

Bulldogs Off to a Great Start

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldogs won two of their three games at the Castle Rock Tournament in Quinter last week to claim the consolation championship. The 'Dogs lost in the first round to state ranked Wheatland/Grinnell but won games against Cheylin and Rawlins County to finish the tournament.

The Bulldogs opened the tournament on December 8 with a great game against the Thunderhawks of Wheatland/Grinnell. The 'Hawks were ranked #2 in the CatchItKansas preseason and eventually won the tournament. The Bulldogs did not let that intimidate them as they stepped on the floor ready to play. The 'Dogs jumped to a 13-6 lead by the end of the first quarter. They continued to take their time on offense and held on to a 19-13 lead at the half.

The 'Hawks found the basket in the second quarter, but the Bulldogs played good team basketball to hold on to the lead 29-26 going into the fourth. The 'Hawks worked their way back into the game as their offense kicked in and they tied the game up at 31. The 'Dogs were not about to give up and continued to work hard and held the lead. A four point play from a foul behind the circle gave the 'Hawks a lead. They 'Dogs got a little shook and the 'Hawks hit the boards to finish with a 50-39 win. Scoring for the Bulldogs were Kade Wessel-15, AJ Camacho-11, Koi Wessel-8, and Brett Gerbitz-5.

The Bulldogs faced the Cheylin Cougars in the second round of play. The 'Dogs once again jumped on a 13-9 lead. The 'Dogs played aggressive with steals completed by layups throughout the second and extended their lead to 28-20 at the half. Senior Koi Wessel shot 9 consecutive points in the third as the 'Dogs were unstoppable in the third and held a 16-point lead (45-29) at the end of the third quarter.

The Cougars didn't give up and played rough and tough. Both Kade Wessel and Koi Wessel fouled out in the fourth, but the younger 'Dogs hit some necessary free-throws as the 'Dogs won the game 57-47. Game points were scored by Kade Wessel-11, Koi Wessel-19, Camacho-13, Dawson Spresser-3, Jesus Aragon-2, Nick Brown-2, Brett Gerbitz-3, and Cole Ziegelmeier-4.

The final game of the tournament on Saturday afternoon was against the Rawlins County (Atwood) Buffaloes. The Bulldogs seemed unstoppable as they jumped to another early lead 12-4 by the end of the first. The Buffs struggled to find the basket as they only scored one basket in the second quarter allowing the 'Dogs to hold a 24 point lead at half time of 28-6.

The 'Dogs extended that lead to 32-8 in the third before Atwood started sinking shots for 12 straight points to close the gap to a 35-27 Bulldog lead at the end of the third. In an action-packed fourth quarter, both teams continued to trade buckets as the Bulldogs worked the ball to the inside and the Buffaloes answered and both teams worked on the score from the free throw line. The Buffaloes were unable to catch up as they closed to spread to five and the 'Dogs held on for the 57-52 win and the consolation championship. Points were scored by Kade Wessel with 33 points along with 17 from Koi Wessel, 4 from Gerbitz, and 3 by Camacho. "All credit goes to the team for doing what was working," said Kade Wessel of his season/career high 33 points. "Some nights, others will have to step up." "It was good to get the wins," added Kade "but we didn't finish the games like we should have. We need to come out better in the second half. Our bench was very beneficial throughout all three games."

The Bulldogs are now 3-1 in the season. This is the best start they have had since the 2005-2006 season. "It is good to have a 3-1 start in the season," said Koi Wessel. "We know that we know how to win. We will continue to improve."

The 'Dogs will have an opportunity to improve their record as they host the Weskan Coyotes this Friday for their final game before the Christmas Break.