

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."

Lady Cats finish strong at home tourney



Louisburg's Cate Stambaugh (left) and Ellie Katzer team up for a block during the Lady Cats' third-place match with Basehor-Linwood on Saturday in the Louisburg Invitational. The Lady Cats finished third overall.

The Louisburg volleyball team was used to playing in the championship match of its home tournament – the Louisburg Invitational – so it felt a little different for the Lady Cats to be playing on a different court for a different prize.

Louisburg didn't let struggles from the Saturday tournament bring them down as it made sure it ended on a positive note.

After losing 2-0 to Shawnee Mission East in the semifinals, the Lady Cats faced off with Basehor-Linwood for third place. Despite losing the first set, the Lady Cats rallied for a 23-25, 25-21 and 25-16 victory to secure their third-place finish.

Although the Lady Cats (21-9) had their ups and downs on the day, Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment was happy to see her team finish well, but knows there is still a lot to improve upon for the rest of the season.

"We are familiar with them," Compliment said of Basehor. "The girls wanted to end the day on a win and end on a high note. I think that was really nice to see."

"We just need to find that confidence with everyone from time

to time. It just a matter of coming together as a team and finding that confidence on every single play. We still second guess on defense on who is going to go get it, but it still a matter of confidence and just going after every single ball. They are a good group that works hard and I know they want it."

Louisburg opened pool play with a 25-20 and 25-10 victory over Leavenworth and went three sets with Fort Scott in its next match, 21-25, 25-23 and 25-18.



Sophomore Sophie McMullen sets up teammate Madison Turner for a kill Saturday during the Louisburg Invitational.

The Lady Cats then went up against Class 6A's Olathe South in the final match of pool play, and despite a good start, fell 25-23, 10-25 and 20-25.

"We had a slow start to our day," Compliment said. "It has been a busy week with homecoming, then last night with the dance, you could tell they were tired. They weren't mentally and physically here and ready to play. We were slow to come out against Leavenworth and slow to come out against Fort

Scott.

"We could not find our rhythm against Olathe South. They served really, really well and we could not get a serve or a pass. That is about being more mentally tough, mentally sound and learning to let a bad play roll off our shoulders and move on. We let too many balls go by us, and with a team like them, they take advantage of it. We came out with a little more energy in the third set, we just weren't hitting consistently."

Louisburg was still able to advance to the championship bracket, where the reward was the opportunity to play Shawnee Mission East, the No. 2 team in Class 6A, in the semifinals. East had already beaten Louisburg easily in the Lansing Invitational earlier in the year, but the Lady Cats put on a better showing this time around in the 22-25 and 15-25 loss.

The Lady Cats started out sluggish in their third-place match to Basehor-Linwood and it didn't get any better as senior Lauren Dunn left the game in the first set with an injury.

Junior Ellie Katzer filled in for Dunn for the rest of the first set and played the entire second set before Dunn entered in the third.

"She is going to be ok," Compliment said of Dunn. "I just wanted to keep her out and make sure she got her legs back underneath her before I put her back in. Plus, it gave Ellie a chance to get out there and play and get some touches. She hasn't spent a whole lot of time on the court with the varsity players and she did a nice job to step in."

It didn't look good for the Lady Cats as they trailed 14-10 in that second set, but freshman Anna Dixon responded with three straight aces to cut into the lead. Senior Megan Lemke eventually tied it up at 17-all with another ace.

Senior Cate Stambaugh responded with a kill that led to a 7-3

run and it ended with a tip from senior Madison Turner to keep the match alive.

In the third set, the Lady Cats got off to a good start and never looked back. Louisburg took a 12-8 lead after three straight kills from Turner.

Back-to-back kills from Dixon, an ace from Dunn and a block from Sophie McMullen widened the lead to 18-12 and Basehor-Linwood couldn't get any closer.

"When we see the bigger 5A and 6A schools, we tend to shut down a little quicker and we can't bounce back," Compliment said. "When we play other 4A schools, we have that mental fortitude to bounce back and win. They wanted to win and I was happy to see how they held it together on the court."

Turner had a big day at the net for Louisburg as she racked up a team-high 49 kills to go along with 33 blocks. Dixon was second on the team with 37 kills and had a team-high five aces. Stambaugh led the Lady Cats with 36 blocks on the day and also had 24 kills.

