

## Bulldogs Advance in Sub-State

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldog basketball team advanced to the semi-final round of sub-state to finish their 2023-2024 season.

The Bulldogs hosted the Thunder Ridge Longhorns for the quarter-final of the Class 1A Division II Golden Plains Sub-State in Rexford on February 22. The Dogs came out on fire and ready to play as they opened with an 11-0 lead over the Longhorns in the first quarter. The Longhorns finally got on the scoreboard but the Dogs stayed strong and with 3 three-pointers from Owen Patmon, 6 baskets from Dylan Wark and three point shots from Zeke Weiner and Josh Rath, the Dogs led 29-13 at the end of the quarter.

The Longhorns adjusted to the Bulldogs aggressive offense and slowed them down in the second. The Dogs still outscored the Longhorns 14-13 for a 43-27 half time lead.

The Dogs continued to play hard in the third quarter as they added another 13. The Longhorns closed the spread with 15 of their own. In the final minutes of play the Longhorns worked to shut the Bulldogs down and gradually chipped away at their lead. The Bulldogs first quarter lead allowed them to hang on for the win 63-62.

Dylan Wark scored a career-high 31 points for the Bulldogs. Owen Patmon added 14, Diego Perez 6, Josh Rath 5, Zeke Weiner 3, Miguel Garcia 2, and Abe Taylor 2.

Rath and Wark each had 5 rebounds, Perez 3, Patmon 3, Weiner, Garcia, Taylor, and Will Bruggeman with 1 each. Rath had 5 assists, Wark 4, Perez 1, Garcia 1. Steals were claimed by Wark 5, Perez 3, Rath 2, Patmon 2, Weiner 1, and Taylor 1. Wark and Garcia each had a block.

With the win over the Longhorns, the Bulldogs advanced to the semi-finals of sub-state for the first time since 2011. They faced the #1 state ranked Northern Valley Huskies at the Colby Event Center on February 29. The Huskies took control of the game early on and never looked back. The Dogs struggled to put in five points in the first quarter to the Huskies 22.

The Dogs picked up the pace in the second quarter to add 11. The Huskies put in 17 for a 39-16 half time lead over the Bulldogs. The Huskies continued to dominate in the second half as the Dogs added 8 in the third and 6 in the fourth. The Huskies finished with 15 in the third and 18 in the fourth for the 72-30 win ending the Bulldogs' season.

Wark had 10 points in the game along with 9 from Patmon. Rath added 5, Perez 4, and Garcia 2. Wark and Perez each had 4 rebounds, Weiner and Patmon 2, Rath and Jose Rios each with 1. Rath had 2 assists, Wark, Weiner, and Garcia 1 each. Rios and Perez each had 1 block.

The Bulldogs finished the season with a 7-15 record—their best since 2018. They will graduate only one senior-Will Bruggeman and return juniors Josh Rath, Owen Patmon, Miguel Garcia, Abe Taylor, Dominic Stout, and Wyatt Almong. They will have a strong upper-class presence as Dylan Wark, Zeke Weiner, Isaiah Gonzales, Diego Perez, and Tanner Black all advance to their junior season.

“It was a good season,” said Abe Taylor. “We won more games than the past several years.” “We worked well as a team,” added Owen Patmon. “Our offense still needs work—on running plays, shot selection, and finding the open guy.”

“We improved on moving the ball throughout the whole game,” said Miguel Garcia. “We do need to improve our mentality so that we play our best with everyone. Our goal next year is to work as a team and show senior leadership.” “We still need to work on moving the ball around,” continued Josh Rath. “With our senior laden team we should continue to find success next year,” concluded Taylor.

“It was a fun season,” said senior Will Bruggeman. “We had one of the better seasons we’ve had for a while. The wins helped us stay motivated. I do appreciate all the coaches I’ve had over the years. I wish the team the best of luck next year.”