

Lady Cats put five on all-league team



Louisburg seniors Madison Turner (left) and Lauren Dunn were named to the all-Frontier League first team on Monday and were two of five Lady Cats that were selected to the squad.

It was a special season in many ways for the Louisburg High School volleyball team and now it is starting to reap the rewards from it.

After finishing third at the Class 4A-Division I state tournament and winning their third consecutive Frontier League crown, it wouldn't be hard to figure out that the Lady Cats would have plenty of representation on the all-Frontier League team when it came out.

The all-league list was released on Monday and there were plenty of Louisburg names to be found – five to be exact.

Seniors Lauren Dunn and Madison Turner garnered first-team honors to lead the Lady Cats. Senior Makenzie Kallevig and freshman Anna Dixon earned spots on the second team, while sophomore Sophie McMullen was named honorable mention.



Makenzie Kallevig, a senior, was named to the all-league second team.

“It was nice to see the girls get recognized,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “You always wish you could get more girls on there, or get another girl on first team or whatever the case may be. There were some other good teams in the league that had some good players, but it was nice to have two girls get first team, two get second and another get honorable mention. It is good recognition for the volleyball team.”

Dunn played all-around for the Lady Cats and was a vital part of the team in several different areas. She was second on the team with 389 digs, third in kills with 281 and third with 39 aces.

“For the past three years, playing front row and back row, Lauren reads the ball really well,” Compliment said. “She reacts to the ball really well. There was a play at state that really showed that when she played the ball while laying on the ground. She can play the ball from anywhere, no matter what position she is playing.”



Freshman Anna Dixon earned all-league second team honors.

As for Turner, the 6-foot, 4-inch middle hitter was a focal point at the net for Louisburg. Turner led the Lady Cats with 327 kills and also had a team-high 266 blocks to go along with 37 aces.

“With Madison being the middle, she was pretty unstoppable whenever we could get the ball to her in the middle,” Compliment said. “She has added a couple different variety of hits, which has allowed her to hit from a couple different spots and really helped the team there. I think she also got stronger with some of her blocking as well.”



Sophomore setter Sophie McMullen was named as an

honorable mention.

Kallevig was a fixture on the back row as the team's libero. She led Louisburg with 500 digs on the season and also finished with 33 aces.

Dixon became a big part of the team for Louisburg as a freshman as she was given the task of playing all-around with Dunn. Dixon was second on the team with 304 kills and finished with 59 aces, which was also second on the Lady Cat squad. She was third on the team with 251 digs.

As for McMullen, she ran the Louisburg offense from the setter spot and was a weapon at different spots on the court. McMullen finished four assists shy of 1,000 on the season with 996 and ran away with the team lead in aces with 82. She also added 246 digs.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL

First team: Lauren Dunn, Louisburg, senior; Madison Turner, Louisburg, senior; Aubri Hinkle, De Soto, senior; Kylie Corneliusen, De Soto, senior; Makaila Garcia, Eudora, senior

Second team: Makenzie Kallevig, Louisburg, senior; Anna Dixon, Louisburg, freshman; Emma Burnett, Baldwin, senior; Chandler Karr, Paola, junior; Moira Frakes, Spring Hill, senior; Madi Miller, Spring Hill, senior

Honorable mention: Sophie McMullen, sophomore, Louisburg; Kelsey Kehl, Baldwin, senior; Kaitlyn Bell, De Soto, freshman; Ally Barnhart, De Soto, freshman; Kristi Daigh, Eudora, senior; Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, sophomore; Megan Milroy, Spring Hill, junior

Opinion: Lady Cat seniors carry on tradition



Louisburg High School seniors (from left) Makenzie Kallevig, Cate Stambaugh, Lauren Dunn, Megan Lemke and Madison Turner share a few tears after they receive the team's third-place trophy Saturday during the Class 4A-Division I state tournament in Salina.

SALINA – As a freshman, Lauren Dunn was all sorts of nervous when she walked onto the state tournament floor the first time.

Madison Turner, Megan Lemke and Makenzie Kallevig probably had the same feelings when they made their first state tournament as sophomores. Cate Stambaugh had some butterflies when she made her state debut last season as a junior.

For these five Louisburg High School seniors, the state tournament has become an expectation and not just a goal of trying to get there. Every season, the Lady Cat leaders have goals of winning state tournaments – a goal they are still trying to achieve as a program.

Dunn, Turner, Lemke, Kallevig and Stambaugh gave it their all in their final go around, but couldn't bring that state title home to Louisburg. It certainly wasn't for a lack of trying.

The Lady Cats took eventual state champion Bishop Miege to three sets in pool play and had a lead against McPherson in the semifinals before falling in two sets. Louisburg eventually beat Tonganoxie on Saturday for third-place.

"I am so proud," Kallevig said. "We had five seniors so we had a lot of fun leading the team through the first match of the year to senior night to substate and now state. We wanted to end our season on a win.

"Getting fourth last season, we wanted to do better than that and we did. Plus I got to finish the season with all my best friends and that was special."

This senior class carried on the traditions that was laid before them under coach Jessica Compliment. It began six years ago when seniors Emily Lemke, Marisa Mackey, Colleen O'Brien and Caitlin Schneider broke through to qualify for the first state tournament under Compliment in 2010. It was the first time the program had been to state in 18 years.

After not qualifying in 2011, the Lady Cats used that state experience to get back the next four years and would place every year. In 2012, seniors Regan Wertz, Bailey Aiken, Katie Dixon, Amy Dennis and Anna Bell put together a strong performance to finish fourth.

The following year, seniors Maddie DeShazer and Ellie Walter helped the Lady Cats to the state championship game and placed second. In 2014, Bailey Dvorak and Sydney Dixon helped guide Louisburg to a fourth-place finish as well.

