



MHS Sophomore Stephanie Wilson drives to the basket for a two points during the game against Augusta

Girls' Relapse Spoils Great Mulvane Start

For a full six minutes, the Mulvane High School girls basketball team played its best ball of the season.

And for a full six minutes, the Wildcats were making all the right decisions on offense and on defense Friday night, Jan. 4, in Augusta, but something happened in the last 90 seconds and that triggered a relapse into sloppy play.

"We got tired and lost our energy," stressed MHS Coach Dale Landes. "When that happened, we stopped executing at both ends of the floor."

The Orioles were able put their game in motion and raved to a 40-29 victory over Mulvane in a Ark Valley Chisholm Trail League Division III game. The loss dropped Landes' Wildcats to 2-6 overall and 1-3 in the league. And it also marked the second straight game in the 20s for the struggling Cat offense.

Mulvane came out in the first six minutes, though and looked good, looked crisp on offense. With sophomore Haylee Smith hitting a couple of buckets, the Wildcats rolled to an 8-1 lead.

What happened in the second 12 minutes is that the Wildcats had five or six consecutive trips down the floor without getting a shot off. They made poor passes in nearly every one of those trips.

"What happens when the girls get tired is they start making those bad passes and silly mistakes," said Landes. "We're not mentally tough. That's one thing we have tried to work on all year long—play through adversity."

"After we got the early lead, I could see it start happening so I called a time out with about 3 minutes left in the quarter to give them a rest, and we came

VARSITY GIRLS				
Mulvane	8	3	11	3-29
Augusta	20	14	10	6-40
Mulvane—Stephanie Wilson 6, Haylee Smith 8, Melinda McKee 5, Katie Ybarra 2, Courtney Becker 2, Maddie Wise 6, FG 10-11, FT 8-10, FT 1				
Augusta—Laruen Crawford 10, Alexa Power 13, Ashley Schwemmer 2, Elizabeth Myers 1, Karlee Farmer 4, Nellie Galles 10, FG 18-21, FT 2-3, FT 17				

out of the TO and changed defenses. Augusta had an immediate turnover but we just turned it back to them and they started their run."

Augusta's run lasted the last minute of the first quarter and all of the second quarter. They out-scored Mulvane, 23-3, to take firm control of the ball game.

"Defensively we were giving up way too many easy shots and on offense, we made too many silly mistakes," said Landes. "We seem to lose our patience and try for something quick instead of working for the extra pass that might give us an easier shot."

After the Orioles' whirlwind finish in the first half, the game was relatively close. Mulvane actually out-scored Augusta the rest of the way, 18-16, but the damage was done.

"From a positive standpoint, I was really happy to see our girls come out strong at the first of the game," said the MHS coach, "especially after seeing us come out extremely flat in our last game against Rose Hill. We came out at Augusta in the first few minutes and played basketball. The girls played well and were making the extra pass to get the good shots. After that, we reverted back to problems we have been trying to solve for a season and a half."

Mulvane had its chances in the second half but never could get a strong run put together. "Every time we had the ability to cut the deficit, we would make a mistake, miss a defensive assignment or miss a block-out. It just seemed like when good things would happen, we wouldn't take full advantage of it."

The problem of inconsistent play continued to dog the Wildcat heels. "That's been our biggest problem," admitted Landes. "We're almost halfway through the season now and we're getting to the point where our execution on the floor is going to have to improve or we're going to continue to struggle."

The loss also spoiled one of the team's best nights shooting from the free throw line. Mulvane went 8-for-10 at the stripe and didn't have many fouls either.

The girls also had a good night on the boards. "We rebounded better than we did prior to Christmas," emphasized Landes. "We worked and worked on that over the holiday break and the girls, I think, are starting to do a better job of creating space for themselves around the basket."

Smith, a starter since junior standout Taylor Parsons, was sidelined with a leg injury, led the Wildcats offensively, scoring eight points. Junior guard Maddie Wise and sophomore Stephanie Wilson scored six points each and Melinda McKee, the team's No. 1 scorer on the season, had five points.

The girls have one more game before the annual Mulvane Wildcat Girls Classic at MHS Jan. 21-26. They tangle with Andale at home Friday night, Jan. 18. They also were to have played Buhler in another home game Tuesday night, Jan. 8. The Crusaders are leading Division III. Results of that game will appear in next week's News.