

From one Wildcat to another, Dixon signs with Kansas State



Louisburg senior Anna Dixon (center) made it official on Nov. 14 when she signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Kansas State. Seated (from left) are Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment, Anna's parents Jerry and Beth Dixon and Louisburg assistant coach Leanna Willer.

Since giving her commitment to Kansas State two years ago, there was plenty of time where Anna Dixon could have had second thoughts about playing for the Wildcats.

It just never happened – not even a little. Dixon was all in.

"I have always known Kansas State was going to be my home," Dixon said. "Even since I committed as a sophomore, I always wanted to go up to Manhattan and see the girls and spend time with the team. K-State is where I need to be."

The Louisburg senior made it official on Nov. 14 when she signed her letter of intent to play for Kansas State next season in front of a room fully of family, friends and teammates. Dixon will trade in one Wildcat uniform for another.

"It hasn't really hit me fully yet," she said. "It has been my dream since second grade, not only to play college volleyball, but to play volleyball at K-State. I am still trying to soak

it all in.

“It is awesome to have everyone here to be with me on my special day. In my four years of high school, my friends and family have been so supportive of me and traveling to tournaments every weekend with club. Even going through the recruiting process as an eighth-grader and a freshman, it is nice to see the same faces that have been there since the beginning.”

Dixon had a prolific career for the Louisburg volleyball program. She was a two-time Class 4A Player of the Year and earned first team all-state and All-Frontier League honors on several occasions. Earlier this month, she was an honorable mention selection to the Under Armour All-American Team.

She helped the Lady Cats to two state runner-up appearances and led the Lady Cats in kills with 584 in 105 sets played. She also finished with 325 digs, as she played all six rotations and also had 50 aces and 42 blocks.

In her four years with the program, Dixon finished with 2,003 kills, which would place that total among the best the school has ever seen.

Playing Louisburg volleyball is a family tradition as she grew up watching her two older sisters, Katie and Sydney, play in the program. Her mom Beth Dixon and aunt Amy Goode, also played for Louisburg and went on to collegiate careers at Wichita State and Kansas State, respectively.

“It was awesome to be a part of this program,” Anna said. “Watching my older sisters play for so many years, I just couldn’t wait to get up here and contribute in any way I could. My mom and aunt played in the program and I wanted to contribute as much as I could like they did. It has been really enjoyable and my teammates have really made it a lot of fun.”



Anna Dixon finished her high school career as a two-time state player of the year and recorded more than 2,000 kills.

Now Dixon will move on to the Division I level where she will compete against some of the nation's best volleyball players on a regular basis. It is that competition that attracted Dixon to the Kansas State program, along with environment that surrounded the team.

"I really like the family atmosphere in Manhattan," she said. "The girls are so welcoming and sweet and they make me feel right at home whenever I visit. One of my biggest goals was to play in one of the top conferences in the country and the Big 12 is right up there. It seems to keep getting more competitive and I am excited to contribute in any way that I can."

Kansas State is currently 14-12 on the season, including a pair of wins over rival Kansas, but the Wildcats will be losing seven seniors off its roster for next season. That leaves an opening for Dixon to come in and play right away.

“Anna is a high-level recruit with great size and athleticism at the outside hitter position,” K-State coach Suzie Fritz said in a release. “She has the potential to contribute early on in her career as she is a strong presence at the net, both offensively and defensively. She has a nice combination of size, power, athleticism and control as an attacker and can play physically at the net.

“We believe she is well prepared to quickly transition to the college game with elite club experience at KC Power and coming off a 4A State Player of the Year performance in leading her team to the 4A state championship final.”

She will be graduating from Louisburg this December and will report to Kansas State shortly after to get her college career started and get acclimated to the program.

“There are a lot of spots to fill,” Dixon said. “Since I am graduating early in December and going out there, I think it just gives me a head start so I can work toward trying to earn a spot on the court. Whether I am playing six rotations, playing three or just sitting the bench, I am just happy I can contribute to the team.”

It has been a long journey for Dixon to reach her dream of playing at Kansas State – one that started in the second grade and that saw countless hours in the gym working to get better.

“I started taking volleyball seriously in sixth grade and I had no intentions of playing anywhere except for high school,” she said. “Then I started getting some looks my freshman year and that is when I started taking it more seriously. I practice 3-4 times a week and have been lifting three times a week, so it is a lot of hard work but I enjoy it. I am just so

excited to get started at K-State.”

Dixon named 4A Player of the Year; Lady Cats earn 6 all-league honors



Louisburg senior Anna Dixon was recently named as the Class 4A Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association and was also named to the all-state and All-Frontier League first teams.

The 2018 season was another one to remember for the Louisburg High School volleyball team.

Louisburg rolled to a perfect Frontier League season, which resulted in its first league title since 2015, and went on to finish runner-up in Class 4A for the second consecutive season.

So it is only fitting the honors are now rolling in for the Lady Cats and it starts with senior Anna Dixon.

Dixon, the 6-foot-3 outside hitter, was recently named the Class 4A Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association, and along with that was also selected to the all-

state first team.

It was the second year in a row Dixon was named player of the year, as she had to share the honor last season with Rose Hill's Gracie Van Driel.

"It is an awesome honor and it feels great," Dixon said of the award. "I didn't mind sharing it with Gracie at all last year and she is such a great player too and so are all the other players in 4A. There was some great talent this season. You could tell that by how close all the matches were at state. It feels great to be recognized with that two years in a row.

"Honestly, I was little surprised to win it because typically the player of the year comes from whoever won the state championship, so I figured it would go to someone from Bishop Miege. I was pretty shocked, but excited at the same time."

The honors certainly didn't stop there as Dixon was all named to the All-Frontier League first team as she helped guide the Lady Cats to an undefeated league season.

Dixon led the Lady Cats in kills with 584 in 105 sets played. She also finished with 325 digs, as she played all six rotations and also had 50 aces and 42 blocks.

In her four years with the program, Dixon finished with 2,003 kills, which would place that total among the best the school has ever seen.