If you want to go back even further, Louisburg's tradition was first started under hall of fame coach Larry Harding in the 1970s and 80s, who guided the Lady Cats to nine state

tournaments, including several top four finishes.



Sophomore Sophie McMullen jumps in the air with excitement as she gathers around teammates (from left) Madison Turner, Megan Lemke, Makenzie Kallevig, Lauren Dunn and Anna Dixon on Friday at the state tournament in Salina

It is hard to win state championships, especially if you are a public school like Louisburg.

Certain schools have advantages Louisburg can't compete against, or others just have the better team that year. This run of state tournaments is something the school and the community should be proud of because nothing is guaranteed.

Not many schools their size, public ones anyway, can match the success the Lady Cats have achieved in their program's history. Past and present Lady Cats should hold their heads high for everything they have accomplished.

It is all about handing the baton from one class to the next and this year's senior class did a great job of preparing the underclassmen for what they can expect.

All five seniors played vital roles on this year's team and meshed well with a great setter in sophomore Sophie McMullen, a fantastic hitter in freshman Anna Dixon and junior outside hitter Olivia Bradley, who played in a couple different spots for the Lady Cats and did them well.

"It was an easy transition," Anna Dixon said. "I was so happy to play with this group of seniors and I am going to miss them a lot next year. I felt pushed a lot to do better and those upperclassmen were a big reason I was able to improve this year."

It was Bradley who stepped in for Stambaugh after she injured her ankle toward the end of the season and moved to the middle hitter spot.

"Olivia did such a good job in my spot and maybe even better than I could have done," Stambaugh said. "I was just glad to end on a win because that is what our team deserves. We work together and we have worked too hard to end on a loss."

Louisburg ended its state tournament with a win Saturday for the first time in these five appearances and the emotions were bittersweet. It was especially hard for Dunn, who stepped onto the floor at the state tournament for the first time in 2012 as a freshman with a core of five seniors similar to her group this season. Since then, she has been named to two state all-tournament teams.

"The whole season has been so fun," Dunn said. "All the underclassmen and all the players have been so great. It is a great group of girls and I am going to miss being a Louisburg Wildcat.

"It is has been an awesome experience to be here four times. It is just sad that it has to end."

Lauren, Madison, Megan, Makenzie and Cate showed the underclassmen the blueprint for what it takes to have success

and now it is their job to add to it

“We have set the bar for the underclassmen for leadership and how we play the game,” Megan said. “I would say Louisburg volleyball has a good future.”

That it does.

Lady Cats take third at state tourney



The Louisburg girls volleyball team pose with the Class 4A-Division I third-place trophy Saturday in Salina. Pictured are (front row, from left) Cate Stambaugh, Lauren Dunn, Makenzie Kallevig, Madison Turner, Megan Lemke; (standing) assistant coach Mary Quinn, Olivia Bradley, Mikayla Quinn, Sophie McMullen, Ellie Katzer, Ava Littrell, Anna Dixon, Carson Buffington and coach Jessica Compliment.

SALINA – Lauren Dunn felt something different.

That says a lot for a person who has been on state tournament teams the last four years. Dunn has felt heartbreak, joy, nervousness and probably a little frustration.

She has been through a lot of good and bad times, but

following Saturday's third-place state finish, Dunn and the rest of her teammates had a little different emotion.

The Lady Cats were finally able to end their state tournament with a victory.

After two fourth-place finishes and a runner-up, the Lady Cats' 25-19 and 25-17 win over Tonganoxie in the third-place match of the Class 4A-Division I tournament at the Salina Bicentennial Center gave Dunn, and fellow seniors Madison Turner, Makenzie Kallevig, Megan Lemke and Cate Stambaugh, a chance to end their season the right way.

"That was something that I emphasized in the locker room is that this was going to be the year that we end on a win," Dunn said. "Getting second and all that was great, but getting to end on a win is one of the best feelings."



Lauren Dunn dives to the court for a dig during Friday's pool play action at the Class 4A-Division I state tournament in Salina.

It was a much-needed win for the Lady Cats, who experienced heartbreak in their two previous matches against the top two ranked teams in the state.

Louisburg found themselves in the semifinals against No. 2-ranked McPherson on Saturday, and despite getting out to an early lead in the first set, fell 25-21 and 25-17.

“McPherson is a good team and they were able to put up some good blocks against us and I think that just got in our heads a little bit and we couldn’t find a way to get around those,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “We just started playing more not to lose instead of playing to win. The momentum just stayed on McPherson’s side and we couldn’t break in.”

Then on Friday, the Lady Cats, who are ranked No. 3 in Class 4A, got a chance to go up against No. 1 Bishop Miege in the final match of pool play. Louisburg made Miege, the eventual state champion, work for everything.

Even though Louisburg fell 25-19, 17-25, 25-16, the Lady Cats were the only team to take a set from the Stags, who beat McPherson in two sets in the championship match.



Megan Lemke (left) and Olivia Bradley go up for a block Friday against Chanute

“We played our hearts out,” Kallevig said. “We wanted to get revenge on them from my sophomore year when we lost in title match. I am really proud of the way we played and I wouldn’t

change anything.”

Louisburg also earned honors following the state tournament as it had three players make the all-tournament team. Dunn, Turner and freshman Anna Dixon all earned spots on the team. It was the second time in her career that she was named to the squad.

The Lady Cats, who ended the year with a 31-12 record, made sure to come out strong against Tonganoxie as they took a 12-7 lead after three kills and an ace from Dixon. Kallevig then served four straight service points that included an ace from her, along with a kill from Dunn and a block from Turner.

Dixon and Turner then added two kills each to stretch out the lead to 20-11 and the Lady Cats never looked back in the first set.

The second set was much of the same went out to a 9-4 lead thanks to three kills from Turner, two kills from Dixon and an ace from Lemke. Ahead 19-15, Louisburg then closed out the match thanks to four kills from Dixon and another from sophomore Sophie McMullen.



