

GP Lady Bulldogs Win 6th Consecutive WKLL Championship

By Breanna Rath

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs won their sixth consecutive WKLL League Basketball tournament championship on February 4 at the Colby Event Center. The Lady Dogs entered the WKLL tournament as the number one seed on Tuesday, January 31. The Bulldogs defeated the Western Plains/Healy Bobcats 75-12 in the first round to advance to the semi-finals. The semi-finals were played on Friday, February 3, against the Weskan Coyotes.

Golden Plains played Weskan for the season opener in December where they brought home a 47-25 Bulldog win. The Bulldogs advanced to the Championship game after defeating Weskan yet again, 49-31, to play the Northern Valley Lady Huskies in the championship game on Saturday. Putting on a show, the Lady Dogs stomped on the Huskies 54-26 and brought home their 6th consecutive WKLL championship.

To start the tournament the Lady Bulldogs took on the Western Plains/Healy Lady Bobcats on January 31. The Bulldogs played aggressively on both the offensive and defensive side of the ball. The first quarter ended 14-2 in favor of the Bulldogs. The second quarter was all about senior Sidney Taylor as she scored 12 out of the 22 points for the Bulldogs. Again, the Bulldogs were able to hold the Bobcats to 2, making the score 36-4 going into halftime.

Coming out of the half, the Bulldogs all but doubled their points after scoring 27 in the third quarter. The Bobcats managed to put up 8 of their own to go into the fourth. Scoring 12 more, the Bulldogs managed a 75-12 win over the Bobcats to advance to the semifinals. Scoring for the Bulldogs was Taylor and Anette Hernandez-Lopez each with 21, Emma Weiner 11, Hayden Wark 9, Breanna Rath 7, McKinzie Horobik 4, and [Jordyn Fleckenstein](#) 2. "We played a good game to open the tournament," said Taylor. "It is hard to play the teams who go at a slower pace, so we just worked on playing our own game and focused on the fundamentals." Both Taylor and Hernandez reached career highs at 21 points.

The semifinal game took place on Friday, February 3 against the Lady Bulldogs and the Weskan Coyotes. Coming out with determination, the Bulldogs took charge of the first quarter scoring 16 points while holding the Coyotes to seven. Outscoring the Coyotes again in the third quarter by five, the Bulldogs went into half-time with a 27-13 lead. After the half, the Bulldogs continued to outwork the Coyotes. Adding 22 points in the second half gave the Bulldogs the 49-31 semi-final win over the Coyotes. Points came from Hernandez 14, Rath 13, Taylor 12, Fleckenstein and Weiner each 4, and Wark 2.

Back in the Championship game for the sixth consecutive year on Saturday February 4, the Bulldogs were prepared to outwork and outcompete the Northern Valley Lady Huskies. Stepping onto the floor with great confidence, the Bulldogs were ready to play. Fleckenstein got up and pulled down the ball in the tip-off against the Huskies' 6'1 Audrey Bina, giving the Bulldogs great excitement to start the game. Quick buckets from Taylor got the Dogs rolling. The first quarter ended with an 11-4 Bulldog lead.

Fantastic defense from the Bulldogs kept the Huskies scoreless throughout the second quarter. The Bulldogs played hard and aggressive which led to 21 points in the

second quarter with 15 of them coming from Rath. The score going into halftime was a whopping 32-4.

Feeling confident, the Bulldogs came back from the half and put up 14 more points in the third quarter. The Huskies finally stepped up their game, but Bulldog defense was still tremendous as the Huskies were only able to put up 11. The fourth quarter started with a Bulldog 46-15 lead. Getting younger players on the floor, the Bulldogs scored eight points in the 4th quarter. Coming alive too late in the game was the Huskies as they outscored the Bulldogs by three, but it wasn't enough to ruin the Bulldog's 6th consecutive WKLL championship. The final score was 54-26.

Scoring for the Bulldogs was Rath 17, Taylor 15, Fleckenstein 13, Wark 6, and Hernandez 3. "We had a great tournament," said Weiner. "Each game helped us to get better," continued Fleckenstein. "It felt great to get that championship win for the 6th year," added Hernandez. Rath and Taylor have been a part of four League Championships in their high school careers.

The Bulldogs are now 12-3 on their season and will continue to put in hard work to prepare for sub-state coming right around the corner.