"Anna had another great season for us," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "She's a dynamic player on the court and one that is fun to watch. She truly enjoys playing, and she brought her love of the sport every day to practice and to every match. Between she and Carson (Buffington), they did a great job leading the team. They both stepped up and made huge plays when we needed it.

"Anna seemed to be our go to player the majority of the time,

but as the season progressed the setters started to move our offense around more. That gave each player more of an opportunity to go up against a single block. Anna's numbers are pretty impressive. I don't have records from years before my time, but I'm going to venture to guess that she is the leader for career kills at Louisburg."

As much praise as Dixon received for her performance, the rest of the Lady Cats weren't able to crack the first team all-league honors.

In a season where Louisburg lost just one set all year in league play, Dixon was the lone player to earn first team honors.

Senior Carson Buffington and freshman Rinny McMullen were recognized as second team selections, while juniors Haley Cain, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Riley Kallevig were named as honorable mentions.



Carson Buffington (left) and Rinny McMullen (right) were named to the All-Frontier League second team.

Eudora, which finished second in the league and never took a set from Louisburg, earned three first-team selections. Bonner Springs ended its year with a below .500 record, but had two first-team honorees.

"It would have been nice to see each of those players and a few others recognized higher within league," Compliment said. "I may be biased, but I think the players on this team were special and some of the best in the area. Their stats may not have been higher than others, but the balance and consistency they brought to the team this year was huge.

"Anna was our main offensive player with the most swings, but every player contributed to our success. You don't go undefeated in league and only drop one set, or place second at state without a well-balanced and talented team."

Buffington, who was the team's setter the last two years, was named to the second team as a hitter as she made the move to a new position this year. She finished the season with 130 kills.

As for McMullen, she shared setting responsibilities with fellow freshman Davis Guetterman, and McMullen led Louisburg in assists with 638, to go along with 202 digs and 40 aces on the season.

"I think it's great to see Carson get second team, especially since I changed up her position this year," Compliment said. "Carson didn't bat an eye and never backed down from a challenge. We started working on special plays, and Carson was excited to try something new. Some players would be hesitant to try something new, especially their senior year after they'd had success somewhere else. I was proud of how Carson took on her new position on the team. She was welcoming and a great leader to the two freshmen setters.

"Rinny didn't act like a freshman on the court. She plays with a lot of confidence and that showed throughout the season. I'm

happy she was recognized for her play this season.”



(From left) Haley Cain, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Riley Kallevig were honorable mention all-league selections.

Cain and Kallevig were named to the honorable mention team as hitters, while Ratliff-Becher was selected as a libero.

Cain had a big season in the middle for Louisburg as she was second on the team with 191 kills. She also finished with 41 blocks and 42 aces on the year.

Kallevig, who played all six rotations for Louisburg, led the Lady Cats from behind the service line with 76 aces and was second on the team in digs with 325. She also finished with 105 kills.

As for Ratliff-Becher, she became a leader in the back row in her first season as the team’s libero. She finished with a team-high 330 digs and also added 21 aces.

“I wish more of their hard work had been recognized, but I am proud of each of them and what they did this year for the team,” Compliment said of Cain, Kallevig and Ratliff-Becher. “They are all returning next year and you can bet they are already talking about what they want to accomplish next season.”

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL

FIRST TEAM

HITTERS – Anna Dixon, Louisburg, senior; Keyana Cruse, Bonner Springs, sophomore; Riley Foltz, Eudora, senior; Jalyn Stevenson, Spring Hill, sophomore; Kim Whetstone, Bonner Springs, junior

SETTER – Keagan Shockley, Eudora, junior

DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST/LIBERO – Delaney Franklin, Eudora, junior

SECOND TEAM

HITTERS – Payton Bruce, Ottawa, senior; Carson Buffington, Louisburg, senior; Alli Frank, Spring Hill, sophomore; Alex Garcia, Eudora, senior; Taylor Knipp, Tonganoxie, senior

SETTER – Rinny McMullen, Louisburg, freshman

DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST/LIBERO – Alli Kerns, Ottawa, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

HITTERS – Haley Cain, Louisburg, junior; Paige Ellis, Baldwin, senior; Paige Fleming, Paola, senior; Audrey Flowers, Baldwin, senior; Alyssa Henness, Paola, senior; Riley Kallevig, Louisburg, junior; Kayla Kurtz, Baldwin, senior; Molly Olmstead, Ottawa, sophomore; Keagan Shockley, Eudora, junior

SETTERS – Shelby Rome, Piper, senior; Abby Wintersheid, Paola, senior

DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST/LIBERO – Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Louisburg, junior; Sammie LeBlanc, Spring Hill, senior; Abby Marcouillier, Tonganoxie, junior; Jada Simmons, Piper, senior;

Dixon named to Under Armour All-American team



Anna Dixon, a senior at Louisburg High School, was recently named to the Under Armour All-American team as an honorable mention. Dixon tallied 584 kills on the season to lead the Lady Cats.

Louisburg's Anna Dixon has solidified herself as one of the top volleyball prospects in the state of Kansas after her performance this past season.

The Lady Cat senior is also considered one of the best players in the nation and she was recently recognized for her efforts.

Dixon was named to the Under Armour Volleyball All-American team as she received a spot on the honorable mention squad when the list was released last Wednesday.

"Getting recognized as honorable mention for Under Armour All American was a big honor," Dixon said. "It has been my goal to make the list, whether that was first, second or third team, since my freshman year. They decide who is on the list based

off of stats during high school season and I was able to receive this award with the help of my awesome setters this high school season. I'm very thankful."

Dixon led the Lady Cats to a second consecutive runner-up finish in the Class 4A state tournament and the 6-foot-3 outside hitter was a team-leader in kills with 584 in 105 sets played. She also finished with 325 digs, as she played all six rotations and also had 50 aces and 42 blocks.

A record 793 nominations were submitted through the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) and MaxPreps, resulting in 150 All-America and Honorable Mention All-Americans. Many already committed to play collegiate volleyball at some of the top schools in the country.

Requirements for nomination were that the student-athlete be in her senior year of high school, that she be nominated by her high school coach, that her coach be a member of the AVCA and that her individual season statistics versus all opponents for the entire season be entered into MaxPreps, a free service that aggregates and distributes data on high school sports.