Senior Madison Turner gets a stuff block

**against Chanute on
Friday at the Salina
Bicentennial Center.**

“It means a lot, especially with this being my first state tournament,” Dixon said of the third-place finish. “We definitely wanted to get back with Miego in that championship match, but it was good to end on a win.”

Louisburg had its sights set on the championship match and appeared at one point the Lady Cats were going to get there against McPherson. They found themselves down 11-6 early on, but the Lady Cats made a furious rally.

McMullen led the charge as she served five straight service points, including three aces to give Louisburg a 12-11 lead. The Lady Cats then went on another mini 4-0 run thanks to two tips and a kill from Dunn to give them an 18-13 lead.

All that momentum quickly went away as McPherson charged right back and went on an 11-3 run to end the set.

The first half of the second set, the two teams went back and forth and neither could pull away. McPherson had a 17-13 lead, but McMullen’s serving came up big again with two aces and Dixon added a pair of kills to tie it.

Unfortunately for the Lady Cats, McPherson scored the final eight points to take the set and the match.

“I think it was just a confidence issue,” Dunn said. “Some of us were just playing timid. Our players are so great that we just need to play with confidence. We just started tipping too much instead of just hitting the ball and that gave them more free balls instead of making them work for the points.”

After losing the first set against Bishop Miego, the Lady Cats put together some of their best volleyball of the tournament in the second set.

Lemke served up five consecutive points to put Louisburg up 9-7 after an ace of her own, along with a block, tip and a kill from Turner. Miege rallied to tie the match at 13-all, but two kills and an ace from Dixon and a kill from Dunn put the Lady Cats up 17-14.

Kallevig put on another serving show for the Lady Cats as she served five straight points and added an ace during that stretch. Turner then added a pair of kills and a block to close out the match.

“We were playing to win against Miege,” Compliment said. “They wanted that game and that set and played aggressive that whole time.”



(Clockwise from left) Megan Lemke, Sophie McMullen, Makezie Kallevig, Anna Dixon, Olivia Bradley and Lauren Dunn celebrate a big point against Bishop Miege.

In the third set, Miege went on a 7-2 run to take a 19-12 lead and the Lady Cats were unable to get any closer.

The Lady Cats also put together good performances to start pool play as they defeated Andover Central (25-19, 25-23) and Chanute (25-15 and 25-12).

Despite the up and down state tournament and some disappointment, the Lady Cats were happy with the way

everything turned out.

“It feels great to end on a win, especially with this being my senior season,” Turner said. “I didn’t want to end it on a loss. It would have been better to get into championship match against Miego and beat them so they didn’t win three times in a row, but it still feels good to get third.”

It was never easy for the Lady Cats as they competed in tough tournaments and played several bigger, state-ranked teams in September. Louisburg then had to play without one of its seniors, in Stambaugh, during the final stretch that included substate and state.

“It was a real fun season,” Lemke said. “Even with Cate going down, I don’t think that set us back too much because she was always there to support us and help us. I had a lot of fun, but sad it is over though.”

Four-Peat! Lady Cats cruise to state bid



Louisburg’s (from left) Cate Stambaugh, Megan Lemke, Lauren Dunn, Makenzie Kallevig, Madison Turner and Olivia Bradley hold up their substate championship trophy Saturday at Spring Hill High School. The Lady Cats defeated De Soto 2-0 to advance to their fourth consecutive state tournament.

SPRING HILL – As the ball hit the floor for the final point Saturday, the Louisburg High School volleyball team celebrated its fourth consecutive trip to the state tournament.

The Lady Cats took care of business in the substate championship game against De Soto at Spring Hill High School. Louisburg cruised to a 25-22 and 25-21 victory to complete its season-long dream of reaching the state tournament.

As far as celebrations go, this was a little more muted compared to the other three. It didn't mean the Lady Cats were any less excited.

“Honestly it just gets better each time,” senior Megan Lemke said. “You are always nervous going into it, but we seem to pull it out each time and there isn't a better feeling. I love it.”

The quick celebration was followed by a few hugs and several photo ops. However, even after just a few minutes of wrapping up substate, the Lady Cats were focused on a much bigger goal.

“I would think this is the first time they weren't as excited as in year's past,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “Yeah, they jumped around and screamed for a little bit, but you could tell they were ready to get going for state. They have been there before and state is what they have been looking forward to all season.”



Lauren Dunn goes up for a kill Saturday in the Lady Cats' first match against Spring Hill.

As for the games themselves, the Lady Cats (28-10) didn't encounter too many problems in their two matches on the day. Before defeating De Soto in two matches, Louisburg defeated Spring Hill 25-22 and 25-18 in the first round.

It did take a few minutes for Louisburg to get in the swing of things against the Broncos.

Spring Hill scored the first four points of the match and used that momentum to build a 21-17 lead. The Lady Cats seemed to flip a switch after that as they went on an 8-1 run to end the set.

During the run, the Lady Cats got three kills from senior Madison Turner, a kill from senior Lauren Dunn and an ace from senior Makenzie Kallevig to put their team back in good position.

"I think we all had some nerves that hadn't been worked out," Dunn said. "I thought we all stayed positive and I think that really helped. Before the tournament, we talked about positivity and I think that was a big factor for our success."

The nerves seemed to go away quickly as the Lady Cats were in control the rest of the way. Louisburg jumped out a big lead against the Broncos in the second to pull away for the easy win.



Louisburg's (from left) Anna Dixon, Megan Lemke, Lauren Dunn, Sophie McMullen and Makenzie Kallevig celebrate after scoring the final point of the substate championship match.

Turner and freshman Anna Dixon had big days at the net as Turner finished with a team-high 12 kills and Dixon added eight. Dunn also had seven kills to key the Lady Cat offense.

