

McMullen excited for opportunity at Northwest Missouri State



Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen helped the Lady Cats to three state tournament appearances during her career at Louisburg High School, including a runner-up finish this year. She signed her letter of intent on Nov. 15 to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State next fall.

Volleyball has always been a part of Sophie McMullen's life and life has been really good to McMullen as of late.

First, McMullen helped the Louisburg volleyball team to a runner-up finish at the Class 4A-Division I state tournament last month. Although her high school career has come to an end, a new beginning for the Louisburg senior is right around the corner.

During a ceremony in front of family and friends on Nov. 15 at LHS, McMullen signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State and is looking forward to spending the next four years as a Bearcat.

"The process of recruiting was crazy and finding the right home was a big deal for us," McMullen said. "I think that I found the right home and I am super excited to be able to sign with them and go down there during the summer to see what it

is all about.”

The decision was a difficult one at times as she had offers from other programs, but McMullen appreciated the loyalty from the Northwest coaches.

McMullen had been recruited by the Bearcat staff for several years, including a time when she transitioned into different positions.

“What really stuck out was the coaches,” McMullen said. “I don’t really like having too aggressive of coaches. I like having a coach who will help me when I am in need of help, not when I am doing well. These coaches are just really supportive.

“They have watched me since I was a setter back in 2014. They have watched me a long time and have seen me develop into a hitter and a right side hitter. They saw something in me back when I was a setter and stuck with me and I appreciate that.”

McMullen played a big role on the Lady Cat volleyball team this season. She led Louisburg with 114 aces and 437 digs. As an outside hitter, McMullen was second on the Louisburg squad with 381 kills.

She was also recognized as one of the top players in the state in Class 4A. McMullen was a first team all-Frontier League selection and was also named to the Kansas Volleyball Association all-state first team. She was later to chosen to participate in the MO-KAN senior all-star match.



LHS senior Sophie McMullen signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State on Nov. 15. Sitting next to Sophie are her parents Sarah and Scott McMullen and her sister Corinna. Standing (from left) is LHS assistant volleyball coaches Mary Quinn and Leanna Willer, head coach Jessica Compliment, LHS activities director Jeremy Holloway and Dyansty club director Bryon Larson.

It was a long road for McMullen, who started her Louisburg career as a setter her freshmen season. She was also the Lady Cat setter as a sophomore as she helped Louisburg to back-to-back state tournament appearances.

McMullen eventually transitioned into an outside hitter, where she helped Louisburg to a runner-up state finish as a senior, which was her third state tournament appearance.

"In Louisburg volleyball, I started off as just a little fish just trying to make it," McMullen said. "I was a freshman and scared of all the seniors. I was just trying to go do my own

thing until Comp (head coach Jessica Compliment) asked me to be the JV setter. I was really excited about that, but then halfway through the season she asked me to suit up for varsity and I obviously hadn't experienced anything like that before.

"This year was an eye opener. Coming back from the loss to Paola at substate my junior year, it took us down a couple notches, but this year I think was one of the best in Louisburg volleyball history. Being a part of it was amazing, but now I realize high school volleyball is over and it pulls at the heart strings a little bit. I am ready for the next level though and excited to experience the college volleyball atmosphere."

The love of volleyball for McMullen started in fourth grade as she spent most of her days hitting the ball against her garage door. The constant banging annoyed her parents at times, but McMullen had a hard time putting the ball down.

Instead of punishing her parents' house, she intends on taking it out on her opponents during her time at Northwest. Playing at a high level is something she had always wanted to do.

"I knew I wanted to play in college the minute I touched a volleyball," McMullen said. "I always thought of myself as that 5-1 setter and nothing else. I never thought I would be recruited as a hitter, but now it is my favorite thing to do. Hopefully I will be able to do it well in college."

Northwest seemed like the best destination for McMullen, who not only looked for the right fit for her, but somewhere where she could be close to her family.

"Distance was a big deal for me," she said. "I was looking at a school in South Dakota and I just felt that I wanted to be close with my family, be with my sister (Corinna) and see her grow up. I think it was a big deal for her to see me play volleyball so it would be cool if I could be there every time she played. I didn't really want to leave my family. I am kind

of a homebody and I like being spending time with my family and I don't think I could have gone nine hours away."

McMullen will join a Bearcat program that earned a No. 5 seed in the MIAA Tournament earlier this month, but lost in the first round to Central Missouri State and finished the year with a 17-15 record.

"I am being recruited as an outside hitter on the right side as of right now," she said. "I think I could potentially play defense, but they are pretty heavy there right now. I think myself, along with the rest of the signing class from this year, can come in and help the team."

Dixon named player of the year; Lady Cats haul in honors



Louisburg High School junior Anna Dixon was named the Class 4A-Division 1 Co-Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association when the all-state team was released Sunday. Dixon, along with teammate Sophie McMullen, was selected to the first team, while junior Carson Buffington was named to the second team.

The Louisburg High School volleyball team found itself just points away from winning the school's first state championship, but despite that, had one of the better finishes in program history.

The Kansas Volleyball Association (KVA) took notice of the Lady Cats' success and gave one of their players the highest honor it can bestow.

Junior Anna Dixon was named the KVA Co-Player of the Year for Class 4A-Division I and headlined the all-state team that featured two other Louisburg players.

Senior outside hitter Sophie McMullen also earned first-team honors with Dixon on the seven-member team, while junior setter Carson Buffington was awarded a spot on the second team.

Dixon shared the player of the year honor with Rose Hill junior Gracie Van Driel. The two players squared off in the state championship match in late October and will do so again in college as Dixon has committed to Kansas State and Van Driel will play at the University of Kansas.