In 2017, Dixon was named as the Class 4A Co-Player of the Year and will be attending Kansas State on a volleyball scholarship next season.

To view a complete list of the Under Armour team, [click here](#).

Lady Cats fight way to state runner-up finish



Members of the Louisburg volleyball team are (front row, from left) Chase Kallevig, Riley Kallevig, Anna Dixon, Carson Buffington, managers Cameron Rogers and Bailey Kern; (back row) Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Erin Lemke, Sydni Keagle, Haley Cain, Alyse Moore, Carleigh Pritchard, Rinny McMullen, Davis Guetterman, assistant coach Mary Quinn, head coach Jessica Compliment and assistant coach Leanna Willer.

HUTCHINSON – The feeling was much of the same.

The pride of finishing as a state-runner up was a popular one among the members of the Louisburg volleyball team. At the same time, the frustration of taking second in state in back-to-back seasons was just as prevalent.

Louisburg wasn't quite sure what to feel following its 25-13 and 25-14 loss to Bishop Miege in the championship game of the Class 4A state tournament Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

In 2017, the Lady Cats fell to Rose Hill by two points in the championship match, and fast forward to the present, they were in the same spot – holding the state runner-up trophy. It was the 15th time in program history that Louisburg finished in the top four at state.

As disappointing as that was to some, the Lady Cats also realize what it took to get to that final match.

“Losing in the championship match is a terrible feeling especially since we lost in the championship last year,” Louisburg senior Anna Dixon said. “We were all very upset, but

we also had to remind ourselves that many girls or teams would have killed to even been able to compete in the state tournament.

“Miege just did not make mistakes and I think we were waiting for them to. They scrapped for every ball and had many offensive players that could put a ball down.”



Senior Anna Dixon slams down a kill during the Lady Cats' match Friday against Topeka Hayden

The Lady Cats faced off with Bishop Miege earlier in season, where they lost a 2-1 match to the Stags at the Ottawa Invitational. Louisburg had hoped to get a little revenge on the biggest stage, but wasn't able to gain momentum in either set.

“I honestly think we let the name on their jersey get to us,” senior Carson Buffington said. “We were fully capable of

beating them, but again, we didn't come out and play the way we know we can. They got to us."

Before the championship, however, the Lady Cats were on the top of their game. In the state semifinals Saturday against Andale, they lost the first set 25-12, but came back to win the second 25-21 and then dominated the third set, 25-14.

"The comeback was great," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "I was so proud of how they adjusted in the second set and battled to win. Then they just came out roaring in the third. They had a goal and that was to make it to the state finals. They weren't going to let anyone stand in their way."



Louisburg's Carleigh Pritchard (right) blocks and Independence player at the net. Pritchard earned all-tournament team honors with Anna Dixon.

On Friday, Louisburg played some of its best volleyball of the

season as it knocked off two defending state champions and the No. 1 seed in pool play to advance to the state semifinals.

The Lady Cats battled two-time defending state champion Rose Hill and got some revenge from last season as it downed the Rockets 25-10, 25-27 and 25-23. Louisburg then went on to beat No. 1 seed Independence 25-16 and 25-20.

In a match to determine seeding in the state semifinals, Louisburg squared off with defending state champion Topeka-Hayden in the final match of the day. The Lady Cats lost 20-25 in the first set, but rallied for a pair of 25-17 victories to finish pool play, 3-0.

“Their emotions were high against Rose Hill and Hayden,” Compliment said. “To open pool play with Rose Hill given our history was exciting, and the team was hyped up to play them. We wanted revenge, and to see them come back in both matches is huge. We hadn’t seen Hayden in a few years since the split of 4A, but the motivation to beat them still existed.”



The Louisburg bench erupts after securing the win against Topeka-Hayden on Friday to finish pool play undefeated.

Dixon had several big performances in her final outing as a Lady Cat. The Louisburg outside hitter led the way with 64 kills in the five matches, including a 22-kill performance in the semifinals against Andale and also had 21 kills against Rose Hill.

She also finished with a team-high six blocks and was second on the team with 49 digs and five aces.

After the tournament was complete, the Kansas Volleyball Association released their all-state tournament teams. Dixon and sophomore Carleigh Pritchard earned tournament honors for their performance.

Pritchard was second on the team with 24 kills and also had five blocks. Also at the net, junior Haley Cain had a big tournament with 22 kills, a team-high six blocks and she also finished with three aces.

Buffington finished with 18 kills and three blocks in her final competition for Louisburg. Junior Riley Kallevig led Louisburg from behind the service line with seven aces and also had 10 kills, while junior Erin Lemke had 11 kills.



Freshman Rinny McMullen celebrates a point Friday during pool play.

Louisburg got a strong performance from its two freshmen setters. Rinny McMullen ran the offense well with 80 assists and also shined on defense with 34 digs. Guetterman had 56 assists in the five matches and had 22 digs.

Defensively, junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher was busy in the back row with a team-best 56 digs and Kallevig had 29 digs, which was fourth on the team.

"This team was just fun to coach and watch play volleyball," Compliment said. "At times, they were a bit frustrating. For instance...our serving. We just liked to keep the game going at times. But when it really came down to it, they made the plays they needed to. We talked all season about starting and finishing strong. Throughout the season we had the tendency to come out slow. We did that a few times at state, but for the most part we played pretty well."

"We needed to peak at the right time and needed all of the pieces to fall in to place, and that happened at state. Each player on the team made some huge plays. Carleigh, Haley and Erin really made a difference at the net both defensively and offensively. Rinny had a great tournament. She and Davis did a good job running the offense throughout the entire tournament."



Junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher gets ready to return a serve Friday.

As each Lady Cat player were given their state runner-up medal at the end of the tournament, the tears of ending their season with a loss was impossible to hold back.

It was a special season that ended with a 36-9 record and second-place state finish. However, for some of the players, it was about more than wins and losses.