Sophomore setter Sophie McMullen also did a good job finding her hitters as she racked up 30 assists and also had two aces.

Against De Soto, the points were a little tougher to come by as it stayed with Louisburg point-for-point through much of the two sets.

With the first set tied at 9-all, Dixon came through with a kill, Dunn and junior Olivia Bradley each had a tip, Turner added a kill and Kallevig followed with an ace to make it a 14-11 advantage.

De Soto eventually rallied to take an 18-17 lead, but Dixon and Dunn came up with three kills to give Louisburg a 21-20 lead. The Lady Cats then went on a mini-run thanks to two kills and a block from Turner to seal the win.

“One thing I told them the night before is that there is no tomorrow for three of the teams,” Compliment said. “No one is going to back down from them and no one is going to make it easy. Spring Hill came out with a lot of fire and it kind of woke us up a little bit. With De Soto, we had a few dips, especially with some serving errors, but we can’t make those mistakes and hopefully we can get those fixed.”



Members of the team (front row, from left) are Cate Stambaugh, Madison Turner; (middle row) Megan Lemke, Lauren Dunn, Makenzie Kallevig; (back row) Anna Dixon, Sophie McMullen, Olivia Bradley, Ellie Katzer, Ava Littrell, Carson Buffington and Mikayla Quinn.

The second set was much like the first as, with the set tied at 7-all, two blocks and a kill from Dixon helped give Louisburg an 11-7 lead. De Soto wouldn't go away and eventually tied the match at 16.

From there, the Lady Cats took over.

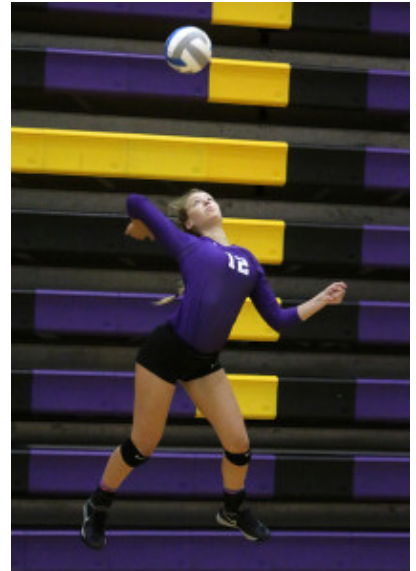
Turner served six straight service points, which included three aces, two blocks from Dixon and a tip from McMullen to pull away. Dunn then sent the ball to the De Soto back row on the final volley, and as it hit the floor, the celebration began.

"I thought we played great," Dixon said. "I thought our defense was a lot better and we played loose and had a lot of fun."

Dunn and Dixon led the Lady Cat attack at the net with seven kills each and Turner finished with five. Turner led Louisburg defensively at the net with six blocks and Dixon added four.

In the back row, Kallevig had a team-high 10 digs, while Dixon and Dunn added six each. McMullen had 22 assists in the victory, while Lemke finished with two aces.

Dixon will be the lone Lady Cat varsity player to make her first trip to the state tournament as the rest of the team will be looking to accomplish something special this weekend after finishing fourth at state a season ago.



Sophie McMullen rises for a serve Saturday during the substate tournament.

“Each time has been exciting, but for me, since I am not playing in college, this would have been my last time playing volleyball and I knew that I had something to work for and I wanted to play one more week,” Kallevig said. “It was a huge goal for us and I just played my heart out.”

Louisburg will begin its quest for a state title Friday when it travels to the Salina Bicentennial Center. The Lady Cats, the No. 2 seed, will open play against No. 7 Andover Central (22-19) at 8:30 a.m. At 10:30, the Lady Cats will play No. 6 Chanute (26-14) and will finish up pool play at 1:30 p.m. against No. 3 Bishop Miege (27-11).

The top two seeds in each pool will advance to the state semifinals at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

“Even though I have been out there before, I am still going to be nervous,” McMullen said. “I was nervous for this substate to be honest. I am just hoping for better than fourth at state and I hope that we can win it.”

State for Cate: Team rallies for injured teammate



Senior Cate Stambaugh (left) is helped to the court by teammate Megan Lemke as the rest of the seniors Lauren Dunn, Makenzie Kallevig and Madison Turner come out to receive their substate championship trophy Saturday at Spring Hill High School. Stambaugh suffered a season-ending injury at practice a week ago and the team has rallied around her.

SPRING HILL – With her ankle encased in a large, gray boot, Cate Stambaugh sat and watched Saturday as her Louisburg teammates celebrated their fourth consecutive substate volleyball championship.

It wasn't the easiest of moments for the Lady Cat senior.

For a few seconds, she thought about leaving her chair – boot and all – and running out with her team. Then she had second thoughts.

“I wish I could jump up and scream with the rest of the girls, but I just had to be loud in my sitting position,” Stambaugh said.

Stambaugh was put in a tough spot after she injured her ankle in practice a week ago and was told she is done for the season. The Lady Cat middle hitter was among the team leaders in blocks and played a big role in their success.

When she went down, the rest of the team was stunned.

“When Cate hurt her ankle, the first thing she said to us was that she wasn’t going to be able to play at state, and that was heartbreaking,” senior Lauren Dunn said.

Her injury also tugged on the heart strings of Lady Cat coach Jessica Compliment. Although she was concerned with how the team was going to alter the way they did things, her main focus was with her senior player.

“She has been at practice ever since she has gotten hurt,” Compliment said. “I told her that she is everywhere with us and that we aren’t doing anything without her. Her goal is that since she can’t do anything about it, is that she is just trying to stay positive. She has been helping out with practices, talking with the players and she is a big help.”

Even though she is not on the court, Stambaugh has made an impact on the team in just a week’s time and she is enjoying every minute of it.