"It is a great feeling," Dixon said. "I was very excited when I heard about being named player of the year and was even more excited when I heard I got to share it with one of my really close friends. Her and I have a very special friendship. Even though we are supposed to be enemies, with her going to KU and me going to K-State, we are still each other's hypeman and best friend off the court.

"She is a stud athlete and so are the rest of the amazing players that were selected for all-state honors. I'm very thankful to be named player of the year and very proud and happy for the rest of team and their hard work."

Dixon put together a strong season for the Lady Cats as she led the team with 613 kills and 61 blocks on the season. The

6-foot-3 outside hitter was also third on the team with 58 aces and 329 digs.



Senior Sophie McMullen earned first team all-state and all-Frontier League honors this season.

McMullen, who will play at Northwest Missouri State next season, also had a big year for the Lady Cats as she was first on the team with 114 aces and 437 digs. As an outside hitter, McMullen was second on the Louisburg squad with 381 kills.

These weren't the only honors Dixon and McMullen have received this season. Both players were named to the Class 4A-DI all-state tournament team and were also first team selections in the Frontier League.

"Both Sophie and Anna had strong seasons," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "They both helped carry and lead the team throughout the season. However, it took the work of the

entire team to accomplish our goals for the season. Without each player knowing and understanding their role on the team, we wouldn't have been as successful and neither would have Sophie or Anna."

A lot of those kills from McMullen and Dixon came thanks to the sets of Buffington. The Louisburg junior performed well in her first year as the team's full-time setter.

Buffington finished the year with 1,111 assists as she helped the lead the Lady Cats to a 34-10 record on the season. Defensively, she was also a factor with 244 digs and had 30 aces from behind the service line.



Setter Carson Buffington recorded more than 1,000 assists this season and earned second team all-state and all-league honors.

Along with the all-state selection, Buffington was also named

to the Class 4A-DI all-state tournament team, along with a second-team all-Frontier League selection.

“Carson really grew this season and did a good job of running our offense,” Compliment said. “Seeing her being recognized for her hard work is great and shows that others recognized that as well.”

Sophomore middle hitter Haley Cain and sophomore libero Riley Kallevig also received honors from the Frontier League coaches. Both players were named all-league honorable mentions.



Sophomore middle blocker Haley Cain earned honorable mention all-league honors.

Cain was third on the Louisburg team with 182 kills and was second on the Lady Cats with 28 blocks. She also ended the

year with 38 aces.

As for Kallevig, she helped the Lady Cats in the back and from behind the service line. As the libero, Kallevig was second on the team with 382 digs to go along with 61 aces.

“Riley and Haley were both returning starters from last year, but I think this year they finally came out of their shells and really showed what they were capable of,” Compliment said. “Throughout the season, they had their ‘sophomore’ moments, but they both play with such composure on the court that you couldn’t tell they were sophomores.



Riley Kallevig was second on the team in digs from her libero spot and was named honorable mention all-league.

“That composure really showed at the end of the season. They both made some huge plays at the state tournament, and their play made the difference in a few of the sets.”

KVA Class 4A-DI All-State Team

First Team

Anna Dixon, Louisburg, outside hitter, junior

Gracie Van Driel, Rose Hill, middle blocker, junior

Elle Barrett, McPherson, outside hitter, senior

Sophie McMullen, Louisburg, outside hitter, senior

Riley Oglevie, Ulysses, outside hitter, junior

Serena Sparks, Bishop Miege, libero, junior

Emily Witt, Rose Hill, setter, senior

Second Team

Carson Buffington, Louisburg, setter, junior

Jaycee Burghart, McPherson, setter, junior

Tasiah Nunnery, Hays, outside hitter, sophomore

Brooklyn Strobel, Andover Central, libero, sophomore

Riley Tinder, Basehor-Linwood, outside hitter, sophomore

Hannah Willey, Abilene, outside hitter, junior

Danyel Yardley, Rose Hill, libero, senior

Honorable mention

Turner Alderson, Abilene, libero, junior

Kate Gordon, Independence, outside hitter, sophomore

Amber Hildebrand, Wamego, outside hitter, senior

Ava Seaton, Basehor-Linwood, outside hitter, junior

Payton Verhulst, Bishop Miege, outside hitter, freshman

Jaden Walters, Abilene, setter, senior

Laney Ward, Bishop Miege, setter, senior

PLAYER OF THE YEAR: **Anna Dixon, Louisburg**; Gracie Van Driel, Rose Hill

COACH OF THE YEAR: Melissa Segovia, Rose Hill

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL

FIRST TEAM

Ally Barnhart, De Soto, junior

Maya Bascom, De Soto, junior

Haley Cuba, De Soto, junior

Anna Dixon, Louisburg, junior

Sophie McMullen, Louisburg, senior

Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, senior

SECOND TEAM

Carson Buffington, Louisburg, junior

Jenna DeVore, Ottawa, senior

Audrey Flowers, Baldwin, junior

Riley Foltz, Eudora, junior

Loren Hinkle, De Soto, junior

Jordan Johnson, Paola, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

Jasmine Boyd, Eudora, senior

Haley Cain, Louisburg, sophomore

Cassy Crist, De Soto, junior

Alli Frank, Spring Hill, freshman

Sutton Jung, Ottawa, senior

Riley Kallevig, Louisburg, sophomore

Allina Kerns, Ottawa, junior

Riley Moore, De Soto, senior

Alexia Nelson, Baldwin, senior

Anna Ohlmeier, Paola, senior

Keagan Shockley, Eudora, sophomore

Kaleigh Scott, Paola, senior

Skyler Williams, Paola, senior

OPINION: Lady Cats inspired fans with successful season



The Louisburg High School volleyball team celebrated a point during the Class 4A-Division I state tournament on Oct. 27 in Salina.

It has been more than a week since the Louisburg High School volleyball team had to watch Rose Hill storm the court and celebrate its second straight state championship.