"This season was the best volleyball season I've ever been a part of," Buffington said. "The chemistry we had with each other was amazing. We all love each other so much, and because of that, we meshed so well together. We are all crazy and weird and it added to the fun. I'll miss my best friends so much and I can't wait to see how far they go in the years to come.

"I'm so proud of our team and how much we cared for everything this season. I'll miss the coaches and everything about LHS Volleyball. It hasn't really sunk in too much yet, even though I'll never play volleyball again. My high school career was such an amazing time and I'm so grateful with everything that has happened."

Dixon's Louisburg career also comes to a close Saturday in Hutchinson. Although, she will still be wearing purple and white, the Louisburg senior will be suiting up for Kansas State next season to begin her college career.

As much excitement as that brings, the thought of not playing volleyball for Louisburg anymore still hasn't quite sunk in.



Seniors Anna Dixon and Carson Buffington walk off the floor for the final time as Bishop Miege celebrates its state championship.

“It has not hit me yet that the season is over,” Dixon said. ‘It went by so fast and I had a lot of fun playing with some of my closest friends. I am going to miss them so much, but now I have to focus on the next level. I can’t wait to watch Louisburg succeed next year and go after the state title again.”

The Lady Cats have been one of the more dominant teams in Class 4A in the last decade as they have made the state tournament seven out of the last nine years and have finished as a state runner-up on three different occasions, along with several third and fourth place finishes.

It is that success that Compliment hopes will drive them team into next season.

"The loss was tough," Compliment said. "To come so close to a state title two years in a row, only to come up short is tough. But with that being said, it is a huge accomplishment for this team to get back to the state championship and make it two years in a row. Finishing second is nothing to hang our heads on. Last year's finish fueled the fire for the team this year, and I challenged the returning players to use this loss and feeling to fuel them for next year. The off-season starts today."

Title game rematch fuels Lady Cats' fire for another state run



Members of the Louisburg High School volleyball team run onto the court to celebrate their sub-state championship last Saturday in Louisburg. The Lady Cats open the Class 4A state tournament against defending state champion Rose Hill this Friday in Hutchinson.

Throughout the offseason and into this season, the Louisburg volleyball team has always had last year's state championship match fresh in its mind.

The Lady Cats lost by two points to Rose Hill in the state title game last season, and the loss has been a driving force in their success this season.

"It is just the worst feeling and it still burns," senior Carson Buffington said. "It is definitely motivation for us and it started right after we lost to Rose Hill. We knew that the next year that we are going to come out and win a state championship, and that is what we plan to do."

Louisburg won its seventh sub-state crown in the last nine years last Saturday in its 2-0 win over Eudora in the sub-state championship game, and on Sunday found out who it was going to play.

The Lady Cats (32-8), which earned the No. 5 seed, won't have to wait that long for their rematch with Rose Hill. They face the No. 4 seed Rockets (31-6) in the first match of pool play at 8:30 a.m., Friday in the Class 4A state tournament at Hutchinson Sports Arena in Hutchinson.

"When we found out Rose Hill was going to be in our pool, I think that just fueled our fire even more, especially with it being our first match of the day," senior Anna Dixon said. "Hopefully we can come out and have a lot of energy. Everyone has been pretty motivated. We have been watching a lot of film and scouting other teams. We have been incorporating their habits into our practice to prepare us for what we see on Friday."

What Louisburg will see Friday is several difficult opponents. Not only will the Lady Cats square off with the defending state champion in Rose Hill, Louisburg will also face No. 1 seed Independence (37-2) and No. 8 Topeka-Hayden (21-17), who is a three-time defending state champion in the former Class 4A-Division II.

The Lady Cats will meet Independence at 11:30 a.m. and follow it up with their match against Hayden at 12:30 p.m.



Carleigh Pritchard and Anna Dixon combine for a block Saturday during the sub-state tournament.

No. 2 Chanute (33-6), No. 3 Andale (32-6), No. 6 Wichita-Trinity (22-15) and No. 7 Bishop Miege (21-16) are in the other pool. The top two teams in each pool will advance to bracket play at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

"We were a little nervous when the seedings came out, but yet excited at the same time," Dixon said. "Rose Hill ended our season last year in the championship game and we have the opportunity to send them home after day one.

"We also have the No. 1 seed and another defending state champion in Hayden. We know we are going to have to play them eventually if we want to win the whole thing, so we might as well get it done the first day."

The first match of the day against Rose Hill could be a pivotal one for the Lady Cats as they want to get started strong and not have the pressure of playing from behind to make sure they get to Saturday.



Senior Carson Buffington celebrates a point last Saturday during the sub-state tournament against Iola.

“The first match sets the tone for the day and you have to come out awake and ready,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “The players are smart and they know how the system works and they know how important every match is. Each set is important and we haven’t dropped very many when we have won matches, so it will be important for them to come out ready to go.”

The Louisburg-Rose Hill match-up brings even more intrigue as it will feature two of the best hitters in the state of

Kansas. Dixon, who will attend K-State next season, will go up against Rose Hill's Gracie Van Driel, a University of Kansas commit.

Dixon and Van Driel were selected as Co-Players of the Year in Class 4A by the Kansas Volleyball Association and the Louisburg senior is excited for the matchup.

"I love playing against Gracie," Dixon said. "We have been good friends since middle school. Our dream was to always play together, but I have enjoyed playing against her and it is always fun to go up against a good team and trying to defend big hitters like her."

Dixon herself has had another good season for Louisburg and currently has a team-high 510 kills on the year. She is also second on the team with 45 aces and 276 digs as an all-around player.

However, all of the Lady Cats have taken a step forward this season, especially when it comes to their setters. Going into the season, Compliment decided to run a 6-2 offense, and handed the reigns to two freshmen setters in Rinny McMullen and Davis Guetterman.

Compliment asked Buffington, who served as the team's setter the last two seasons, to move to an outside hitter position and the change has worked out well for the Lady Cats. McMullen currently leads the team with 558 assists and Guetterman has 391.



Freshman setter Rinny McMullen rises up for a serve last week.

Both players are also among the team's best servers. Guetterman is third on the team with 44 aces and McMullen has 35 on the year.