“It is really exciting, because this whole week I have become a different part of the team,” Stambaugh said. “I am the eyes and trying to see what we can fix if something doesn’t look right. It is really exciting to see that I can help even though I was in a whole different element.”



Middle hitter Olivia Bradley tips the ball over the net during the substate championship match. Bradley is filling for Stambaugh at the middle spot.

In Stambaugh's absence, there have been a few other players who have had to take on different roles as well, including junior Olivia Bradley and senior Megan Lemke. For both players, the change was different, and a little familiar at the same time.

Bradley moved to Stambaugh's spot in the middle, a position she has played in club ball and at the junior varsity level a year ago.

"I was very nervous coming in because I had big shoes to fill coming in for Cate, but I did the best I could and hopefully everyone else thought so too," Bradley said. "I felt we stepped up a huge amount, especially with learning all the new rotations and how that was going to affect us. We just played the game."

Lemke, who played primarily on the back row for much of the year, also moved to the front row to replace Bradley as one of the team's outside hitters.

"I have always been a hitter throughout much of high school,

but this year we just focused on the back row, because that's what would be best for the team," Lemke said. "I would always practice swinging in practice just in case someone got hurt and unfortunately Cate did. I love hitting and it has been a lot of fun so far. So, it hasn't been a big change for me."

Freshman Anna Dixon has also had to adjust as well as she is being looked to contribute more on the blocking side of things, along with being one the team's top hitters.



Freshman Anna Dixon goes up to block a De Soto kill attempt Saturday during the substate championship match.

"They have asked me to step it up a bit on defense," Dixon said. "Cate was a great blocker and I have had to step it up a bit there. Plus I think I have gotten better on the back row as well because I have never had to play that before."

Now the Lady Cats look on to what they hope is a special week in Salina as they open the Class 4A, Division I state tournament Friday. Louisburg finished fourth a season ago and was runner-up in 2013.

"The state tournament is the most fun thing in my high school career," Stambaugh said. "I am just so excited to go back with all my best friends and make another run at it."

And Stambaugh will be right there with them, cheering them on.

LEAGUE CHAMPS: Louisburg wins third straight crown



Louisburg senior Madison Turner goes up for a kill during the Lady Cats' senior night match Tuesday against Ottawa. The Lady Cats won their third consecutive league crown with a 3-0 win over Ottawa, while also saying goodbye to their five seniors.

It all seemed like a formality when the Louisburg High School volleyball team took to its home floor for the final time this season.

The Lady Cats, who were unbeaten in Frontier League play, faced off with winless Ottawa on Tuesday to claim an undefeated league crown. There was no drama to be had – just a lot of celebrating.

Louisburg rolled Ottawa in the best-of-5 dual, 25-18, 25-15 and 25-15, to claim its third consecutive league crown and each time the Lady Cats have had a perfect record in league play.

Those three league titles came partially thanks to the five Lady Cats seniors who were also honored on senior night. Lauren Dunn, Cate Stambaugh, Madison Turner, Megan Lemke and Makenzie Kallevig all played their final home match.

Along with the three league championships, those seniors have been a part of some – or all – of the Lady Cats' three consecutive state tournament berths.

“It was an emotional game for all of us I think,” Kallevig said. “Whether it was the night before, before the game, during the game and then when that last serve came. Before the last set we all just kind of looked at each other and realized this was it. We just went and played our hearts out knowing this would be the last time we play on our home court and it was a great ending.”



Senior Lauren Dunn rises up to tip the ball over the net during Tuesday's senior night match against Ottawa.

However, it wasn't the storybook ending the Lady Cat players had hoped for as they watched one of their seniors go down in practice last week as Stambaugh, one of the team's middle

hitters, injured her ankle and is done for the season.

“For those seniors, this was their final game on their home floor and with substate coming up and not having Cate out there I think played with them a little bit emotionally,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “We will miss her blocking because she and Madison were leading the team in stuff blocks and she would come up with the kills when we needed them too.”

In Stambaugh’s absence, junior Olivia Bradley moved over to the middle spot, while Lemke played all-around as she will also serve as one of the team’s outside hitters, along with her play in the back row.

The position isn’t unfamiliar to either player as both have been put in that position at different points in their careers.

“Megan has been swinging all year in practice and I told her that if anyone went down that she was going to go in,” Compliment said. “She has been practicing in that spot and Olivia played in the middle last year so she is comfortable as well. We just did that to keep things simple and we will look at it again in practice to see if that is what we want to do.”

Despite the new lineup, the Lady Cats didn’t have much of a problem with Ottawa as they jumped out to big leads in each set.

Louisburg (26-10) jumped out to a 4-1 lead in the first on a pair of Turner kills, an ace from Dunn and a block from freshman Anna Dixon. Dixon then did some damage from behind the service line as she recorded three aces to give Louisburg an 11-6 advantage and the Lady Cats rolled from there.

In the second set, Dunn gave the Lady Cats more strong serving as she recorded five straight service points, and kills from Dixon and Turner put Louisburg up 7-2.

Dunn used the same formula in the third set as she served the Lady Cats to an 8-0 lead thanks to three aces and a kill from Turner and Dunn again.

Turner and Dixon provided a lot of offense at the net as they finished with 13 kills each and Dunn added nine in the win. Dunn also finished with team highs in aces (4) and digs (15).



Members of the Frontier League champion Lousiburg volleyball are (front row, from left) Ellie Katzer, Anna Dixon, Sophie McMullen, Ava Littrell, Mikayla Quinn; (back row) Olivia Bradley, Cate Stambaugh, Madison Turner, Makenzie Kallevig, Lauren Dunn, Megan Lemke and Carson Buffington.

Sophomore setter Sophie McMullen found her hitters with ease as she had 33 assists on the night and also had three aces. Defensively, Kallevig played well from libero spot with 13 digs and Lemke added 11.

At the end of the night, it was still a little surreal for those five seniors as they said farewell to their home gym. They did it going out on top, however.