Trying to figure out just how much those Lady Cat players were hurting as Rose Hill won match point is something that is difficult to quantify. Needless to say, it was probably a lot.

On three different occasions, Louisburg found itself one point away from winning a state title and becoming in the first team in Lady Cat history to win a team championship in any sport.

The loss was gut-wrenching – at least it was for me.

If I could feel that horrible, I can't imagine what those players were going through. I didn't have a child on the team, nor was I there during the offseason and practice to see how much work the girls put into the season, but I could still feel their pain from across the court.

The entire Louisburg fan base that made the trek to Salina could feel it too. There were a lot of people who connected with this group of girls. They watched as these players grew

throughout the season and saw the potential they had.

There weren't many opponents that were all that excited about facing the thundering kills of Anna Dixon or Sophie McMullen, or the stingy Louisburg defense that got better as the season went on. Riley Kallevig, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Carson Buffington, McMullen and Dixon all came up with big digs throughout the year and became a strength of the team.

Middle hitters Haley Cain and Mikayla Quinn, along with outside hitter Erin Lemke, saw their confidence grow and it showed in the state tournament. They came up with big plays against Bishop Miege and Rose Hill to help Louisburg go undefeated in pool play to start the state tournament.

Buffington also became comfortable as the team's full-time setter as she had good chemistry with her hitters, especially McMullen and Dixon. When it mattered most, the Lady Cats were a well-oiled machine.

It was all set up to be a happy ending for Louisburg volleyball – a program that has suffered heartbreak several times on the state level. The Lady Cats have a number of runner-up, third and fourth place finishes, but haven't been able to pin down that championship.

As bad as that loss hurt, Louisburg continues to build on its rich volleyball tradition. To finish second in the state is a fantastic accomplishment and one that shouldn't be forgotten.

This team also showed a younger generation of players what it takes to become great and 'Believe The Hype' – the motto the Lady Cats used all season to remind themselves what it means to be a Louisburg volleyball player.

Let me share one, very small example, with you.

My daughter, who is in elementary school, has just started playing volleyball. She is really starting to enjoy it and

wants to get better at it.

She is always banging the ball on the wall in her room or against the garage door. The noises drive me nuts.

In just a few months time, she has become interested a sport I never thought she would like. Part of the reason is she sees the success this Lady Cat team has enjoyed.

When Louisburg qualified for the second day of the state tournament, she wanted to go with me to Salina. A girl, who is normally a pain the butt to get up early for school, had no problems waking up at 6 a.m. and making the drive with her dad.

She wanted to support her favorite Lady Cats.

To the Lady Cat players – I just wanted to let you know, that even in a loss, she had a time that she will never forget. You also probably already know this, but you have a lot of other little girls around town who look up to you all and are inspired by what you have accomplished.

There are girls, like my daughter, who have aspirations of hitting the ball as hard as Anna or Sophie when they get to high school, or maybe setting them up like Carson. Maybe they want to be in the middle of it all like Haley and Mikayla, or just maybe they want to dive on the floor for a dig like Riley and Reilly.

You may have not captured a state championship, but you won the hearts of a lot of future Lady Cat volleyball players. You taught them what it takes to believe in themselves and come together as a team.

Your performance at state shows what it takes to keep a strong tradition alive.

You showed them what it means to 'Believe the Hype.'

So for that ladies – thank you for taking all of us on the ride with you. It was a season a lot of us will always remember – not with disappointment – but with pride.

McMullen, Quinn selected to play in all-star match



Louisburg High School seniors Sophie McMullen (left) and Mikayla Quinn were recently selected to participate in the 21st Annual MO-KAN All-Star Volleyball Match this Sunday at Avila University.

A pair of Louisburg High School seniors will compete against, and with, some of the best volleyball players the Kansas City area has to offer.

Sophie McMullen and Mikayla Quinn were chosen to compete in the in the 21st Annual MO-KAN All-Star Volleyball Match this Sunday at Avila University. McMullen and Quinn will take part in the small class game that pits the Kansas all-stars against Missouri.

The two Lady Cat players are fresh off a runner-up performance in the Class 4A-Division 1 state tournament after leading Louisburg to a 34-10 record on the season.

McMullen, who will be playing for Northwest Missouri State next season, did a lot of different things for the Lady Cats as she was an all-around player. McMullen led Louisburg with 114 aces on the season to go along with a team-high 437 digs. She was also second on the team with 381 kills.

McMullen was recently named to the all-Frontier League first team and was selected to the Class 4A-Division I state all-tournament team

As for Quinn, she served as one of the team's two middle hitters and finished the year with 96 kills and 23 blocks. She is also a two-year varsity player for the Lady Cats.

The match, which is put on by the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association, compiles the top seniors on both sides of the state line. The small-class match will take place at 5 p.m., and will be followed by the large-class game.

The other small-class Kansas players that were selected are: Kate Allen, Heritage Christian; Elle Blake, Piper; Jordan Johnson, Paola; Natalie Klotz, Bonner Springs; Jaylyn McPherson, Basehor-Linwood; Aurora Rodriguez, Bishop Miege; Maggie Smardo, Bishop Miege; Laney Ward, Bishop Miege; Madison Wright, Piper; Kate Yankovich, Basehor-Linwood

All-Frontier League Volleyball Team Announced



Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen (left) and junior Anna Dixon (right) were each named as first team selections to the All-Frontier League Volleyball Team. The Lady Cats put five players on the team in all.

The All-Frontier League volleyball teams were recently released and the Louisburg High School volleyball team was well-represented.

The Lady Cats earned five spots on the all-league squad, including two first team honors.

