

Bulldogs Struggle in Close Game

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldogs hosted the Triplains/Brewster Titans for an evening of varsity boys basketball action on Tuesday, February 18. The Bulldogs had defeated the Titans in January on their home floor in Winona, but the Titans outscored the Bulldogs in the WKLL tournament, so both teams were expecting a competitive match-up. "We knew this would be a tough game as both teams know each other very well," said Coach Mike Doll. "Defensively both teams are very sound and try to force tough shots."

The Bulldogs struggled throughout the first half of the game only scoring five points in the first quarter. They continued to shoot the ball throughout the second but couldn't get anything to fall for them as the Titans leapt ahead. Finally, senior Zach Spresser sank a shot just as the buzzer sounded to go into the half trailing the Titans 7-14.

Following the break, and a hearty discussion from Coaches Mike Doll and Laura Rush, the boys came back onto the floor ready to turn the game around. They quickly closed the gap to 13-16 by distributing the ball and taking smarter shots. They outscored the Titans 13-9 in the third to close the spread to 20-23.

The girls game earlier in the evening was close and the boys were determined to not give up. The Titans expanded their lead to 28-20 early in the fourth before Tristan Schwarz hit a couple to narrow the spread. The boys continued to work hard, but shots still wouldn't fall the way they knew they should.

As the clock ticked down, a basket by Shane Ryburn put the Bulldogs to within 2 points. The Titans called a time out with less than a minute remaining. Following another quick time out, the Bulldogs started to foul as they had several to give before sending the Titans to the line. With just 32 seconds remaining, the Bulldogs fouled again allowing the Titans to score. Domonic Luna answered with a bucket with 10.2 seconds on the clock to make the score 28-30 in favor of the Titans. A final free throw from Seth Smith gave the Titans the 31-28 win.

Scoring for the Bulldogs came from Tristan Schwarz-10, Shane Ryburn-5, Kade Wessel-4, Zach Spresser-4, Domonic Luna-2, Grant Spresser-2, and Koi Wessel-1. Scoring for the Titans were Nathan Jorgensen-11, Seth Smith-7, Coleton Rogge-6, Taylor Stramel-3, Ryan Gfeller-2, and CJ Felzien-2.

"After our slow start our guys did a good job of scraping and competing to get back in the game and give us a chance at the end," added Doll. "It's tough to win when you shoot 0-15, but in basketball, nights like that happen. The tremendous defensive effort and hard work gave us a chance at the end and that's all we could really ask for. We will be ready to bounce back Friday."