"I don't think a lot of people realize that both of them are freshmen," Compliment said. "I've had people come up to me, even at sub-state, and say 'Your setters are freshmen? You can't even tell.' You can't tell that when you watch them play and that is kudos to those two and the experience they had coming in.

"Also, as the season has progressed they have gotten more and more comfortable adjusting on how to run things and getting to know their hitters. They have done a really good job of figuring out strengths, weaknesses, what works and what doesn't. I am just proud of both of them and they have gotten

stronger as the season goes on.”

The Lady Cats also take pride in their defense, which changed up from last season. Reilly Ratliff-Becher took over the libero spot from Riley Kallevig and Kallevig moved on to play all six rotations.

Kallevig leads the team with 296 digs on the season, while Ratliff-Becher is third on the team with 274. Kallevig also has a team-high 69 aces and both players are key in the back row with Dixon, along with McMullen and Guetterman.

“I think everyone knows this, but defense wins game,” Ratliff-Becher said. “Being a libero, I have to be the loudest in the back row, especially for this tournament. Defense is hard, but it is all about your mindset. If you don’t think you can play defense, the ball is going to come right to you. You have to have the confidence to go get it.”

Louisburg has also improved at the net throughout the season as junior Haley Cain and sophomore Carleigh Pritchard have emerged as big hitters in the middle, and also on defense. Cain is second on the team with 169 kills and Pritchard has 119. Pritchard also leads the team with 45 blocks.



Junior Haley Cain goes up for a kill during the sub-state championship match against Eudora.

On the outside, Buffington, Kallevig and junior Erin Lemke also give the Lady Cats good hitting options as they have combined for more than 300 kills on the season.

Even with all the success and big wins they have posted this season, the Lady Cats realize the stakes are high and are hoping to bring home the school's first state volleyball title. They just need to have the right frame of mind.

"When they just unload, unleash it, don't hold anything back and just have fun, they are a very tough team to beat," Compliment said. "That is what we have done all season long. Some of the matches we have lost is when we have played it safe and over-analyzed everything, rather than just playing aggressive. For Friday, we just need to play the way we know how and have fun. When they have fun, I think these girls are

unstoppable.”

TITLE TOWN: Louisburg earns 7th trip to state in last 9 years



Louisburg senior Anna Dixon holds the Class 4A sub-state championship trophy up high following the Lady Cats’ 2-0 win over Eudora in the title game Saturday at Louisburg High School.

The last time the Louisburg volleyball team hosted a sub-state tournament, the Lady Cats had to watch an opposing team celebrate a trip to state on their home floor.

It was a thought that was never too far from some of the players’ minds.

“When we hosted sub-state my sophomore year, we ended up losing to Paola by two points,” Louisburg senior Anna Dixon said. “I just kept thinking that we weren’t going to let that happen this year and we were going to finish out strong as my last time playing on this court.”

Dixon and the rest of the Lady Cats made sure it didn’t happen

again.

Louisburg captured its seventh sub-state tournament title in the last nine seasons as the Lady Cats defeated Iola, 2-0, in the sub-state semifinals, before downing Eudora, 2-0, in the championship match on Saturday at Louisburg High School.

The Lady Cats, who are the No. 3-ranked team in Class 4A, will get another shot at state championship this weekend in Hutchinson.

"It is an amazing feeling because I know this is my last year and that I am not done playing quite yet," Louisburg senior Carson Buffington said. "I am so pumped to get back to state. I want to play Miego, I want to play Rose Hill and all the other good teams and I am just so excited. I know what our potential is and I know that we can get to it out at state."

Louisburg (32-8) didn't face much resistance to start the day as the Lady Cats controlled the match against Iola, 25-4 and 25-8, and came out strong from the beginning.

Dixon finished the match with 10 kills to lead the Lady Cats and junior Haley Cain finished with four. Buffington and sophomore Carleigh Pritchard each added three.

Offensively, they also served well from behind the service line as the Lady Cats recorded nine aces, including three each from Dixon and Cain. Freshman Rinny McMullen led the offense with 15 assists.

On defense, Louisburg junior Riley Kallevig finished with a team-high seven digs and junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher added four.

"We just wanted to come out, take care of business and just do our job," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "I thought they played great against Iola and had high energy. They

didn't hold back on anything and came out and played tough."



Louisburg's (from left) Riley Kallevig, Anna Dixon, Carson Buffington and Carleigh Pritchard erupt with excitement after securing match point against Eudora on Saturday.

It was much of the same in the first set against Eudora as the Lady Cats jumped out to a quick start and won the first set, 25-14.

The second set was a little different as Louisburg had to face some adversity. Eudora looked like as if it was going to force a deciding third set as the Cardinals held an 18-13 lead late.

That was until McMullen got behind the service line as she recorded five straight service points to give Louisburg the lead and it wasn't going to let it go. The Lady Cats went on to take the second set, and the match, 25-22.

"Rinny stepped up big and it all started with her serving,"

Compliment said. "It took Eudora out of their offense and kept them guessing on what they were going to do. It just helped us dig out of it."



Freshman Davis Guetterman sets up teammate Erin Lemke for a kill with the student section cheering behind her.

"The girls were just on fire in that first set against Eudora, but that second set we made a few errors and missed a couple serves and that slowed our momentum down a little bit. I was proud of the girls with how they finished it out and it just showed how much they wanted it."

Dixon had another big showing for the Lady Cats offensively as she finished with a team-high 12 kills and Cain was second on the team with seven.

McMullen had a team-best two aces and 13 assists, while fellow freshman setter Davis Guetterman added 12 assists as both

players distributed the ball well offensively. Pritchard also had four kills and a team-high two blocks for Louisburg.



Freshman Rinny McMullen runs down a ball to keep it in play Saturday against Eudora.

On defense, Kallevig and Ratliff-Becher both led the team with six digs each, while Dixon and Cain both had five. It was a defense that also came up big late against Eudora.

“Everyone really showed their strength out there, especially Reilly Rat,” Kallevig said of the defense. “She was able to pick up all the tips and Haley really stood out too when she filled in on the back row. It really was a great team effort.”

