

Tough Against Circle

Wildcat Boys Enjoy Best Showing Yet

Somebody turned the light on Tuesday night, Jan. 11, and found a basketball team putting things together.

The Mulvane High School boys, struggling all season on offense, put together their best game of the season to throw a scare into Circle's Thunderbirds before the T-Birds charged from behind in the final seven minutes to win a 55-45 Chisholm Trail League decision in Mulvane.

The 45 points represents the most scored by Coach John Darrow's Wildcats this season and gave the Cat coach hope that the team's offense was starting to come together. "We played they tough all the way," said Darrow. "They had a run in the last quarter of about 16 straight points after we had gained the lead on a Ryan McKnight basket off an in-bounds play right at the start of the fourth quarter. Once we fell behind, we couldn't catch back up.

"Encouraging? You bet it is," added

Darrow, whose Cats had been averaging only 26 points a game. "The kids came out and played extremely hard. We did a great job running the offense and executing. It was our best game of the season...definitely."

Guard Nick Pope finally started finding his niche, scoring 12 points and veteran senior Jesse Marksberry finished with 10 points. Jared Rice scored six points and Chris Gerhardt had five off the bench.

"Our offensive execution was the key to the game," said Darrow. "The kids ran the plays for about the first time this year and they got a lot of easy offensive opportunities. I think they week of practice we had plus the kids coming in extra on Saturday really paid off. We have some set plays we run and the kids get certain shots from areas where they are comfortable in shooting and they finally ran those plays like they were drawn up."

Darrow singled out Gerhardt off the bench with some key play as well as Pope getting untracked. "Chris provided a major spark for us, especially pulling down some big rebounds, and Nick also came off the bench to hit some key shots," said Darrow. "Nick played within the system and hit his shots. It's one of those things we have been talking about, getting on the same page, and I think it finally happened. It was great to witness."

But for all the "feel good" that came from the game, the Cats still have to learn to win. "I thought they pulled away from us because we hadn't been in that situation before (leading)," pointed out Darrow. "The kids got a little nervous and took a couple of bad shots. You can't do that in crunch time. But overall, I was really proud of the way our kids hung in there until the end. It was very good to see.

"It's a first big step in the right direc-

Chaparral Roadrunner Boys Classic Pairings

Wednesday, Jan. 19

Game 1 -- Kingman (6-1) vs. Mulvane (0-7), 6 p.m.

Game 2 -- Chaparral (4-4) vs. Conway Springs (2-5), 8

Thursday, Jan. 20

Game 3 -- Medicine Lodge (5-1) vs. Clearwater (2-5), 6 p.m.

Game 4 -- Arkansas City (4-4) vs. Campos (2-6), 8

Friday, Jan. 21

Game 5 -- losers of games 1 and 2, 3 p.m.

Game 6 -- losers of games 3 and 4, 4:30

Game 7 -- winners of games 1 and 2, 6:30

Game 8 -- winners of games 3 and 4, 8

Saturday, Jan. 22

Game 9 (Seventh Place) -- losers of games 5 and 6, 2 p.m.

Game 10 (Fifth Place) -- winners of games 5 and 6, 3:30

Game 11 (Third Place) -- losers of games 7 and 8, 5:30

Game 12 (First Place) -- winners of games 7 and 8, 7

tion," added Darrow. "As happy as I was after the game, the kids were disappointed because they knew they could do better. They weren't satisfied."

The MHS boys will get a chance to get that satisfaction Friday night, Jan. 14, when they go to Rose Hill for a league contest. Next week, Mulvane will play in the annual Chaparral Roadrunner Classic. The first round game will be played at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 19, against No. 1 seeded Kingman.

Varsity Boys

Circle	12	10	15	18--55
Mulvane	12	12	12	9--45

Circle--Tyler Ryan 2, Jason Farner 3, Nick Whitson 6, Toby Loeffler 7, Brandon Hendrix 15, Travis Brundage 18, Justin Farner 3, FG 18 (1), FT 18-33, F 8.

Mulvane--Chris Brannon 3, Jason Wilson 2, Troy Johnson 3, Nick Pope 12, Chris Gerhardt 5, Jesse Marksberry 10, Ryan McKnight 2, Jared Rice 6, Shawn Rogers 2, FG 18 (1), FT 4-7, F 27.