

## Bulldogs Capture Overtime Win

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldogs won their last home game of the season over the Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks on February 21. It took four quarters and an overtime to give their home crowd and exciting night of basketball. The Bulldogs had narrowly slipped past the Thunderhawks when they met at the league tournament, so it promised to be a competitive evening.

The four seniors playing for the last time on the Rexford floor—Shane Ryburn, Tristan Schwarz, Grant Spresser, and Zach Spresser—started the game off with a pretty evenly matched first quarter falling behind 11-12 by the end. Despite a couple of three's from Schwarz, the Bulldogs and the Thunderhawks matched each other again in the second and the Bulldogs continued to trail 23-24 at the half.

The Thunderhawks were determined and extended their lead by five in the third before Ryburn hit a couple of shots and Schwarz tied the score with under two minutes remaining in the quarter. The 'Hawks answered but a steal and layup by Ryburn tied it back up at 31. The 'Hawks hit one more shot before the quarter ended to give them a 33-31 lead going into the fourth.

The Bulldogs controlled the ball once they got back on the floor and worked it in to Grant Spresser to tie the game once again. Following a 'Hawks free throw, Grant regained the lead for the Bulldogs only to have the 'Hawks push forward. Following a basket from Koi Wessel, Ryburn and Schwarz once again gained the lead. They 'Hawks tied it back up and the Bulldogs called a time out with 2 minutes to play.

The teams started fouling to send the opposing team to the free throw line in an attempt to finish with the win, but as shots were missed, Schwarz put the Bulldogs up by 2 with 45 seconds on the clock. With that much time remaining, both teams stepped up their defense and the Thunderhawks called a time out, returned to the floor, and tied the game up with 9 seconds on the clock to send the game into overtime.

Clayton Schwarz scored a three for the 'Hawks halfway through the OT. Koi Wessel answered with a Bulldog basket. Trailing by one, Zach Spresser pushed the ball down the floor. It was knocked loose, but Ryburn picked it up tangling with a Thunderhawk on the floor. Bulldog coach Mike Doll called a quick time out with just over a minute to play.

Back on the floor, Grant Spresser put up a three but it bounced off the rim. The Bulldogs rebounded and Ryburn hit a three with 27 seconds to play to put the Bulldogs up 49-47. The game wasn't near over yet as the 'Hawks attempted a shot, but missed only to have Schwarz rebound for the Bulldogs. Coach Doll called another time out with 14 seconds on the clock. As the Bulldogs inbounded the ball, the 'Hawks fouled, but still had some to give to send the Bulldogs to the line. GP threw it in again only to be fouled once again finally sending Grant Spresser to the free throw line where he made both shots giving the Bulldogs a four point lead. The 'Hawks sent Schwarz to the line with .4 seconds on the clock. He made both shots for the 53-47 win and a home floor win for the senior's last game on the floor. "We played well as a team," said Tristan Schwarz, "and it was fun to play against my cousin!" "We do appreciate all our home crowd's support over the past four years," added Grant Spresser.

Tristan Schwarz finished the game with a 20 point tie for his season high. Shane Ryburn hit for 13 and Grant Spresser 10. Koi Wessel scored 8 and Kade Wessel 2. The Bulldogs will face the Thunderhawks one more time this season as they play them on their home floor on March 3 for the first round of the Sub-State Tournament.