Although they didn’t necessarily like trailing for much of the second set, the Lady Cats hope to turn it into a positive that they can use for even bigger stakes this weekend.



Reilly Ratliff-Becher dives on the floor to dig up a ball Saturday against Iola.

"All season we were taking one game at a time, one point at a time and we kind of got shook up a little bit when Eudora took the lead, but we decided we were going to defend our home court," Dixon said. "It shows a lot of progress because there would be times earlier in the season where we would dig holes and we weren't able to come out and finish. It showed we have come a long ways, and we were able to get it out of our heads and finish strong."

Louisburg, which finished as the state runner-up a season ago, will try for the program's first state title beginning Friday during the Class 4A state tournament at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

The Lady Cats, which earned the No. 5 seed, will start pool play against No. 4 Rose Hill (31-6) – last year's state champion – at 8:30 a.m. on Friday. Louisburg will then play No. 1 Independence (37-2) at 11:30 a.m., and No. 8 Topeka-

Hayden (21-17) at 12:30 p.m.

The top two in each pool will advance to bracket play at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

“There are a lot of teams that we have heard about, or even seen that should be out there next weekend,” Dixon said. “We just want to take it one point at a time and one game at a time and make it to that championship game again.”

For a photo gallery from Saturday’s tournament, make sure to [click here](#).



Members of the team (front row, from left) are: Davis Guetterman, Chase Kallevig, Anna Dixon, Carson Buffington, Rinny McMullen, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, manager Bailey Kern; (back row) assistant coach Leanna Willer, assistant coach Mary Quinn, Erin Lemke, Riley Kallevig, Alyse Moore, Carleigh Pritchard, Haley Cain, Sydni Keagle, head coach Jessica Compliment and manager Cameron Rogers.

PHOTO GALLERY: Lady Cats take sub-state title



The Louisburg High School volleyball team doesn't mind all the winning and it continued Saturday when the Lady Cats captured their seventh sub-state championship in the last nine years as they defeated Eudora, 2-0, in the championship game at Louisburg High School. Louisburg also defeated Iola, 2-0, in the sub-state semifinals.

The Lady Cats were greeted with a great atmosphere from its fans and student section, and they thrived on it as they breezed to title.

Louisburg, which finished second at state last season, will try for the program's first state championship starting on Friday when it faces Rose Hill, Independence and Topeka-Hayden in pool play at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

Here are some photos from Saturday's thrilling action. Make sure to travel to support the team if you can this week. Congrats again to all the players and coaches.







Senior Carson Buffington celebrates a point last Saturday during the sub-state tournament against Iola.





Carleigh Pritchard and Anna Dixon combine for a block Saturday during the sub-state tournament.











Reilly Ratliff-Becher dives on the floor to dig up a ball
Saturday against Iola.













Freshman setter Rinny McMullen rises up for a serve last week.



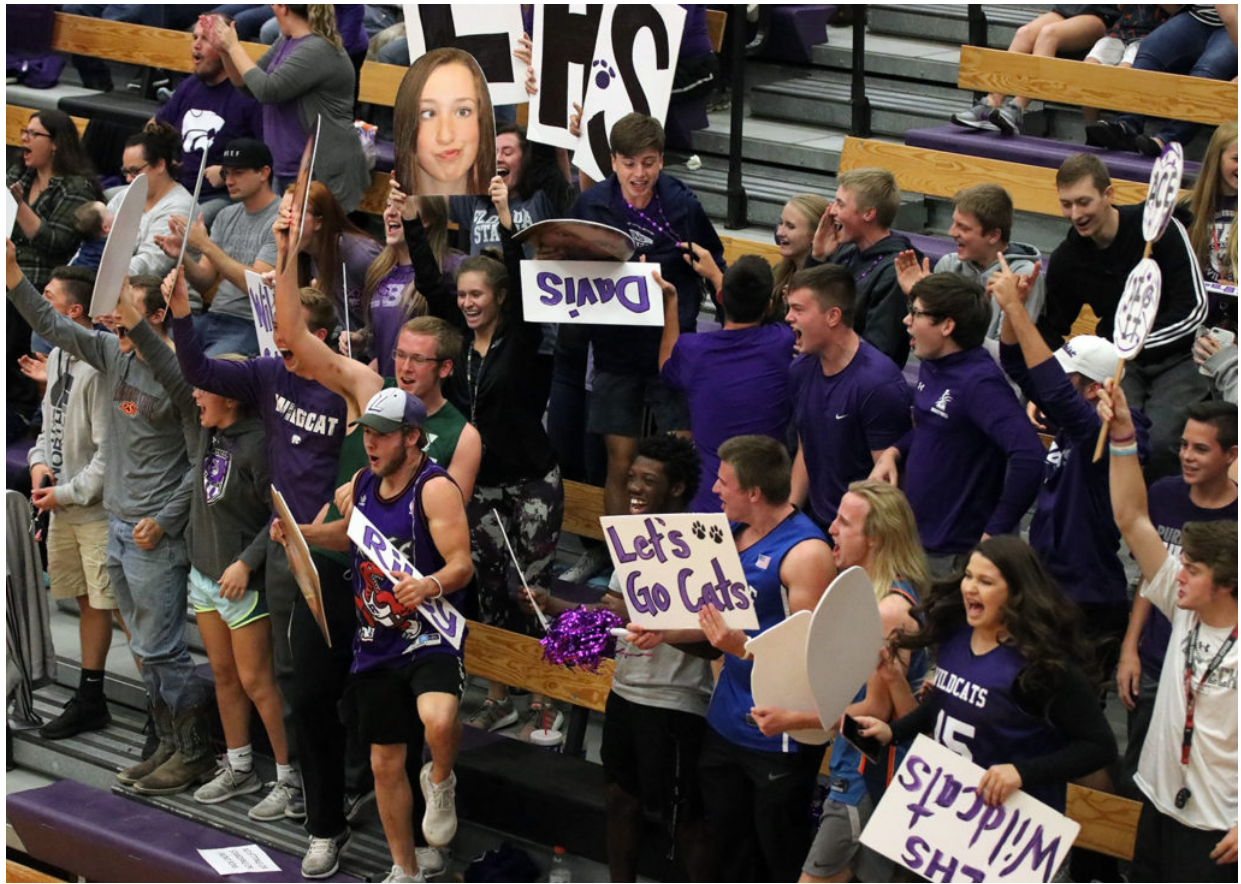


Junior Haley Cain goes up for a kill during the sub-state championship match against Eudora.



















