

Dunn, Turner help Kansas to all-star victory



Lauren Dunn (left) and Madison Turner (right) pose for a picture with Louisburg High School coach Jessica Compliment following the GKCVCVA Mo-Kan All-Star match on Nov. 15 at Avila University. Dunn and Turner helped Kansas to a 3-0 victory. Both players, along with LHS freshman Anna Dixon, also earned KVA all-state honors.

Photos courtesy of Amy Turner

Lauren Dunn and Madison Turner might have walked off the volleyball court together for the final time as members of the Louisburg volleyball team back in late October, but they weren't done teaming up just yet.

Dunn and Turner were selected to participate in the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Mo-Kan All-Star Match on Nov. 15 at Avila University. The two players joined with several other Kansas City area all-stars to compete in the small-class match.

The Louisburg duo did their part in helping Kansas to a 25-13, 25-16 and 25-17 victory over Missouri to avenge a loss from a year ago, when then-Louisburg seniors Bailey Dvorak and Sydney Dixon fell just short in their attempt.

“It was bittersweet,” Dunn said. “In the very last set of the game, I turned toward Madison and I was like ‘Last time on the same side of the net.’ So it was awesome to have one more game with her.”

Turner felt the same way.

“Lauren and I have been playing volleyball together since the third grade, either on a rec team or through CYO (Catholic Youth Organization), so knowing that the all-star game was the last time we would be playing together was definitely bittersweet.”



Madison Turner (left) and Lauren Dunn team up for a block during the Nov. 15 all-star match at Avila University.

Each player scored some big points during the match and both players left the court the same way they did during the high school season – with a win.

“It was really fun to be on the all-star team and to play with all the girls,” Turner said “I have played against them all during the high school season and four or five of the girls I have played with on the same club team or against during club season, so it was really nice to be on the same side of the

net as a team.

"It was a really fun experience. Everyone selected to be on the team are really good players and all really nice girls and I am glad that I had the opportunity to play with them all. And it's always fun to win."

Being selected as an all-star wasn't the only honor to come their way in recent weeks.

The Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association announced the all-state teams and both players received honors, along with Louisburg teammate Anna Dixon.

Turner was named to the Class 4A Division I all-state first team for her role as the Lady Cats' middle blocker. She led the Lady Cats in both kills (327) and blocks (266) and she also finished with 37 aces.

"I was very honored to be selected to be on the all-state first team," Turner said. "I feel that I had a really good senior season and it was really nice to be recognized for all my hard work."

Dunn garnered second team honors as she played all six rotations for Louisburg. She was second on the team in digs (289), third in kills (281) and third in aces (39).

"I was pretty excited to get the honor but I was proud that we had three girls from our team on it as well," Dunn said. "It was a great way to cap off the season."

As for Dixon, she was named to the honorable mention team as the Louisburg freshman had a great first year for the Lady Cats. Dixon was second on the team in kills (304), aces (59) and third in digs (251) as she played all six rotations as well.

Turner and Dunn are both moving on to play in the college ranks. Turner signed to play at Arkansas State, while Dunn

inked with the Pittsburg State volleyball program.

Turner signs with Arkansas State



Louisburg High School senior Madison Turner signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Arkansas State on Wednesday at Louisburg High School. Sitting next to Madison are her parents Amy and Brad Turner. Standing is Louisburg High School coach Jessica Compliment.

It isn't hard to spot Madison Turner on the volleyball court.

Turner, who stands at 6 feet, 4 inches, can usually be found in the middle of all the action at the net. Whether it was with blocks or kills, Turner turned a lot of heads and college coaches seemed to take notice.

The Louisburg High School senior pulled in a lot of college offers and took a dozen visits, but when it came down to it, Turner's college choice was an easy one to make.

On Wednesday, Turner signed her letter of intent to play for

Arkansas State University, a Division I program in Jonesboro, Ark. Her dream finally became a reality.

"It is very exciting," Turner said. "I knew I always wanted to play Division I and it has been my goal for a long time."

It was a goal that took a lot of hard work in the weight room and countless matches on the floor, whether it was in high school or club volleyball.

"I am just really excited for her and to see what she can do in her four years there," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "Madison has had to deal with some injuries from time to time that has prevented her from coming to the summer weights program, but when she could come she would and work hard. I am very excited she found a school that she really likes."

Turner joins an Arkansas State program that is on the rise. The Red Wolves recently won the regular season Sun Belt Conference championship and have nearly had a perfect season.

Arkansas State is 25-1 on the season and finished with a 16-0 record in the conference. The Red Wolves' lone loss so far was to Missouri in early September and have since rattled off 21 wins in a row.

Red Wolves coach David Rehr is excited to see what Turner can bring to their program.

"Madison is already an excellent blocking middle and her offensive game profiles to our style of play," Rehr said in a statement. "She's got great size and is a good athlete too so I'm excited on getting her on campus next season and watching her compete. I expect her offensive game to just get better and better once she gets here."

Although it was an exhaustive process at times that brought along plenty of offers, Turner's decision wasn't a difficult one as she fell in love with the program during her visit last

May.

"It was really easy to choose Arkansas State because I knew I wanted to attend there after I visited," Turner said. "I had visited about a dozen other colleges and had other offers, but Arkansas State just felt right. I really liked it there. The coaches are amazing, and I really liked the campus and everything about their volleyball program."

