

Wildcats

'Whistled'

While Work

The rusty gate syndrome caught up with Mulvane High School boys last week in the annual Roadrunner Classic at Chaparral High School, and so did the tooting whistle.

The Wildcats finished fourth at Chaparral, looking like a fourth-place team all the way instead of the No. 2 seed, which they were. The Cats were beaten by Pratt, 62-57, Saturday evening, Jan. 24, in the game for third place (and the long-awaited Pratt rematch). A night earlier, Kingman's hot-shooting dropped the Wildcats, 78-65, and in opening tournament action Thursday, Jan. 22, the Wildcats popped Arkansas City, 83-72, but looked extremely rusty.

"We were just flat from the first game on," said Mulvane coach Charlie Mason. "We were just a little rusty. We hadn't played in quite a while and we looked like it. The whole tournament was the same way, we just weren't playing sharp."

Mason also felt like the teamwork wasn't there. "I saw some things I hadn't seen in quite a while," said Mason of his 7-3 Cats. "I saw some selfishness out there. We can't win as individuals. We have to play together."

Mason also saw the guys in the striped shirts almost exhaust themselves. From the opening moments of the tournament to the very end, Mulvane was off-balanced because the officiating was so tight. In all, there were 72 free throws shot in the marathon opener and Mulvane was called for 76 fouls in the three games.

"The whole tournament the officials took us out of our game," said Mason. "Maybe that's a cop-out but we have to be aggressive. That's our style and if they take that away from us, we have to adjust, I guess, but we didn't." Ironically, Mulvane made more field goals every one of the three games.

Mason said the Cats looked better in the third place game when Mulvane was trying to get revenge for an earlier loss to Pratt. "We looked better in that game but we had three starters on the bench with fouls."

Mulvane battled back in the final moments against the Greenbacks, finally getting within two points (59-57) with the ball but a bad pass ended Mulvane's hopes as Pratt made a lay-up at the other end for a four-point lead in the final minute.

Senior Todd Fox scored 24 points in the finale after struggling the entire tournament. The normal scoring balance wasn't there most of the time. The only other MHS player in double figures against Pratt was guard Kyle Steadman, who scored 10 points.

Mulvane fell behind Kingman miserably as the Eagles, who went on to take second place after a thrilling 56-54 tournament championship game, out-scored Mulvane, 23-14, in the second period to take a 42-27 halftime lead. The Cats pressed their way back in the game, but the Eagles went on a spree to pull away down the stretch.

Two players were in twin figures for the Cats. Guard Curtis Hicks scored 18 points and Todd Fox had 15.

In the opener Thursday, Mulvane played like the old baseball adage of swinging like a rusty gate. The Cats struggled through the first half, finally opened a nice lead in the third quarter only to see Ark City scramble back to within four, 68-64, with 3:10 left in the game. Reserve Lyle Graybeal canned two buckets and Steadman drilled three of four free throws to lift the Cats out of danger.

Andrew Swayne led all scorers with 20 points and Hicks finished with 19.

ROADRUNNER BOYS CLASSIC THIRD PLACE

Mulvane 15 12 18 12-57
Pratt 13 13 17 19-62
Mulvane—Morgan LeClair 8, Todd Fox 24, Andrew Swayne 5, Kyle Steadman 10, Curtis Hicks 8, Shay Cornejo 2. FG 27, FT 3-8, F 24.
Pratt—Todd Courbot 9, Brennen Wood 22, Mike Adelhardt 18, Matt Havlas 15. FG 24, FT 14-26, F 12.

FIRST PLACE

Clearwater 56, Kingman 54

FIFTH PLACE

Nickerson, 67, Chaparral 46

SEVENTH PLACE

Arkansas City 69, Wellington 67

SEMIFINALS

Mulvane 13 14 19 19-65
Kingman 19 23 12 24-78
Mulvane—Kyle Steadman 8, Curtis Hicks 18, Morgan LeClair 8, Andrew Swayne 7, Todd Fox 15, Jeff Williams 1, Lyle Graybeal 6, Bryson Butts 2. FG 28, FT 9-17, F 23.
Kingman—Dan Bliggs 6, John Earnst 18, Mike Minton 30, Chris Ziegler 4, Roy Boswell 18, Shawn Winter 2. FG 18, FT 22-31, F 18.

Clearwater 67, Pratt 65

Chaparral 60, Wellington 51

Nickerson 64, Arkansas City 60

FIRST ROUND

Arkansas City 12 19 17 24-72
Mulvane 13 21 25 24-63
Arkansas City—Garette Long 13, Kent Murphree 12, Brian Stone 14, Shane Mullen 18, Matt Gee 14, Ted Ford 1. FG 24, FT 24-35, F 26.
Mulvane—Kyle Steadman 11, Curtis Hicks 19, Morgan LeClair 13, Todd Fox 11, Andrew Swayne 20, Lyle Graybeal 4, Shay Cornejo 4, Toby Butcher 1. FG 30, FT 23-37, F 29.

Kingman 66, Nickerson 64

Pratt 70, Wellington 67

Clearwater 61, Chaparral 56



Cats' Morgan LeClair [42] and Todd Fox [35] sandwich Pratt ballhandler



LeClair, Fox All-Tourney

Two Mulvane Wildcats were named to the Chaparral Roadrunner Classic all-tournament first team at the conclusion of the tournament Saturday, Jan. 24, at Chaparral High School.

The two Wildcats on the first unit were seniors Todd Fox, who was in double figures all three nights in leading Mulvane to fourth place, and Morgan LeClair, who scored 29 points in the tournament.

Others on the first team were 6-foot, 6-inch senior Chris Hickman, who led Clearwater to the tournament championship, Jamie Newlin of Clearwater, Shannon Farr of Nickerson, Mike Minton and John Earnest of Kingman, Jade Beam of Chaparral and Todd Courbot and Brenne Wood of Pratt.

Clearwater won the sportsmanship trophy.