McMullen, the team's setter, ran the offense well with 122 assists in the five matches and also had three aces and 39 digs. Libero Makenzie Kallevig had a team-high in digs with 63 and added three aces. Dunn added 48 digs from the back row, had 30 kills at the net and two aces. Lemke also finished with three aces.

Louisburg downs Baldwin

Louisburg competed in its first Frontier League road match of the season on Sept. 22 when it traveled to Baldwin.

The Lady Cats didn't have much of a problem as they cruised to a 25-18, 25-14 and 25-10 win over the Bulldogs.

Madison Turner led Louisburg at the net with 10 kills and also had three blocks. Cate Stambaugh had a team-high 11 blocks to go along with six kills.

Lauren Dunn played well all over the court as she finished with nine kills and also had a team-high 11 digs in the back row. Setter Sophie McMullen countered with 27 assists, nine digs and four blocks.

Senior libero Makenzie Kallevig posted a team-high three aces and also had eight digs. Anna Dixon finished with eight digs and six kills, while Olivia Bradley added four kills and three blocks.

Lady Cats seventh at Hayden Invite



Louisburg senior Lauren Dunn sends a kill over the net during a match earlier this season. The Lady Cats traveled to the Topeka Hayden Invitational on Saturday and finished seventh overall with a 1-4 record.

TOPEKA – The Topeka Hayden Invitational featured seven state

ranked teams in three classifications, so the Louisburg volleyball team knew it was going to be a tough road Saturday.

The Lady Cats had their hands full, got off to a bad start and couldn't recover as they finished with a 1-4 record on the day. Louisburg did finish the tournament on a positive note as it defeated Bishop Carroll 25-18 and 25-9 in the seventh-place match.

It was a revenge match of sorts as it was Bishop Carroll, the No. 7 team in Class 5A, that handed the Lady Cats their first loss of the day. After Louisburg won the first set 25-23, Carroll responded with 25-19 and 25-15 victories in the first match of pool play.

Louisburg (17-7) got strong performances from seniors Madison Turner and Lauren Dunn in that first match. Turner led the way with a team-high 12 kills to go along with six blocks.

Dunn finished with eight kills, but also had a team-best 14 digs on defense. Sophomore setter Sophie McMullen added 27 assists in the three-set match.

Next up in pool play for the Lady Cats was Olathe East, the No. 2 ranked team in Class 6A. It was a tough battle, but Louisburg came up short in the 25-17 and 25-21 loss.

Freshman Anna Dixon led the Louisburg attack with six kills and an ace. Turner had a team-high 10 blocks on defense and fellow senior Cate Stambaugh added eight in the loss.

It didn't get any easier as Louisburg squared off with host Topeka Hayden, which also happens to be the No. 1 team in Class 4A-Division I. The Lady Cats, which are ranked No. 4, couldn't get the momentum it needed in the 25-20 and 25-20 setback.

Dunn led the Lady Cats with seven kills and Dixon added six, while senior Megan Lemke finished with two aces. Turner added

a team-best nine blocks and senior libero Makenzie Kallevig had eight digs in the back row. McMullen also had 17 assists to lead the Lady Cat offense to go along with five blocks.

Louisburg finished up pool play against the No. 10 team in Class 6A, Manhattan. The Lady Cats wrapped up pool play winless in the 25-22 and 25-17 defeat.

Turner and Dixon finished with nine and seven kills, respectively, to lead the Lady Cat offense and McMullen added 21 assists. Defensively, Kallevig racked up a team-high 16 digs and Dunn finished with 10. Stambaugh also had nine blocks to help the Louisburg defense.

After all the losing, the Lady Cats took their aggression out on Carroll in the seventh-place match to win in two sets.

Turner and Stambaugh had a strong match at the net from their middle hitter positions with eight and six kills, respectively. Dunn added a team-high four aces and Kallevig recorded three.

Kallevig also came up big again defensively with 14 digs. McMullen moved the ball well from the setter spot with 18 assists.

The Lady Cats will try and rebound as they host the Louisburg Invitational on Saturday. Pool play is set to begin at 8 a.m. Teams scheduled to attend are Basehor-Linwood, Fort Scott, Leavenworth, Olathe North, Olathe South, Shawnee Mission East and Turner.