Will put together a full story soon, but here is the complete list. Congrats to all the players who earned all-league honors.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL

FIRST TEAM

Ally Barnhart, De Soto, junior

Maya Bascom, De Soto, junior

Haley Cuba, De Soto, junior

Anna Dixon, Louisburg, junior

Sophie McMullen, Louisburg, senior

Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, senior

SECOND TEAM

Carson Buffington, Louisburg, junior

Jenna DeVore, Ottawa, senior

Audrey Flowers, Baldwin, junior

Riley Foltz, Eudora, junior

Loren Hinkle, De Soto, junior

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Jasmine Boyd, Eudora, senior

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Alli Frank, Spring Hill, freshman

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Riley Kallevig, Louisburg, sophomore

Allina Kerns, Ottawa, junior

Riley Moore, De Soto, senior

Alexia Nelson, Baldwin, senior

Anna Ohlmeier, Paola, senior

Keagan Shockley, Eudora, sophomore

Kaleigh Scott, Paola, senior

Lady Cats' title quest comes up short in finals match



Senior Sophie McMullen holds up the Class 4A-D1 state runner-up trophy as the team gathers together following the Lady Cats' three set loss to Rose Hill in the finals match Saturday in Salina.

SALINA – The Louisburg High School volleyball team hoisted a state trophy Saturday during the Kansas Class 4A-Division 1 State Volleyball Championships.

It just wasn't the one the Lady Cats wanted.

Louisburg advanced to the championship match against Rose Hill, and after the two teams split the first two sets, they provided the fans with an intense, and decisive, third set.

In the end, the Lady Cats made just one more mistake in the 23-25, 25-10 and 29-27 loss to the Rockets and finished as the state runner-up. Both teams went back and forth at each other, with both defenses digging most everything up, but Rose Hill won the final two points to pull out the thriller in Salina.

"It has been extremely difficult to handle this loss," Louisburg junior Anna Dixon said. "I have played a lot of games over the years and lost many important games, but this was definitely the hardest for me, because it was so close and we ended it on our own unforced errors."

The end of the match saw the Rose Hill players storm the court as they secured their second straight state title. At the same time, the Louisburg players tried to fight back a wave of emotions that came flooding up as they came just short of winning the school's first volleyball state title.

"There were a lot of tears," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "The players were crushed at first. They set their goals high and were disappointed to come so close to the elusive first place at the state tournament. Both teams did leave it all out there on the floor, and that is what I told the girls they had to do. Rose Hill played great defense on Saturday. Their libero was picking up everything."



Senior Mikayla Quinn gives coach Jessica Compliment a long hug after receiving her second place state medal Saturday in Salina.

Louisburg, which defeated Rose Hill in two sets during pool play Friday, saw a different team in the state championship. Despite that, the Lady Cats got off to a strong start Saturday as they jumped out to a 14-9 lead in the first set thanks to a pair of kills from senior Sophie McMullen, another kill from Haley Cain and an ace from Reilly Ratliff-Becher.

Although Rose Hill cut it to two late, McMullen reeled off three kills down the stretch to secure the first set win. The Rockets came out on fire to win the second going away, which set up the dramatic third set.

Rose Hill took the lead and held it halfway through, until Dixon recorded a pair of kills to give Louisburg a brief 14-13 lead. The Rockets battled back and took a 20-18 lead late and

Compliment called a timeout to calm her team down.

It seemed to work as the Lady Cats went on a 5-0 run to take a 23-20 lead behind kills from McMullen and Cain. The state title was within their reach, but Rose Hill didn't give up as it scored a quick three points to tie the match.

Cain responded with a kill to put Louisburg up 24-23 and set up match point. The Rockets defense held firm and tied it back up. Dixon gave Louisburg the lead back with a tip and another match point, but instead, Rose Hill scored the next two to set up match point for itself.

Louisburg tied it up at 26-all and Dixon followed with a block for a 27-26 advantage for Louisburg. Rose Hill called a timeout, and it seemed to be just what the Rockets needed as they scored three straight points to win the match and the state championship.



Setter Carson Buffington tips the ball over a pair of Rose Hill blockers.

"It has been tough to finally come to realization about the loss," McMullen said. "I think that overall we played better than we would have ever imagined and I'm proud to go out like that, especially with second place.

"Although it does still replay in my mind thinking what I could have done better for my team, and in all honesty it was probably my missed serve. Ultimately, there is nothing more that we could have done. I think Rose Hill just had a few little things that we didn't."

Dixon and McMullen provided the Lady Cats with a lot of offense at the net with 20 and 13 kills, respectively. Cain also added six kills of her own and senior Mikayla Quinn had two.

Junior setter Carson Buffington was busy as she tallied 34 assists to set up her four hitters.

The Rose Hill defense made an adjustment on both Dixon and McMullen as the Rockets tried to make it more difficult for the Lady Cat players to hit over them.

"They shifted after the first set which really challenged Anna and I," McMullen said. "They made it to where we had to hit over a 6-foot blocker, which was very challenging. It was very difficult, yet that's just what we will see as we both continue off to college, so it was a little eye opening. Of course, we were frustrated but that just made us realize that we can't just hit it straight down."

Defensively, the Lady Cats put together one of their better performances of the season as they turned away several Rose Hill attacks and had four players with double-digit dig numbers.



Libero Riley Kallevig digs up a ball against Rose Hill on Saturday during the state championship match.

Sophomore libero Riley Kallevig was one of those as she had a team-high 20 digs along with Dixon. McMullen finished with 15 digs, while Ratliff-Becher added 10 of her own.

The defense was one of the reasons the Lady Cats had match point three times late in the third set.

“The final points of the game were insane,” Dixon said. “Their defense dug everything and so did ours. I never thought the game was going to end. What the game finally came down to was mistakes. That’s what volleyball is, a game of mistakes, but unfortunately it was our side of the net that made the mental mistakes that cannot happen in a time like that. It happens with every team, but we gave it our all and worked our tails off. I am very proud of our team and cannot wait to come out and try to get that state title next season.”