“It was special because we got to spend our last moments

playing with our best friends,” Dunn said.

“It feels good because we played as a team this whole time,” Turner added. “So to go undefeated in league is definitely nice.”

Now for the Lady Cats, the real fun begins as they try to make their fourth consecutive state tournament Saturday during the substate tournament in Spring Hill.

Louisburg, who earned the No. 1 seed, will play No. 4 Spring Hill (14-22) at 2 p.m. at Spring Hill High School. If the Lady Cats advance, they will play the winner of No. 2 De Soto (24-12) and No. 3 Paola (19-16) at approximately 4 p.m. in the championship match.

However, whether the Lady Cats win or lose, the five seniors will always remember the good times.

“When we win it is the best feeling in the world and when we lose we all know it is going to be OK because we are all there for each other,” Lemke said. “It is pretty special.”

Opinion: Lady Cats need your support



Louisburg seniors (from left) Makenzie Kallevig, Cate

Stambaugh, Madison Turner, Lauren Dunn and Megan Lemke were honored Tuesday during senior night against Ottawa. The Lady Cats won the league title with a 3-0 win over the Cyclones.

Tuesday was already going to be an emotional evening for Cate Stambaugh.

The pageantry of senior night was enough to get her choked up just thinking about it. It was there where she, along her senior compadres, Madison Turner, Lauren Dunn, Makenzie Kallevig and Megan Lemke all said their goodbyes during the final home match of the season.

They all knew this day would come.

It didn't make it any easier.

There wasn't a dry eye between them. Their parents and younger teammates were crying as one-by-one they were recognized in front of their fans.

It was a gut-wrenching, yet happy experience. Following the ceremony, the Lady Cats made quick work of Ottawa to win their third consecutive league crown and each year they finished with an undefeated league record.

The run these five seniors have been on together has been one to remember. Several of the seniors have made trips to multiple state tournaments and have played on the biggest stage.

Having five seniors is a rarity for a lot of volleyball programs, and Louisburg is no exception. These Lady Cats have played big roles in some, or all, of the three consecutive state tournament berths.

Each of the last three seasons, Louisburg has left with a medal and came within a few points of winning the school's first state championship two years ago. The five Lady Cat seniors were prepared to make this season four in a row and ride off into the sunset

"It is very special to finish it with these four because we have been playing together since we knew how to play volleyball," Cate said. "I have never had a season where I didn't spend it with them."

Cate just didn't think it would end this way for her.

Instead of linking arm-in-arm with her parents during the senior night ceremony, Cate made her way onto the Lady Cats' home floor for the final time with the help of crutches. You see, just a few days earlier, she broke her ankle during a practice – ending her season.

The dreams of playing in one more state tournament with her four friends wasn't going to happen. The thought of not being out there with her teammates for that final home match was difficult to handle.

It had been a great year for Cate as she was among the team leaders in blocks from her middle hitter spot and had recorded big kills all season. Her improvement from last year to this year was great to see and you could tell she was playing with a lot of confidence.

Now, the Lady Cats will venture into their most important part of the season without her on the floor. Players will be asked to raise their game and move to different positions to fill her void.

It is a difficult situation, but one the Lady Cats can overcome. That doesn't mean they don't need any help.

Volleyball is not the most popular sport in these parts – at

least when it comes to spectators. Crowds at several of the Lady Cats' home matches have been limited to parents, relatives and a few students.

In recent weeks, the student section has gotten bigger in support of their team, but they could always use more – a lot more.

There is a saying that goes “You don't miss it until it is gone.” It is a phrase we have all heard at one point in our lives.

Louisburg has been fortunate that it has a volleyball program that has been ranked among the best in the state the last five or six years. They are on a run a lot of schools only dream about.

I will also tell you that this streak of success will not last forever and I think a lot of us will forget just how good the Lady Cats actually are. Sometimes we just take it for granted.

Time is precious with everyone and a lot of us have a lot going on in our lives, but if you have a few hours to give to these girls it would mean the world to them. Come out, cheer them on and lift them up because they are a little down right now.

I implore you all to make your way to Spring Hill High School at 2 p.m. Saturday and make some noise. Whether you are a student at LHS, a graduate, teacher, parent or just a casual fan, come out and see what these girls are all about.

Come and watch them before they are gone.

Louisburg outlasts Olathe North in dual



Louisburg sophomore Sophie McMullen stretches out for a tip over an Olathe North blocker during the Lady Cats' home match Thursday. The Lady Cats defeated Olathe North 3-2 to improve their record to 25-10 on the season.

Having their backs against the wall was nothing new for the Louisburg volleyball team.

Louisburg features a veteran lineup that has played a lot of matches and has been in a lot of tight spots. Down a set in the deciding fifth set Thursday against Olathe North, the Lady Cats stared a loss right in the face on three different occasions.

They never blinked.

The Lady Cats rallied to beat the Eagles 25-15, 21-25, 23-25, 25-17 and 21-19 to complete the comeback in what was an up and down match. Olathe North had match point three times in that fifth set, but the Lady Cats always had an answer.

"For them to stay focused and stay aggressive was really good to see," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "We talked all week about not making two mistakes in a row. If you make a mistake, you need to come back and get the sideout or the kill

and I really thought helped us in that last set.

“There is a lot of experience between the girls where they have been in a lot of close matches so they know when to make the play.”



Senior Cate Stambaugh sends a kill over the net Thursday during the Lady Cats home match against Olathe North.

It was a crazy final few points in the fifth set.

Louisburg found itself down 11-8 in the first-to-15 set. The Lady Cats rallied to tie it up after a tip from Sophie McMullen and a kill from Madison Turner.

The match, which had to be won by two, was tied eight more times. Olathe North served for match point up 15-14, 18-17 and 19-18, but each time the Lady Cats had an answer thanks to kills from Anna Dixon and Lauren Dunn.

