

Bulldogs Play Three at League By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldog Basketball team played three games in the WKLL league tournament at the Colby Event Center on January 31-February 3. Although the Dogs were unable to come away with a win, they showed improvement as a team throughout the tournament.

“Our team has improved so much,” said sophomore Josh Rath. “We are finally getting the TEAM part of basketball. The players are figuring out their role on the floor and gaining knowledge of the game. This season was never about wins and losses, but more about growing together as a team.”

Their first game of the tournament was against the Cheylin Cougars on January 31. They had just played the Cougars a good, close game the Friday before and were ready for a rematch. However, the Cougars were also ready for the rematch and jumped to a 26-5 first quarter lead. The Dogs were plagued by turnovers and were unable to gain much ground as they fell behind 44-10 by the half.

The Dogs came out of the half with determination and were able to double their points in the third as the Cougars added 13 for a 57-20 lead. The pace slowed in the fourth as the Dogs were unable to get a shot to fall while the Cougars progressed to a 63-20 win. Dylan Wark led the Dogs with 11 points along with Owen Patmon 5, Abe Taylor 2, and Will Bruggeman 2.

The Bulldogs moved to the back side of the bracket for the Friday game against Western Plains/Healy. The Dogs has fallen to the Bobcats early in the season and, although they lost again, it was a closer game with a final score of 25-32.

The Dogs started off with a 6-0 lead before the Bobcats got on the board. The Dogs held on to an 8-5 lead at the end of the first. The Bobcats went on a 12 point run in the second before sophomore Owen Patmon hit a three for the Bulldogs with less than a minute left to end the half trailing the Bobcats 11-17.

The Dogs continued to have trouble finding the basket in the third as they only added two more baskets while the Bobcats extended their lead 26-15. The Dogs were not finished, however, as they rallied to finish strong in the fourth. They controlled the first part of the fourth closing the spread to 2 and holding the Bobcats scoreless with just over three minutes to play.

They boys worked hard on both sides of the ball as the Bobcats claimed the win 32-25. Patmon led the game with 11 points while Dylan Wark added 7, Josh Rath 5, and Will Bruggeman 2. “We played some of our best ball in the fourth quarter,” said Rath. “We did not give up. Overall, I’m pleased with how we played in the tournament. We just need to start out stronger.”

The final game of the tournament on Saturday was against the Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks. This was the first time these two teams met this season and they played hard giving their fans an exciting game. Both teams played close in the first quarter as the Dogs would lead, then the Hawks would pull ahead. GP closed the spread but the Hawks finished the first with a 14-12 lead.

Will Bruggeman tied the game up to start the second. Again, the Hawks pulled ahead only to have Dylan Wark tie it back up. The Dogs pulled ahead 21-20 with a three

from junior Iu Ribera causing the Hawks to call a time out. They came back and pulled ahead of the Dogs 33-24 by the half.

The Dogs continued to work together in the third but still trailed the Hawks 38-48 as they headed in to the final 8 minutes. Dylan Wark spent much of the fourth at the free throw line as he made six of the thirteen he sank in the game. Ribera also pushed hard to add another 6 while Patmon added a three. The Dogs finished the game with a 59-67 loss as they scored the most points they have in a game all season.

Freshman Dylan Wark scored a career high of 30 points against the Thunderhawks. Ribera added 9, Miguel Garcia 6, Will Bruggeman 5, Josh Rath 4, Owen Patmon 3, and Abe Taylor 2. "I didn't realize I had that many points," said Wark. "I'm proud of how we all worked together and played the best we've played so far this year. Our goal is to continue to improve as we finish out the regular season and prepare for the post-season."

The Bulldogs return to regular season games as they host Hill City in Rexford on February 7.