To get to that position, the Lady Cats put together some of their best volleyball of the season as they went 3-0 in pool play Friday to secure a spot in the state semifinals.



Sophie McMullen puts down a kill against Rose Hill in the state championship match Saturday in Salina.

Louisburg opened with a 25-16, 25-16 win over Basehor-Linwood and then followed it up with big 13-25, 25-19, 25-19 win over Bishop Miege. With the victory, the Lady Cats qualified to play the next day, but didn't let up as it beat Rose Hill in two sets, 25-15 and 25-22.

However, it was the win against Miege, a perennial state power, that took the Lady Cats' confidence to another level.

"The win against Miege was straight heart," McMullen said. "After the first set, and me hitting my head, I think a few got nervous and lost hope, but that didn't stop us. We fought

till the very end and pulled it out. The win definitely gave us the confidence to move on to Rose Hill and it showed as we crushed them on the first day. Our confidence was at an all-time high as we ended our first day, which was an amazing feeling.”



Junior Anna Dixon skies for a kill Saturday against Rose Hill.

Dixon led the way with a team-high 20 kills and McMullen finished with 14 in the Miego match, but it was the emergence of Cain, the team’s middle hitter, that helped put Louisburg over the top as she added seven kills and provided another option for Buffington to set to.

“Haley had a good tournament,” Compliment said. “She made some big plays at crucial times on both Friday and Saturday. She also made some big plays in the back row when she was in

serving. She is pretty consistent and always keeps a level head. I'm excited to see what the next two seasons will bring for her."

Defense was also big for Louisburg against Miego as McMullen and Kallevig led the Lady Cats with 17 and 15 digs, respectively, and Buffington added 12. Dixon and Quinn were also big at the net with five and three blocks, respectively.

Serving was key for Louisburg in its first match against Rose Hill as it recorded nine aces and all of them came from Dixon and McMullen. Dixon led with five aces and McMullen had four.



Sophomore Haley Cain goes up for a kill against Wellington in the state semifinals match.

To start the day Saturday, the Lady Cats had an easy time with Wellington in the state semifinals as they notched a 25-11, 25-17 win to set up the rematch with Rose Hill.

The Lady Cats ended their season with a 34-10 record and they realize, despite the loss, that it was a season to remember.

“As I told the team, you can’t let one match define an entire season,” Compliment said. “I needed reminding of that as well because it’s very easy to focus on that last match, on the last set and forget about all of the accomplishments throughout the entire season. To go 34-10 and second in the state is something the team should be proud of. I think after they had time to process the loss, they realized how great the season was. They played really well all season as a team, and continued to grow as a team and as individuals throughout the season.”



Members of the Louisburg High School state runner-up volleyball team are (front row, from left): Sarah Wilson, Ainsley Vance, Sophie McMullen, Mikayla Quinn; (back row) assistant coach Leanna Willer, assistant coach Mary Quinn, Riley Kallevig, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Makenna Allen, Erin Lemke, Anna Dixon, Carson Buffington, Haley

Cain and Riley Vohs.

The players also enjoyed the journey that began with a loss in the sub-state tournament a year ago.

“Our season was a winning season,” McMullen said. “Looking back on my four years of playing, this was the best season so far. We ended at 34-10, which is better than many others. Although last year we didn’t go to state, it made the team as whole want to win this year and gave us the determination and the goal that we wanted to achieve this year. We may not have won it all, but we sure made history and proved to ourselves that the sky is the limit and we can achieve anything with hard work and heart.”

Louisburg volleyball excited for challenge of state tournament



The euphoria of winning a sub-state championship last Saturday hasn’t diminished much for the Louisburg High School volleyball team.

The Lady Cats are still riding high off earning their second state tournament bid in the last three years. However, don’t confuse that with being satisfied – far from it.

Louisburg achieved its first goal of the season during last week's sub-state tournament, but there is a bigger goal that lies ahead. It is a goal they set for themselves at the beginning of the season – capture a state title.

"Our expectations is just to go win," Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen said. "Our first step was to obviously qualify for state. This year's expectation is we are just looking for that first place trophy."

The Lady Cats face a tough task if they want to win that final match of the Class 4A-D1 state tournament at the Tony's Pizza Events Center in Salina.

When the brackets were released, Louisburg (30-9) earned the No. 4 seed and was put in the same pool with the last two state champions in No. 1 Rose Hill and No. 8 Bishop Miege. Also included is No. 5 Basehor-Linwood, who Louisburg has seen four times already this season.

"When the brackets came out, we were a little nervous at first," junior Anna Dixon said. "We have watched film on all three teams and we all decided that if we keep the same energy and effort that we had against teams like Paola and Olathe North, then we will be fine."

Louisburg will square off with Basehor-Linwood (24-14) in the first match of pool play at 8:30 a.m., on Friday and the Lady Cats are very familiar with the Bobcats as the two teams are 2-2 with each other on the season.

The players realize getting off to a good start will make things easier for them as the tournament progresses.

"We are excited to play them again," Dixon said. "The two games we lost against them I think we had zero effort and communication. If we improve on those two things, then I think we should be fine."

"The first game means a lot because you have to set the tone for the rest of the day. If you start off bad, it is hard to dig yourself out of hole in those next two games, so hopefully we come out with a bang in that first game."

The Lady Cats will meet Bishop Miego (10-26) at 10:30 a.m. in their second pool play match of the day. Miego won the state championship in 2015.

At 1:30 p.m., Louisburg will end pool play with a match against Rose Hill (36-3), which is the defending state champion. The top two teams in each pool will advance to the state semifinals at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

"They learned their lesson at our home tournament of what happens when you drop at least one set," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "You can go 2-1 and still not make it out of pool. Setting the tone for the day is going to be important. We need to come out strong against Basehor and be ready to play. We need to play to win and compete."

