

Lady Bulldogs Named League Runner-Up

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs entered the Western Kansas Liberty League as a #3 seed and as defending League Champions. Following three hard fought games, they were named as Runner-Up to the Triplains/Brewster Lady Titans in the championship game in a hard fought competition on Saturday evening.

The girls opened the tournament with the Lady Cougars from Cheylin. “We were a little apprehensive about playing the Cougars,” said senior Hailee Spresser, “since we hadn’t yet seen them this season.” Despite their nerves, the Lady Bulldogs jumped to an 18-5 lead by the end of the first quarter. The Lady Cougars fought their way back into the game, made some adjustments, and closed the gap to 28-21 by half time.

The Lady Bulldogs faltered a bit in the third quarter as Coach Parker Christensen shook his head in wonderment from the bench. They girls got back into their game and hit some vital shots to maintain their lead going into the fourth. As the final minutes of the game ticked down, the Lady ‘Dogs went into auto-pilot and executed their plays according to plan, making some vital passes, moving the ball patiently waiting for a good shot to gain the 62-51 win over the Lady Cougars.

Their quarter final win over Cheylin sent the Lady Bulldogs into the semi-final round on Friday afternoon to face the Northern Valley Lady Huskies. The Lady Huskies play tough and the Lady Bulldogs struggled to gain a lead in the first quarter, but battled their way to a tied 8-8 game. The Huskies regained the lead and the ladies traded baskets and leads for much of the game. A buzzer shot from senior Jordan Christensen put the Lady Bulldogs up 25-19 at the half.

The Lady Bulldogs opened the game up in the third by running the floor and pushing hard to Coach Christensen’s cries to “Push, Push!” and finished the quarter with a 13 point lead 38-25. They continued to work hard throughout the fourth, but the Lady Huskies weren’t finished and outscored the Lady Bulldogs 9-8 in the final quarter. Fortunately, the Golden Plains girls maintained their lead for a 46-34 win and a spot at the championship game.

Jordan Christensen claimed the WKLL Free-Throw Championship just prior to the final game of the tournament against the Triplains/Brewster Lady Titans. The two teams had faced off the week before with the Lady Bulldogs coming out on top by three points. “We knew this would be challenging game based on last week’s outcome,” said Christensen.

The girls from both teams worked to a close 10-9 score at the end of the first 8 minutes of play with a buzzer shot from senior MiKayla Lobato. The Lady Titans tied it up with a free throw to start the second and gained the lead with another free shot. They continued to run the floor both ways, but the Lady Titans hit better on their shots to gain an eight-point lead. A basket from junior Rachael Ritter and a free throw from Kami Miller closed the gap. An additional shot from Christensen closed the gap to two by half.

Christensen opened the second half with a free shot that brought the game to within one. A three pointer from Christensen put the Lady Bulldogs tied with the Lady Titans with just over half the quarter remaining. The girls traded free shots and kept the game tied until just seconds before the quarter ended as Hailee Spresser hit a basket for the 29-27 lead going into the fourth.

The championship game was not yet decided and both teams had to step up their game to finish strong as fans cheered with vigor from each side of the gym. The Lady 'Dogs maintained their lead for much of the fourth, but the Lady Titans were aggressive and determined to tie it up gaining the lead with about three minutes to play. Following a time out, the Lady Titans extended their lead by three, but two charity stripe shots from Spresser cut their lead to one. Following another time out, Kynndra Rush, sophomore, put the Lady Bulldogs back on top, but the Lady Titans hit a three for a two-point lead with less than a minute on the clock.

Brewster claimed the ball and were pushing it down the floor as the Golden Plains defense kept moving to foul and to send the Lady Titans to the line. The girls missed their free shots and GP rebounded, heading back to their basket as Coach Christensen called his final time out with 16.7 seconds to play. Back on the floor, Jordan Christensen, who had hit three 3 pointers in the game, put up one more, but it fell short and Hailee Spresser fouled once again with 6.9 on the clock. The Lady Titans missed again and the Lady 'Dogs claimed the ball and started to push to their end, but the ball slipped out of bounds and Brewster regained possession. The Lady Bulldogs fouled once more with 1.1 seconds on the clock. This time Shayna Rogge hit the free throw for the Lady Titans to clinch the 41-38 win over the Lady Bulldogs.

"They worked harder than we did and we couldn't hit some of our easy shots," said MiKayla Lobato, "but our younger girls really stepped up when they needed to throughout the tournament." "We will meet the Lady Titans again this season," added Spresser. "It is sure to be another competitive game when we do." The Lady Bulldogs return to regular season play this week with a 7-3 record and a #5 ranking in the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association. They will host the Palco Lady Roosters on Friday with a ½ JV game beginning at 5:30 in Rexford.