Two sideouts gave Louisburg a 20-19 lead and the Lady Cats put it away thanks to a block from Turner.

It was a relief for the Lady Cats who started out with a

convincing first set win, only to see Olathe North bounce back and win the next two. Louisburg had a 15-9 advantage in the second set and appeared to have a firm hold on the match, but it watched the Eagles go on a 16-6 run to steal the set.

“We are the kind of team sometimes where we come out strong and then we can get a little overconfident,” senior libero Makenzie Kallevig said. “We know we can bounce back together. We work together, play our hearts out and we know what needs to be done.”

The Lady Cats (25-10) got big performances at the net from a senior and a freshman.

Turner, a senior middle blocker, had a big night defensively as she had a team-high 17 blocks, including 10 solo blocks. Turner was also second on the team with 11 kills.

Dixon, a freshman, was the go-to-player at the net as she finished with a team-high 17 kills. McMullen, the sophomore setter, moved the ball around and recorded 42 assists. She also had a strong serving night as she led the team with five aces to go along with 17 digs.

Defensively, Dunn led the Lady Cats in the back row. The Louisburg senior came away with 22 digs, but also had 11 kills for her work on the front row. Kallevig and fellow senior Megan Lemke added 16 and 15 digs, respectively.

Senior Cate Stambaugh also recorded nine kills and five blocks in the winning effort.

Louisburg will try and wrap up its undefeated league crown tonight when it hosts Ottawa on senior night. The Lady Cats will honor their five seniors; Dunn, Turner, Stambaugh, Kallevig and Lemke before the match, which is scheduled to begin at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Louisburg takes care of business at Eudora

Louisburg hasn't been tested much when it comes to its Frontier League opponents and that didn't change on Oct. 13 when it traveled to Eudora.

The Lady Cats kept their undefeated league record alive with a 25-20, 25-13 and 25-23 victory over the Cardinals.

Sophomore setter Sophie McMullen provided with a big spark all over the floor. She rattled off a season-high 10 aces in the three-set match and gave the Cardinals fits.

McMullen also ran the offense well with 32 assists to go along with five blocks and four kills.

Louisburg also got big performances from Anna Dixon and Madison Turner at the net. Dixon led the Lady Cats with 12 kills and Turner added 11 in the win. Turner and fellow senior Cate Stambaugh each finished with six blocks to lead their squad.

Seniors Lauren Dunn and Makenzie Kallevig were strong defensively with 17 and 15 digs, respectively and Dunn also added eight kills in the win.

"We played OK in Eudora," coach Jessica Compliment said. "They controlled the tempo for a little bit in the third set where they scored four or five points in a row, but for the most part I thought we played pretty well."

Lady Cats remain perfect in

League



Louisburg senior Megan Lemke dives to the floor for a dig during the Lady Cats' home match against Spring Hill on Tuesday. Lemke and the Lady Cats defeated the Broncos 3-0 to move to 4-0 in league play.

The Louisburg High School volleyball team is one step closer to capturing its undefeated Frontier League title following its match Tuesday against Spring Hill.

The Lady Cats made quick work of the Broncos inside the LHS gymnasium with a 25-12, 25-15 and 25-22 victory. Louisburg now has a record of 23-10 and is 4-0 in league play, but even though it is later in the season, the Lady Cats decided to change some things up.

Louisburg altered its rotation a little bit starting senior Megan Lemke in the back row with libero Makenzie Kallevig and Anna Dixon and having Madison Turner, setter Sophie McMullen and Lauren Dunn start up front.

"We flipped flopped the middles around, so we just moved Madison and Cate (Stambaugh) around in the lineup and we just rotated the offense," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "I just wanted to look at different options for blocking and I wanted to try and tighten up some of our rotations. We started with Sophie, Lauren and Madison in the front row and had more

defensive players in the back row to get things going.”

The new rotation seemed to work, especially early on as the Lady Cats opened with big leads at the beginning of the first two sets.

They got those leads thanks to their serving as Turner, Lemke and Dunn didn't make a serving error, while Turner racked up 16 service points and Lemke added 10. Turner and Dixon added three aces in the win.



Libero Makenzie Kallevig passes the ball off to a teammate Tuesday against Spring Hill.

“Megan has been pretty consistent all year long,” Compliment said. “She doesn't necessarily have the most aces, but she is the most consistent and her serves are always the ones that get teams out of their offense. She did a really nice job as did Madison. I wanted to get Madison going early and get that tempo going and we were able to do that.”

Turner was also active on the front row as she and Stambaugh went on the offensive with 11 kills each. Dixon and Dunn also

added seven and six kills, respectively, in the win. McMullen also moved the ball around well with 34 assists

Defensively, Stambaugh and Dixon played well at the net. Stambaugh led Louisburg with seven blocks and Dixon came up with six.

Kallevig led the team with 17 digs out of the back row while Dunn and Dixon added 13 and 12 digs, respectively.

“Our thing was just to push the tempo and play our game and for a majority of the night that is what we did,” Compliment said. “We also tried a new lineup out and I think that really helped out. There were some teaching moments in there too.”

Lady Cats put up a fight against Olathe Northwest

Louisburg went up against the toughest team the Lady Cats will face all season last Thursday when they hosted Olathe Northwest.

Northwest, which is currently the No. 1 team in Class 6A, currently has a record of 25-1 and knocked off nationally-ranked St. James Academy earlier in the season. To make matters worse, Northwest had only lost five sets all season in those 26 matches.

The Lady Cats didn't back down from the Ravens, in fact, the Lady Cats are responsible from one of those five set defeats.

Although Louisburg fell 25-14, 23-25, 25-17 and 25-22, the Lady Cats showed a lot of fight and it was exactly what their coach was looking for.