"It is a tough pool and a tough draw, but at the same time it is going to be good competition. We are going to see Basehor first and we have seen them four times this season and that is going to be tough. We know them, they are familiar with us. With Bishop Miego and Rose Hill, you have two good teams that have been down to state numerous years, but this is a different year and we are a different team. It is just exciting to see what is going to happen when we meet up with those teams."

KSHSAA
CLASS 4A DI STATE VOLLEYBALL PAIRINGS
OCTOBER 27 & OCTOBER 28, 2017
SALINA, TONY'S PIZZA EVENTS CENTER

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Seed 1: Rose Hill, 36-3
Seed 8: Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege, 10-26
Seed 4: Louisburg, 30-9
Seed 5: Basehor-Linwood, 24-14



COURT A

8:30 AM Louisburg (4) vs. Basehor-Linwood (5)
9:30 AM Rose Hill (1) vs. Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege (8)
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12:30 PM Basehor-Linwood (5) vs. Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege (8)
1:30 PM Rose Hill (1) vs. Louisburg (4)

Friday, October 27-- Pool II (Bottom Bracket)

Seed 2: Independence, 35-4
Seed 7: El Dorado, 20-19
Seed 3: Ulysses, 29-8
Seed 6: Wellington, 19-16

COURT B

8:30 AM Ulysses (3) vs. Wellington (6)
9:30 AM Independence (2) vs. El Dorado (7)
10:30 AM Ulysses (3) vs. El Dorado (7)
11:30 AM Independence (2) vs. Wellington (6)
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Saturday, October 28

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Saturday Semi-final matches will begin @10:00 am.
Consolation & Championship Matches will begin 15 min. after last semi-final match has concluded.*

Louisburg will enter the state tournament with an arsenal that is set up to make a run at a spot in the semifinals. The Lady Cats will feature two of the top outside hitters in the tournament in both Dixon and McMullen.

Dixon, who has committed to Kansas State, leads the team with 508 kills on the year and McMullen, who will play at Northwest Missouri State next season, has 310. McMullen, on the other hand, leads the team with 105 aces and 362 digs and both players have played in the state tournament before.

Although they know what the state experience is like, the rest of the team has yet to play in a state tournament game as Louisburg features four sophomores in Riley Kallevig, Haley Cain, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Erin Lemke who will all see playing time.

Setter Carson Buffington, along with seniors Mikayla Quinn,

Sarah Wilson and Ainsley Vance will also see their first state tournament action. Quinn and Buffington suited up with the team two years ago when the Wildcats qualified in 2015.

“They are a little nervous, but I think they are excited for the experience,” McMullen said of the underclassmen. “We have hyped the experience so much. The feeling of playing at state is just the best feeling that you could ever feel. They have finally realized that and they are ready to just go out there and play.”



The Louisburg volleyball team hopes to be filled with excitement following the state tournament this weekend in Salina.

There are many players that have seen the past Louisburg teams play in the state environment and they are looking forward to being a part of it themselves.

"I watched from the sidelines and these role models of mine playing at state, and this is just a fulfilling experience for me because now I get to be in their shoes," Quinn said. "Anna and Sophie have told me it is just indescribable playing at state. I am really looking forward to it."

Louisburg is also looking to become the first girls team to win a state championship in school history, but the Lady Cats realize that nothing is going to come easy.

"I think they are aware of it, but it isn't something we have touched on," Compliment said. "You don't want to apply too much pressure. Making it to state is goal No. 1. We can't focus on Saturday until we take care of Friday first. Our goal is to come out of pool play and have the opportunity to play for a championship on Saturday. We just try to take it one step at a time."

"The girls want to do well and they are capable of it. They have to work harder than the other team and stay focused and not let one bad play get in their head. I am excited to see how they perform."

ALL THE WAY TO STATE: Lady Cats win sub-state title



The Louisburg High School volleyball team hoists the Class 4A-

Division I sub-state volleyball championship plaque following the Lady Cats' 25-19 and 25-17 win over Spring Hill in the championship match.

PAOLA – The Louisburg volleyball team had been waiting for this moment for a year – a moment that couldn't come fast enough.

Following a home loss to Paola in the sub-state championship a year ago, the Lady Cats have used that defeat as fuel to come back this season even stronger and more poised to try and earn a berth in the Class 4A-Division I state tournament.

The wait is over.

Louisburg punched its ticket to the state tournament for second time in three years Saturday as the Lady Cats avenged their loss to Paola with a 2-0 win in the sub-state semifinals, and followed that up with a 2-0 win over Spring Hill in the championship match at Paola High School.

After it was complete, the Lady Cats stormed the floor and celebrated what they had been working all year for – a chance to compete for a state title.

"Wow, it feels pretty good," senior Sophie McMullen said. "I think the loss from last year really impacted this team a lot. We came to win and we were not going to take a loss.

"We were really focused on making sure we touched every single ball and stayed focused throughout the whole tournament and I think we did that. We came out ready to go. Our morning practice that we had went really well and we came here and got it done."

Louisburg showed why it is considered the No. 3 team in Class 4A-Division I, as it put away both Spring Hill and Paola without much problem. All the motivation to get back to state,

however, didn't hurt its cause.

"We all remember the feeling of losing to Paola last year," junior Anna Dixon said. "After losing that match, we wanted to come out and play again, so it was good to be able to beat them this time and it is a great feeling to be able to go back to Salina. We have worked really hard to get here."



