowed us to see if there were changes in chemistry when players moved around.

“Between open gyms, weights, summer league matches, and both camps the players have put in a lot of work. It’s always fun to see how the players and groups progress from the start of summer to the end of summer camps. The KU camp is the final thing we do as a team over the summer, and there were big strides made from the first summer league match to the last match played at camp.”

The 2018 campaign has the possibility of being another special season for the Lady Cats. Of the starting eight players from last year, six of them are returning, including the Class 4A Co-Player of the Year in Anna Dixon. Setter Carson Buffington, middle hitter Haley Cain, defenders Riley Kallevig and Reilly Ratliff-Becher and outside hitter Erin Lemke also return.



**Haley Cain tips the ball over the net
during a drill at the Lady Cat team
camp.**

Even with several players coming back, Compliment saw her team get better and believes it was a successful summer.

"We still have a ways to go and a lot that needs ironing out, but we have a group of athletes that are hungry for the season to start," she said. "Placing second at state is a great accomplishment, but there is still a feeling of unfinished business among the players.

"We do have a solid crew returning, and I've seen a lot of good play out of all of the athletes this summer so I think we should be fairly solid. They are hungry for another shot at state. They understand that it won't be easy and that they can't take anything for granted. They will need to work harder than everyone else. Nothing will be handed to them."