Lady Cats sweep quad at Prairie View

Louisburg didn't have much of a problem Thursday when it traveled to Prairie View High School for a quadrangular with Osawatomie and Fort Scott.

The Lady Cats won all three matches in two sets and didn't get much of an opposition.

Louisburg defeated Fort Scott 26-24 and 25-15 behind 10 kills from Lauren Dunn and six kills each from Cate Stambaugh, Madison Turner and Anna Dixon. Stambaugh also had a big match at the net with 10 blocks.

Setter Sophie McMullen handed out 22 assists, while three Lady Cats posted double-digit numbers in digs. Dixon led the way with 14, while Dunn and McMullen added 11 and 10, respectively.

It was much of the same against Osawatomie as the Lady Cats rolled to a 25-13 and 25-13 win. Dixon, Dunn and Turner had five kills each, while Dixon had three aces to lead the Louisburg offense. McMullen also added 18 assists.

Against Prairie View, Louisburg took care of business against the home team with a 25-15 and 25-9 victory. The Lady Cats served well as they racked up 11 aces in the two sets, with Dixon and Turner recording four each.

LHS volleyball wins league opener



Louisburg sophomore Sophie McMullen sets up a teammate at the

net during the Lady Cats' league opener Tuesday against De Soto at home. Louisburg defeated De Soto in three sets.

The Louisburg High School volleyball team showed a couple things during Tuesday's league home opener.

One, the Lady Cats are really good.

And two, the other six teams in the Frontier League are going to have their hands full.

Louisburg competed in its first league dual of the season against De Soto, and other than and up and down first set, it didn't have much of a problem. The Lady Cats defeated De Soto 28-26, 25-19 and 25-18.

"We are not playing our best ball right now, which is fine, because we want to be playing our best ball at the end of the season," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "That is still something we have to work on and get better at. Overall, I thought we did a pretty decent job. The good thing about this group is that they play really well together and they feed off each other."

It is that chemistry that helped the Lady Cats, which are ranked No. 4 in Class 4A-Division I, get through a back and forth first set.

Louisburg built a small 8-5 advantage, but De Soto kept battling and eventually took a 15-4 lead midway through the set. After a kill from Madison Turner, the Louisburg senior rattled off six straight service points thanks to two kills from senior Lauren Dunn, a kill from freshman Anna Dixon and a block from senior Cate Stambaugh to put Louisburg back up 21-15.

De Soto then went on a 9-1 run to take 24-22 and appeared it was going to steal the first set. Instead, the Lady Cats buckled down and got back-to-back points after a tip and an ace from Dunn.

It remained tied at 26-all, but Dixon gave Louisburg the lead with an ace and senior libero Makenzie Kallevig finished the match off with an ace.



Megan Lemke sends the ball over the net during Tuesday home match with De Soto.

“I was really pleased that they were able to come back and win that first set,” Compliment said. “It would have been easy to give up there, but they didn’t.

“I think it is hard to keep that intensity and focus sometimes. This is the third time we have seen De Soto and we have beaten them twice before, and I think they had that in the back of their head. They will come out and play well, ease back and then push back at the very end.”

The Lady Cats used that momentum in the second set to build a 21-13 lead behind kills by Dixon and Turner. De Soto made a

little dent in the lead, but Stambaugh stopped the run with a kill and block. Sophomore setter Sophie McMullen and Dixon added kills of their own to finish the set out.

Dixon continued her strong play in the third set as she recorded five straight service points to build a 6-1 lead behind an ace of her own and a tip and kill from Dunn.

A block and a kill from Stambaugh, a block from Dixon and a kill from Turner put Louisburg up 16-8 and the Lady Cats never looked back. For most of the night, Louisburg was efficient with its offensive attack and Compliment saw quite a few positives from her team.

“Serving was pretty good,” Compliment said. “We got into a little rut in that third set, but they served tough and they served aggressive.

“Defensively we still have some miscommunication at times, but overall it was a good night. Sophie did a great job moving the ball around and did some real nice things with her hitters.”

Louisburg will face another tough part of its schedule Saturday when it travels to the Topeka Hayden Invitational. Matches are set to begin at 8 a.m.