Members of the Louisburg volleyball team are (front row, from left) Riley Kallevig, Mikayla Quinn, Sophie McMullen, Ainsley Vance, Sarah Wilson, Riley Vohs; (back row) assistant coach Leanna Willer, head coach Jessica Compliment, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Haley Cain, Anna Dixon, Makenna Allen, Carson Buffington, Erin Lemke and assistant coach Mary Quinn.

To start their season, some of the Lady Cat players decided to create a slogan to help, not only build confidence, but set a standard for Louisburg volleyball. 'Believe the Hype' has seemed to have done the job as the Lady Cats are currently

30-9 on the year and are playing some of their best volleyball at the right time.

"We were just lacking some confidence last year and we wanted to show the girls that this was Louisburg volleyball and that there is a tradition here," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "There is something to be said for wearing a Louisburg jersey, and that you are Louisburg volleyball and you need to wear it with pride. I think they just started believing it more."

The Lady Cats, who were the tournament's No. 1 seed, had a chance at the Panthers in the first round of action Saturday and were ready from the opening serve. Louisburg took down Paola 25-16 and 25-9.

McMullen opened the match with an ace and started a 7-1 run in the first set. Louisburg got contributions from all over the floor as it go kills from Dixon, McMullen and sophomore Haley Cain. Dixon led the way with 14 kills, McMullen had eight and Cain finished with four.

Louisburg also served up six aces, with three of those coming from McMullen, and the others coming from sophomores Riley Kallevig and Reilly Ratliff-Becher and junior Carson Buffington. It was Buffington who helped get the offense going with 25 assists.



Setter Carson Buffington passes it up to a teammate for a kill Saturday in Paola.

Defensively, McMullen had a team-high 10 digs and Kallevig, the team's libero, finished with nine. Cain led Louisburg with three blocks.

In the championship match, the Lady Cats made sure to finish their quest for a sub-state title as they downed Spring Hill 25-19 and 25-17 and it was their defense that helped them pull away.

Not only did Buffington lead the Louisburg offense with 21 assists, but she also led the Lady Cats with 11 digs as she found herself all over the floor.

"We played really well," Dixon said. "Our defense was awesome and I think Carson did great running the court. It was one of

the best games I have seen her play.

“She has gotten so much better as a setter. She has improved every single day at practice and she is always open for constructive criticism, whether it is from the coaches or the team. She has grown a lot as a player.”

This is Buffington’s first full year as a setter after sharing the duties with McMullen last season. Louisburg moved back to a 5-1 offense this year and it has paid dividends for Buffington.

“I really like it a lot more because I feel I can contribute a lot more to the team as a setter than a hitter,” Buffington said. “It is just so much fun. Setting for people like Anna and Sophie is the best thing ever.”

The win over Spring Hill wasn’t as easy as the final scores indicated. Louisburg found itself down 16-13 in the second set before the Lady Cats got a kill and an ace from Dixon and a block from McMullen to give Louisburg a 17-16 advantage.



Anna Dixon and Haley Cain team up for a block against Paola during the Class 4A-D1 sub-state tournament.

"Spring Hill did make a run in that second set, but I was so proud to see the girls rebound from that and stay aggressive," Compliment said. "We made some huge defensive plays, both at the net and back row and the girls just played really well."

Louisburg didn't waste the opportunity as McMullen took over at the net. Five of the final eight Lady Cat points were on kills from McMullen, some of which were perfectly set up thanks to some bad Spring Hill passes.

"I am not going to lie," McMullen said, "that was a lot of fun."

Dixon led the Louisburg attack at the net with 13 kills and McMullen finished with 11 as the Spring Hill defense didn't have an answer for the Louisburg duo.

After match point, the Lady Cat bench emptied as players rushed the floor to celebrate with their teammates. It was a feeling some of the Lady Cat players hadn't experienced before.



Sophie McMullen leaps into the arms of teammate Anna Dixon, while senior Mikayla Quinn and junior Riley Vohs celebrate alongside them Saturday.

"It is so surreal," Kallevig said. "When it happened everyone just started cheering and jumping up and down. It felt so good. I am just excited for what state is going to hold for us because I think we have a really good chance if we all work really well together."

As good as it felt for the Lady Cats players to earn a bid to the state tournament, they know they aren't satisfied with just going. They want something more.

"We want to keep our season going as long as possible and hopefully we can bring home a state title," Dixon said. "There are a lot of tough teams, but hopefully we can pull it out."

Louisburg will get a chance at that state title as it will begin pool play Friday in Salina. The Lady Cats are the No. 4 seed and will match up with No. 5 Basehor-Linwood at 8:30 a.m. They will then have matches against No. 8 Bishop Miege and No. 1 Rose Hill later in the day as the top two in each pool will advance to the semifinals on Saturday.

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"They want to do well and their expectation is to take state," Compliment said. "They want to take care of business on Friday in pool play and put ourselves in a good position for Saturday. The girls have said that this is their time."

"We have fallen short a few times taking second, third and fourth down there, but at the same time this is a new group

that has a lot of energy and focus. We just want to go down there and take care of business.”

Photo gallery: Sub-State Volleyball Title



Here is a photo gallery from today's Class 4A-Division I Sub-State Tournament in Paola. The Louisburg volleyball team defeated Paola and Spring Hill, 2-0, to win the sub-state crown and will advance to the Class 4A state tournament Friday in Salina.



Setter Carson Buffington passes it up to teammate Haley Cain for a kill Saturday in Paola.



Anna Dixon and Haley Cain team up for a block against Paola during the Class 4A-D1 sub-state tournament.





























The Louisburg volleyball team hopes to be filled with excitement following the state tournament this weekend in Salina.







Members of the Louisburg volleyball team are (front row, from left) Riley Kallevig, Mikayla Quinn, Sophie McMullen, Ainsley Vance, Sarah Wilson, Riley Vohs; (back row) assistant coach Leanna Willer, head coach Jessica Compliment, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Haley Cain, Anna Dixon, Makenna Allen, Carson Buffington, Erin Lemke and assistant coach Mary Quinn.