Turner had a big season for the Lady Cat program as she garnered a first team all-Frontier League selection as she helped Louisburg to its third straight undefeated league crown and a third-place finish at the state tournament. She was also on three state tournament teams during her career, including a second-place finish as a sophomore.

Serving as the team's middle hitter this season, Turner led the Lady Cats with 327 kills and also had a team-high 266 blocks to go along with 37 aces.

"Playing Louisburg volleyball has been really fun, especially my senior season because I got to play with all my close friends which was great," Turner said. "My high school career ended with a win at state which was how I wanted to end it. It was great going to state all those years."

As for her future, Turner knows the jump from high school to Division I volleyball is going to be a big one, but she is looking forward to the challenge.

"The coaches said they wanted to redshirt me the first year because they want me to get stronger before I get out there and play," Turner said. "I think it would be beneficial because it will give me a chance to get better and stronger."

Madison is the daughter of Brad and Amy Turner and is planning on entering the medical field.

Dunn inks with Pittsburg State



Louisburg High School senior Lauren Dunn signed her letter of intent Wednesday to play volleyball at Pittsburg State University. Sitting next to Lauren are her parents Don and Janie Dunn. Standing is Louisburg High School volleyball coach Jessica Compliment.

When Lauren Dunn started thinking about where she wanted to play college volleyball, there was really only one school that stood out among the rest.

As it turns out, it is only about 80 miles down the road.

Dunn's top choice became a reality Wednesday when she signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Pittsburg State University.

"It was kind of a family thing for me," Dunn said. "A lot of my family has gone there and I have always liked the school and the program.

"I ended up deciding last summer and the coaches and seniors that were there when I took my visit really welcomed me in. I

got a chance to meet the freshmen that are playing there now and they are all a really nice group of girls. It is a lot of the same type of friendships there that I saw on our Louisburg team.”

Dunn, a senior, has had quite the career for the Louisburg High School volleyball program. She has participated in state tournaments all four years and has placed each time out.

As a sophomore, she helped the Lady Cats to a runner-up finish at the Class 4A-Division I state tournament. Louisburg also finished third place this past season and fourth the other two years.

It is those state tournament appearances that she hopes can propel her to a big career with the Gorillas.

“It has prepared me quite a bit,” Dunn said. “We have been to state the last four years so that has really helped with the experience of playing high, intense volleyball.”

For much of her Lady Cat career, she has played all-around the court and has thrived in the different spots.

Dunn, who was a first-team all-Frontier League player this past season, was among the team leaders in several different categories. She was second on the team with 389 digs, third in kills with 281 and third with 39 aces.

“The coaches have told me that they see me playing six rotations all the way around,” Dunn said. “I am just hoping that I can work hard enough to earn that six rotation spot when I get down there. There are seven freshmen playing down there now and there are five of us in this incoming class.”

The process wasn’t too difficult for Dunn who always had Pitt State in the front of the line and now she will get the opportunity to live out her dream.

“Lauren has always been 100 percent Pitt State,” Louisburg

coach Jessica Compliment said. "I am so glad to see that she got what she wanted because that is what she has been working so hard for. I am happy to see what the next four years brings for them."

Next fall Dunn will take the floor for the Division II Gorillas in the MIAA Conference. Along the way she will run into a couple familiar faces. She will play against former teammates Sydney Dixon (Fort Hays State) and Bailey Dvorak (Lindenwood) next season as both have completed their freshman seasons with their respective schools.

"I talked to them a little bit, but they have been pretty busy with their seasons," Dunn said. "It will be different seeing them on the other side of the net because we played together for three years. I think it will be a lot of fun, but it will be different for sure."

Pitt State is in the rebuilding process this season with seven freshmen this season and even more new players coming in for next year. It will be a lot of competition for Dunn to go against, but she is looking forward to the challenge.

"It is really exciting," Dunn said. "I hope that I end up playing freshman year down there, but if not, I still think it is going to be a great experience for me. I am going to be learning from some of the best players down there."

Lauren is the daughter of Don and Janie Dunn and she is planning on majoring in nursing or physical therapy.

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. Miego 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 Miego," 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 Miego.

In the third set, Miego 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.

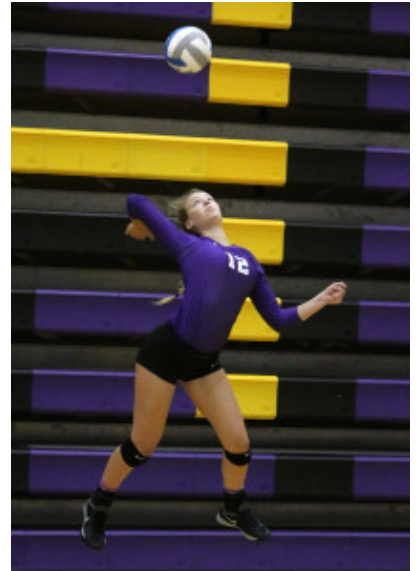
Turner served six straight service points, which included three aces, two blocks from Dixon and a tip from McMullen to pull away. Dunn then sent the ball to the De Soto back row on the final volley, and as it hit the floor, the celebration began.

"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.