Freshman Rinny McMullen runs down a ball to keep it in play Saturday against Eudora.



Freshman Davis Guetterman sets up teammate Erin Lemke for a kill with the student section cheering behind her.







Louisburg's (from left) Riley Kallevig, Anna Dixon, Carson

Buffington and Carleigh Pritchard erupt with excitement after securing match point against Eudora on Saturday.







Lady Cats wrap up league title on Senior Night



Louisburg volleyball manager Bailey Kern gets a hug from junior Erin Lemke, while senior Anna Dixon (back) shares a hug with teammate Reilly Ratliff-Becher during Senior Night ceremonies on Tuesday at Louisburg High School.

The reality started to sink in for Anna Dixon and Carson Buffington.

The Louisburg seniors walked onto the court for their final home regular season contest and memories started to rush back. Their time as Lady Cats are coming to a close.

Both players, along with manager Bailey Kern, were honored during their Senior Night ceremony prior to Tuesday's home dual with Piper.

"It was very emotional," Dixon said. "I started having flash backs of seeing both of my older sisters walking out on the court for their senior nights and it was crazy that it was my turn. It hasn't fully hit me yet that my last time playing in a Louisburg jersey is coming to an end."

The same could be said for Buffington.

"The emotions didn't hit me until Erin (Lemke) and Reilly (Ratliff-Becher) came out to give me the senior gifts," Buffington said. "That was when it hit me that I'll be leaving my teammates and best friends next year. It was a special night because it was the last time playing a regular season game in high school for me."

Emotions were all over the place Tuesday as there was a little bit of sadness, but there was also plenty to be excited about as Louisburg entered the dual undefeated in league play. The Lady Cats already clinched the Frontier League crown, and this match was only a formality.

Louisburg had no problem with Piper and rolled to a 25-9, 25-5 and 25-9 victory over the Pirates to finish with a perfect league record and moved its overall record to 30-8 on the season. It was the first league title for Louisburg since 2015.



Senior Carson Buffington gets a hug from Reilly Ratliff-Becher, while Carson's mother, Amy, shares a hug with Erin Lemke.

"It means so much to be able to win the league title," Buffington said. "We know that we have done everything we could have to earn it. It feels especially great beating every team in the league."

Winning a league crown was the perfect way to honor both Dixon and Buffington, according to Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment.

"With Anna playing four years of varsity, Carson playing three and then Bailey being a manager for a while, they have just been a lot of fun to coach and be around," Compliment said. "They are great seniors, who provide great leadership, work well with their teammates and have put in a lot of time in the offseason, whether it be with club or playing multiple

sports. It has been a lot of fun to be with Anna and Carson and I just wanted them to go out and have fun and just play.”

The dual itself provided little drama and gave the Lady Cats opportunity to play loose. Louisburg got contributions from up and down its lineup, and it even allowed bench players Sydni Keagle, Alyse Moore and Chase Kallevig to see action in the final set.

Dixon led the Lady Cats offensively with seven kills, while Buffington was right behind her with six. Juniors Haley Cain and Erin Lemke both had three kills as well.

Louisburg had 10 aces on the night, including four from freshman Davis Guetterman and a pair from Cain and Riley Kallevig. Sophomore Carleigh Pritchard, who normally doesn't serve during a match, got an opportunity to close out the second set and she did just that by serving the final six points to seal the win and recorded two aces in the process.

Freshman setter Rinny McMullen finished the night with 14 assists and Guetterman added six in the win. Defensively, Dixon led the way with six digs, while junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher finished with five.

“We still missed too many serves, but at least we were aggressive,” Compliment said. “But if we would miss a serve, we would come right back and we were effective with the serve receive, then with the pass and then side out right away. I was happy with how they played and I was glad to see that their energy was high.”



(From left) Anna Dixon, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Rinny McMullen, Alyse Moore and Carson Buffington were all smiles following a point late in Tuesday's dual with Piper.

Louisburg will have one final opportunity to play at home Saturday when it hosts a Class 4A sub-state tournament as the No. 4 seed. The Lady Cats will face No. 13 Iola (10-17) at 2 p.m., and if they advance, will meet the winner No. 5 Eudora (22-11) and No. 12 Fort Scott (11-23) at 4 p.m., in the championship match.

A win there would give the Lady Cats another trip to the state tournament, after they finished second a year ago.

"I'm so excited for sub-state and even more excited that we are hosting," Dixon said. "We are pretty pumped about it and staying humble. We want to focus on point after point and take one game at a time."

The two Louisburg seniors are also looking forward to one more opportunity to play on their home floor.

“I couldn’t be more excited for Saturday with my team, who we are playing, and that it’s on our home court,” Buffington said. “We are all super pumped but we all know we have to come out and play our best and that absolutely nothing is handed to us. I am so ready to see what Saturday will bring us.”

Lady Cats rally to finish fifth at Emporia Invitational



Louisburg juniors (from left) Erin Lemke and Haley Cain go up for a block during a match earlier this season. The Lady Cats competed in the Emporia Invitational on Saturday and finished with a 4-2 record and took fifth overall.

EMPORIA – If the Louisburg High School volleyball team wanted one final tune-up before the start of the postseason, the Lady Cats certainly got it in the Emporia Invitational.

Three of the top six teams in Class 6A made an appearance in the tournament and the Lady Cats faced all three Saturday at Emporia High School. Although it got off to a rough start, Louisburg finished with a flurry of wins.

The Lady Cats won their final four matches of the day to finish in fifth-place overall, including a victory over Lawrence Free State, the No. 6 team in Class 6A, in three sets in their final match of the day.

After losses to No. 2 Lawrence High and No. 3 Washburn Rural, Louisburg bounced back with victories over Shawnee Heights, Maize, Bonner Springs and Free State.