Lady Cats send four seniors out in style



(From left) Sophie McMullen, Sarah Wilson, Riley Kallevig, Mikayla Quinn, Carson Buffington and Anna Dixon celebrate a point during Tuesday's Senior Night match against Ottawa.

The result was never really in doubt.

The Louisburg High School volleyball team hosted Ottawa for its final regular season match of the season and the Lady Cats had no problems in the 25-17, 25-18 and 25-18 sweep of the

Cyclones.

Although they were happy with the win, it wasn't on the mind of the Lady Cat players – it was more about honoring their four seniors.

Sophie McMullen, Mikayla Quinn, Ainsley Vance and Sarah Wilson walked on the LHS gym floor for the final time as players and were recognized in front of their home fans Tuesday. All four players have left an impact on the program.

McMullen, who is headed to play at Northwest Missouri State next season to play volleyball, has been a four-year starter and helped Louisburg to state appearances her freshman and sophomore seasons.

Quinn has found herself in a varsity role her last two years, while Wilson and Vance are playing varsity for the first time this season. Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment is proud of what her four seniors have accomplished.

"Sophie has obviously done a lot for us these last four years," Compliment said. "Her first two years, she ran a 5-1 offense for us and helped us to a third and fourth place finish at state. We transitioned her into a new position and she has handled that really well. She has been a good leader on the team and she is one of the players that I am counting on to get stuff done in matches.

"Mikayla has spent the last two years on varsity and we also changed her position this year. We have moved her around a lot, but she has always been open and willing to do whatever the team needs. Both Sarah and Ainsley have worked their way up through the program playing freshmen to varsity and it is exciting to see them both step up and make plays."



Seniors (from left) Mikayla Quinn, Ainsley Vance, Sarah Wilson and Sophie McMullen were honored during Senior Night, prior to Tuesday's match with Ottawa.

All four seniors saw the floor and each of them had an opportunity to make an impact on the match. McMullen finished the night with 15 kills to go along with a team-high 19 digs, while Quinn had two kills and two blocks. Wilson and Vance each had a dig in the win.

As for the rest of the Lady Cats, they put together a strong performance as the Cyclones never threatened to win a set. The No. 3 team in Class 4A-Division 1 provided a lot of positives.

"Overall, I think we played well," Compliment said. "I just felt that all night we were more efficient and we just took care of the ball. We had some good passes, nice sets and good hits and got the points when we needed to. We didn't have very many mental mistakes or errors on our side. Our energy level

might not have been as high as in the past, but I think with it also being Senior Night there were a lot of emotions.”

Junior Anna Dixon provided a lot of offense at the net with a team-high 21 kills and also led Louisburg with four aces and four blocks.

Carson Buffington ran the offense well from the setter position as she racked up 34 assists on the night and also had three aces and three blocks. Libero Riley Kallevig had a big outing in the back row with 16 digs.



Sarah Wilson (left) and Mikayla Quinn go up for a block Tuesday.

The day the Lady Cats have been waiting all season for is almost here as they will travel to Paola on Saturday for the Class 4A-Division I sub-state tournament.

Louisburg, which earned the No. 1 seed with a 28-9 record,

will square off with No. 4 Paola (13-21) at 2 p.m. If the Lady Cats advance, they will play the winner between No. 2 Ottawa (17-18) and No. 3 Spring Hill (17-20) in the championship match at approximately 4 p.m.

The Lady Cats lost in the sub-state championship match to Paola a season ago and are ready to put that all behind them Saturday.

"They are excited and amped up for it," Compliment said of her team. "We kind of joked around that it is the Frontier League sub-state. This was the first time we saw Ottawa this year, but we have seen Paola twice, Spring Hill three or four times, so they are teams we are familiar with. At the same time we know we can't take anything for granted and we have to work hard. They are excited for the opportunity, especially after not making to state last year. It has left a bitter taste in their mouths. This year, they have been focused and I think they are ready to go."

Lady Cats place seventh at Emporia Invitational

Playing ranked teams isn't something new to the Louisburg volleyball program.

The Lady Cats saw their fair share Saturday during the Emporia Invitational as they faced off with state-ranked Lawrence and Lawrence Free State in 6A and another ranked team in Maize that is Class 5A.

Record wise, Louisburg didn't fare as it would have liked as it ended the day with a 3-3 record and a seventh-place finish last Saturday. Despite that, coach Jessica Compliment still liked what she saw from her group that had a little different look to it.

Senior Sarah Wilson and sophomore Erin Lemke each saw a lot of playing time as outside hitters, while junior Riley Vohs stepped up and joined the rotation on the back row for defense.

Junior Anna Dixon led the Lady Cats in kills, but sophomore Haley Cain rose to the occasion and was second on the team in kills.

"There were a lot of very good teams there," Compliment said. "We saw teams like Lawrence, Lawrence Free State and Maize, all of which are ranked in higher classes. We also saw teams like Junction City and Bonner Springs that we don't see of as much. The girls responded to the challenge well and really played hard.

"Erin got to play a lot on the outside, Sarah got lots of reps on the right side and Riley Vohs stepped in and played some good defense for us. The girls just rallied around each other and had to play some different roles. I thought Haley did a really good job the entire day hitting wise."

Louisburg finished pool play with a 2-2 record and had wins over Bonner Springs (25-19, 19-25, 25-21) and Junction City (29-27, 23-25 and 25-14), and fell to Maize (25-12, 25-15) and Lawrence High (25-13, 25-23).

The Lady Cats moved to the consolation semifinals where they fell to Lawrence Free State (25-27, 25-22 and 25-14), but beat Bonner Springs for seventh place (25-15, 25-7).