

Wildcats Give New Meaning To 2-For-1

It's almost too wild to believe, but who could not believe it?

It took the Mulvane Wildcats just five hours to win two ball games after going a month and a half with only one win.

It all happened Friday, Jan. 22, in the 22nd annual Chaparral Roadrunner Invitational, a seven-team affair this year. But if Friday's results carry any weight, Coach Dale Landes may just insist on playing back-to-back games the rest of the season.

Knocked into the consolation round by No. 1 seeded Kingman in a 66-58 slugfest Thursday, Jan. 21, the Wildcats came alive the next day to knock off first Clearwater, 61-56, then Medicine Lodge, 61-44, to take the consolation bracket title or fifth place.

Those games were a scant five hours apart because of the snow-out earlier in the week.

"It was a real good tournament for us," beamed Wildcat first-year coach Dale Landes. "I told the kids going into Friday night's game that if they loved the game of basketball, they were going to love the situation, and they really responded well."

Heck, the way it worked out, don't be surprised if Landes tries to play two games a night every game. "It worked well for us this time, didn't it," chuckled Landes. "They gave us a room we could retire to and I just asked the kids to hang out there. Against Medicine Lodge, we came out real strong and got off to a real quick start, and it lasted the whole game. We seemed to get stronger as the game progressed."

The Cats jumped ahead quickly and blew the doors off in the third quarter, out-scoring the Indians, who were playing in the Roadrunner Classic for the first time since 1980, 20-10, to take a king-sized lead. A

bucket by reserve Chris Heersche and two free throws by J.J. Dunn made it 41-27 with 2:15 left in the quarter. Dunn scored underneath and Brian Heinrichs scored again along the baseline to put the count at 47-29 as Mulvane enjoyed its first "blowout" in a few years.

"We went with our bigger line-up against Medicine Lodge to take advantage of our size and it worked for most of the time," noted Landes. "We also had the experience. They had some young kids and we started the game pressing all over because we felt like their ball-handling skills were really weak. We forced 31 turnovers in the game, and that also says a lot about our intensity."

Landes also had the Wildcat defense switching back and forth between a man-to-man and zone to keep the young Indians confused. It worked. "We'd pressure the ball, then slip back into a zone," said Landes. "We wanted to confuse them and I think we did. We also had a constant stream of people going in and out to keep everybody fresh. Playing two games in one day, we didn't want the fatigue factor to come into the game. It was just a great example of a true team victory because we had nine people score and all 12 played."

Dunn finished with his best scoring of the season, 20 points. Heinrichs scored 13 points. Heersche and Dan Smith scored five points each and the guard tandem Larry Dixon, Brian Strack and Steve Nelson had four points apiece.

Earlier in the afternoon, the Wildcats rolled past Clearwater to keep the Eagles winless for the year. In that game, Smith had a career-high 15 points, Strack scored 11, Dunn had nine and Heinrichs had seven.

"We had a size advantage in this one, too," said Landes. "We wanted to work inside-out. We knew we could get the pass inside and if they shut it down, we could get the shot by kicking it outside. Brian Strack came off the bench and had a great game."

In the tourney opener against the No. 1 seeded Eagles, Mulvane gave Kingman all the trouble it wanted before bowing. "The key time of the game came in the last two and one-half minutes of the first half," admitted the MHS coach. "At that point, we were up, 27-22, and playing well, but they out-scored us, 11-2, before intermission to grab the lead and that really hurt. That gave them all the momentum coming out after halftime and it carried over into the third quarter. We didn't score the first four minutes."

The Eagles had a big lead by that time

but Mulvane scrapped its way back to within six points with three minutes to play. "We had to start fouling and they made 13 of their last 15 free throws," said Landes. "A No. 1 ranked team will do that."

Smith had another huge game, scoring 15 points. Dunn and Jason DeWald scored nine points each and Heinrichs scored eight.

Although Dunn, Heinrichs and Smith all had an extremely good tournament, none were named to the Roadrunner Classic All-Tournament team.

The Cats were presented the 5th-place

CHAMPIONSHIP

Campus 74, Kingman 60

THIRD PLACE

Arkansas City 68, Chaparral 36

FIFTH PLACE

Mulvane 16 11 20 13-61

Medicine Lodge 10 11 10 13-44

Mulvane—J.J. Dunn 20, Brian Heinrichs 13, Dan Smith 5, Larry Dixon 4, Brian Strack 4, Jason DeWald 4, Steve Nelson 4, Jeremy Kendrick 2, Chris Hoersche 5. FG 28 (0), FT 5-12, F 13.

Medicine Lodge—Dustin Price 10, Brandon Poland 6, Josh Axline 5, Chad Nittler 10, Eric Van Allen 2, Kraig Bowe 6. FG 20 (1), FT 5-8, F 14.

CONSOLATION ROUND ROBIN

Clearwater 15 18 5 18-56

Mulvane 11 16 15 19-61

Clearwater—A.J. Frischenmeyer 19, David Henaley 11, Clayton Campbell 6, Jeremy Williams 12, David Jayne 8. FG 22 (4), FT 16-24, F 21.