“Stealing a set from Olathe Northwest was great to see,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “We didn't play well in that first set, but for them to come back against a great team like that was great to see. They fought hard in the third

and fourth sets, but they were able to rally back when they got down and didn't get frustrated."

Louisburg got down early in the first set as Northwest jumped out to an 18-6 lead. The Lady Cats made a mini-run as they got three blocks from Madison Turner and an ace from Anna Dixon to cut the lead to 18-11, but it was as close as they would get.

The second set was completely different.

The Lady Cats got out to a 10-7 lead after back-to-back aces from Megan Lemke and a kill from Lauren Dunn. Northwest battled back to tie the set at 19-all, but Louisburg went on a 4-1 run to take a 23-20 advantage after a kill from Cate Stambaugh and an ace from Makenzie Kallevig. Dixon and Turner followed with kills to secure the set win.

"In that second set, they didn't come out as intimidated or nervous and that is what happened in that first set," Compliment said. "They let Northwest's serving mentally control what they were doing and that second set they came out with more confidence. We got a couple big plays at the beginning, which is always key for us and the girls played with a higher energy level."

Setter Sophie McMullen helped guide the Louisburg offense as she finished with 19 assists and also led the team with three aces, along with Lemke. Dixon and Kallevig each added two aces of their own.

Turner was strong at the net with a team-high seven kills and seven blocks, while Dunn was next with six kills. Defensively, Kallevig and Lemke finished with 14 and 11 digs, respectively, out of the back row.

Louisburg returns to action Tuesday when it travels to Eudora for another Frontier League dual.

Lady Cats survive test at Paola



Louisburg senior Lauren Dunn sends a kill over the outstretched arms of a Paola blocker during Tuesday's road contest in Paola. Louisburg defeated Paola 3-2 in the best of five sets and had to rally from 2-1 down to win.

PAOLA – Madison Turner wasn't about to give in and neither were the rest of her Louisburg volleyball teammates.

The Lady Cats found themselves on the verge of their first Frontier League defeat, and to make matters worse, it was against rival Paola on Tuesday during the Panthers' senior night. In the final two sets of the night, Louisburg showed why it is the favorite to win the league.

Down after three sets, the Lady Cats rallied to defeat Paola 25-23, 22-25, 23-25, 25-14 and 17-15 to get their third league victory of the season.

Louisburg ran away with the fourth set, and in a back-and-forth fifth set, Turner's play at the net was the difference as she provided pivotal kills and blocks to pull it out. The

Louisburg senior middle hitter finished with 20 kills and 20 blocks on the night.

“It was really nice to get the win,” Turner said. “We started playing together more at the end. We started out slow, but we were able to put it together. We just weren’t talking as much as we needed to and we weren’t playing together in the beginning, but I was glad to see us finish it out.”

The deciding fifth set encompassed the entire match as it was back-and-forth that provided a lot of drama. The Lady Cats jumped out to an 8-3 lead after a kill, tip and an ace from Turner, while fellow middle blocker Cate Stambaugh also had a kill and block.

Paola roared back and went on a 9-2 run and eventually took a 12-10 lead in the first-to-15 set. Freshman Anna Dixon came through to tie the match on back-to-back kills, while Turner added a kill and a block to give Louisburg a 14-13 advantage.



Louisburg’s Madison Turner (left) and Olivia Bradley celebrate a big point Tuesday in Paola.

Junior Olivia Bradley and Turner teamed for several blocks on

a long volley that was also key to giving Louisburg the lead.

The Panthers didn't fold as they recorded back-to-back points to eventually take a 15-14 lead. One more point and Paola would steal the match, but Turner came up with a kill to tie it at 15-all, while senior Lauren Dunn and Stambaugh followed with a kill and a block, respectively, to seal the win.

"I was glad to see that the team didn't give up, and they handled the pressure well," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "Paola puts together a great crowd and a great student section every time we go there to play. The team never let the crowd or the energy of the Paola team intimidate them which I was pleased to see. Paola has been the first team to really push us and test our limits. We needed that to help us see where we are as a team and how we can play under pressure."

Louisburg (22-9) got big performances from several other players along with Turner's 20-20 output. Stambaugh led Louisburg with 21 blocks and finished with 12 kills, while setter Sophie McMullen led the attack with 49 assists. McMullen also shined on defense as she finished second on the team with 14 digs and had 10 blocks.

Dunn and Dixon played well at the net with 12 kills on the night. Dixon also finished with three aces and had 11 digs.

Senior libero Makenzie Kallevig led the Lady Cat back row with 25 digs and fellow senior Megan Lemke added 12.

"Madison had a big night at the net, and she definitely pulled through with some big plays that either helped stop Paola's momentum or helped us pick up our momentum," Compliment said. "Anna had a few big hits as well. Overall, each player made some key plays when we needed them. Olivia Bradley had a few big blocks right at the end that helped us maintain our energy and momentum."

The match started out just like it ended. The two teams traded

leads throughout the first set and Paola held a 23-22 late. However, Turner responded with two kills and Dunn added another to give the Lady Cats a good start.

In the second set, it was Louisburg that had the late 21-18 advantage, but Paola went on a 7-1 run to even the match. The Panthers held the lead through much of the third set and held on for the win despite two kills from Turner and another from Dunn to tie it at 23-all.

The Lady Cats didn't hold anything back in the fourth set. Louisburg went on a 7-1 run to take a 17-8 lead that it wouldn't give up thanks to six straight service points from Kallevig, including an ace.

"I was happy to see the team pull out with the win," Compliment said. "Paola came to play, and they didn't let up all evening. We hadn't been placed in that situation before when we had been down a few sets and had to battle back. I was very glad we didn't completely shut down but found the guts to continue to battle and hold on to the win.

"Overall, we could have played better. We made a few too many mental and communication errors that need to be addressed. We also seemed to have a lack of energy from time to time."