“The Emporia tournament was an important one, and one that I was hoping would provide us with some positive motivation leading up to sub-state,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “Overall, we played well. We did come out a little slow against both Washburn Rural and Lawrence High. We got behind in both matches and had difficulty digging ourselves out of the hole. We picked it up during the Shawnee Heights match and maintained it for the rest of the tournament.”

Louisburg, the No. 3-ranked team in Class 4A, had a tough draw to start the day as it faced two of the top three teams in 6A in Lawrence High and Washburn Rural. The Lady Cats fell to Washburn Rural 25-16 and 25-20 and then dropped their next match to Lawrence, 25-21 and 25-16.

The Lady Cats (29-8) dropped their fifth set in a row in its next game with Shawnee Heights in a 25-12 loss, but they were able rebound for a pair of 25-16 victories to win its first match of the day.

From there, Louisburg was able to put it all together with a 25-19 and 25-16 victory over Maize and a 25-15 and 25-23 win against Bonner Springs.

Free State was the Lady Cats’ opponent in the fifth-place match and they had to play from behind from the start. Louisburg lost its first set 23-25, but responded with a 25-21 and 25-22 win over the Firebirds.

“Lawrence Free State was the last match of the day, and I

talked to the team about finishing on a high note,” Compliment said. “Any momentum we could get through that match would also help set the tone for sub-state. We played well against Free State. Our offense was consistent and aggressive, and our defense made some big plays.”

Offensively, the Lady Cats got big plays all over the floor against Free State, most notably from outside hitter Anna Dixon. The Louisburg senior recorded a team-high 17 kills, while fellow senior Carson Buffington and junior Erin Lemke both had five.

Freshman setter Rinny McMullen set the tone for the offense with a team-high 21 assists against Free State and another freshman, Davis Guetterman, added 12 of her own.

Defensively, the Lady Cats also played big at the net as junior Haley Cain led the way with five blocks and sophomore Carleigh Pritchard added three. Junior Riley Kallevig also had a team-high eight digs in the win.

“Haley and Carleigh both had a great tournament,” Compliment said. “They both stepped up big during our afternoon matches and made some big plays at the net. I was glad to see our middle offense step up. Erin made some key plays on the right side. She had a few big blocks and attacks that helped us against Bonner Springs and Free State too.”

Dixon finished the tournament with double digit kills in five of the six matches. On the day, she recorded a team-best 72 kills and now has 474 on the season, which averages out to more than five per set.

Pritchard was second on the team with 29 kills Saturday, including a team-high nine in the Lady Cats’ win over Maize. Cain added 22 on the day and Kallevig finished with 19.

Louisburg also created some momentum from behind the service line as it had 22 aces over the six matches. Dixon and

Guetterman both had five to lead Louisburg, while Kallevig and McMullen each had four.

McMullen also had a big day running the offense with a team-high 92 assists and Guetterman was second with 61.

Defensively, Kallevig had 47 digs to lead the Lady Cats, while Dixon and junior libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher had 39 and 35 digs, respectively. At the net, Pritchard led Louisburg with 10 blocks and Cain added nine of her own.

Louisburg will conclude its regular season tonight when it hosts Piper for Senior Night. The Lady Cats will honor Dixon, Buffington and manager Bailey Kern during pregame ceremonies.

Also, should the Lady Cats defeat Piper, they will wrap up a perfect Frontier League season and earn their first league crown since 2015.

“Senior night will be special,” Compliment said. “Both Anna and Carson have been a part of the program for four years, and they have both brought a lot to the program as well. Bailey has also been a great addition to the team as our manager for the past three years. It will be a special night and a great way to honor our seniors.”

Louisburg sweeps Olathe North in dual

In a tune-up before the Emporia Invitational, the Louisburg volleyball team traveled to Olathe North last Thursday and left with a 25-16, 25-18 and 25-14 win.

Senior Anna Dixon pestered the Eagles as she was a difficult matchup at the net with a team-high 21 kills and fellow senior Carson Buffington had six. Junior Erin Lemke had five kills and junior Haley Cain had four in the win.

Cain and Dixon were also strong from behind the service line

with four and three aces, respectively. Freshmen setter Rinny McMullen had a team-high 19 assists and freshman Davis Guetterman was also in double digits with 11.

Defensively, junior Riley Kallevig and junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher both led Louisburg with 10 digs, while sophomore Carleigh Pritchard finished with a pair of blocks.

Louisburg volleyball gets road sweep over Eudora



Louisburg libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher receives a serve during a match earlier this season. The Lady Cats traveled to Eudora on Oct. 2 and left with a 3-0 win over the Cardinals to stay perfect in Frontier League play.

The Louisburg High School volleyball team is inching closer to an undefeated league season and they took another step in the right direction last week in Eudora.

The Lady Cats had no problems with the Cardinals on the road as they earned the 25-22, 25-19 and 25-19 sweep on Oct. 2 at Eudora High School. Louisburg improved its record to 24-6 on the season and are 7-0 in Frontier League play.

Louisburg has one more league match left, which is against Piper next week, and a win would give the Lady Cats an undefeated league championship.

“We played well at Eudora,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “The team came out fired up and ready to compete, and they did a pretty good job of maintaining control of the match. We made a few errors which swayed the momentum Eudora’s way, but the team rallied back and regained control.”

Anna Dixon once again led the Louisburg play at the net with a team-high 17 kills, but setters Rinny McMullen and Davis Guetterman spread the ball around to get several different players involved.

Carson Buffington was next on the team with six kills, but middle hitters Haley Cain and Carleigh Pritchard each finished with five. McMullen added three of her own, while Erin Lemke and Riley Kallevig each added two.

McMullen also had a strong night setting as she finished with a team-high 23 assists and Guetterman was second with nine. The Lady Cats also recorded six aces, including three from Kallevig.

Kallevig was also strong defensively with a team-high 15 digs, while libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Dixon had 12 and 10, respectively.

Louisburg returns to action Thursday when it travels to Olathe North for a dual and then will travel to the Emporia Invitational on Saturday.