Mulvane—Dan Smith 17, J.J. Dunn 9, Jason DeWald 5, Brian Strack 11, Steve Nelson 4, Jeremy Kendrick 5, Brian Heinrichs 7. FG 25 (4), FT 15-23, F 23.

Clearwater 73, Medicine Lodge 55

FIRST ROUND

Kingman 12 21 12 21-66

Mulvane 17 12 5 24-58

Kingman—Gary Nye 18, Matt Carrithers 3, Michael Armour 11, Brent Wood 7, Brent Garrison 27. FG 24 (3) FT 21-26, F 16.

Mulvane—Dan Smith 15, Chris Hoersche 4, Brian Strack 5, Steve Nelson 5, Jeremy Kendrick 3, J.J. Dunn 9, Brian Heinrichs 8, Jason DeWald 9. FG 26 (3), FT 9 13, F 19.

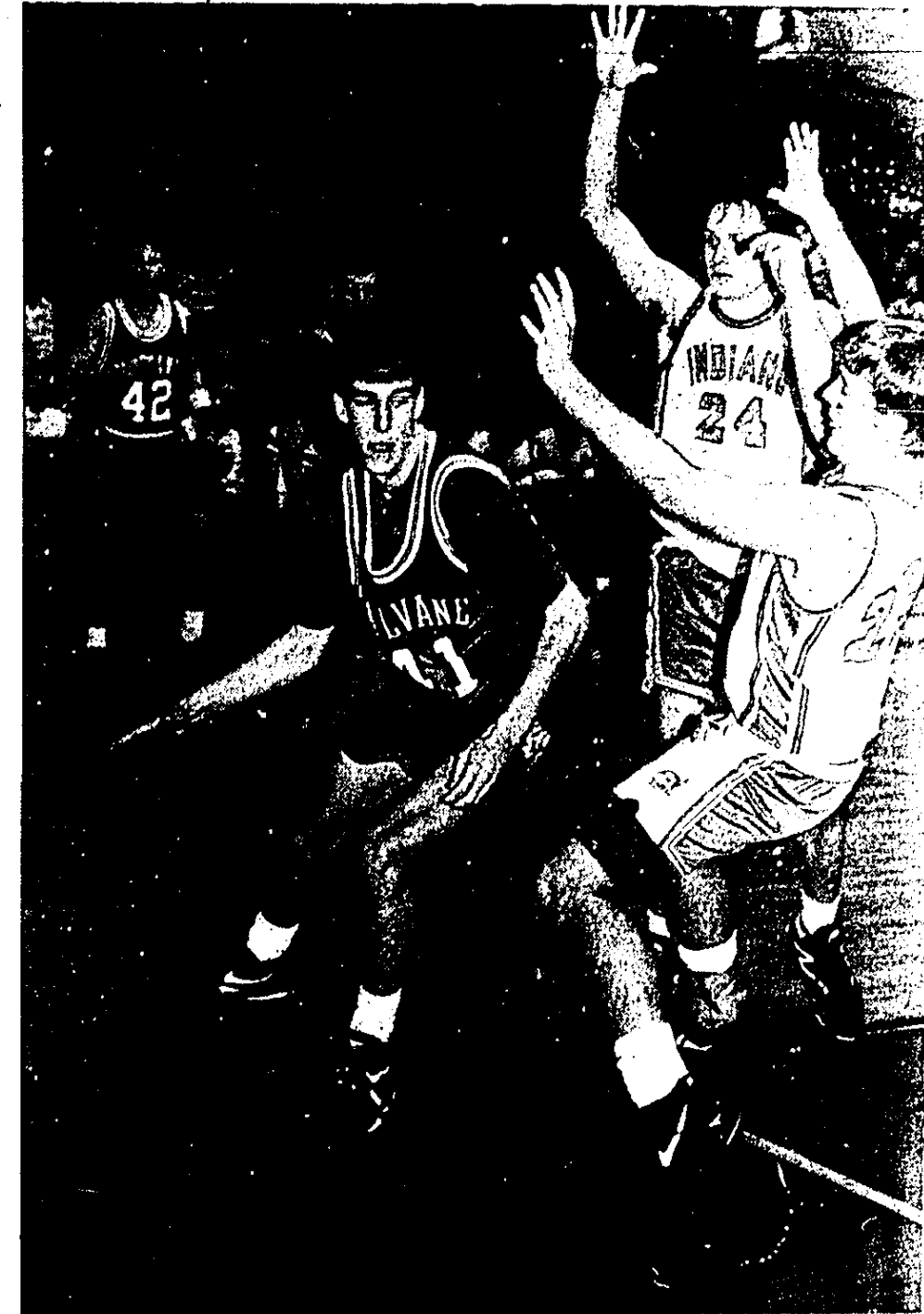
Arkansas City 68, Clearwater 44

Campus 82, Medicine Lodge 51

Chaparral, bye

team trophy immediately following their victory over Medicine Lodge, and it was the first basketball team trophy won by MHS

since the last glory season—1986-87 when the Wildcats went 20-6 and finished third at the 4A state tourney.



Cat senior J.J. Dunn (41) drives the baseline at Chaparral