

Chaparral Tournament

It's A Bumpy Ride With Mulvane Boys

As the Volkswagen commercial says: "Enjoy the ride." It's hard for Mulvane High School boys basketball coach Ryan Herts to do that because his 2002-03 season has been more of a roller coaster ride than the ride you get from a Mercedes.

The Wildcats led Coach Herts through the whole gamut of emotions last week in the 32nd Chaparral Roadrunner Classic. There was the extreme high registered out of the game as the Wildcats totally overwhelmed Clearwater, 81-47, in the opening round but on the way down, the Wildcats finished in 4th place after losing the game for third place, 63-50, to Winfield Saturday evening, Jan. 25.

In the semifinal game a night earlier, Kingman barely held off the Cats, 54-51, as the Eagles advanced to the title game instead of the Wildcats.

"It was a tale of two teams," said Herts. "We played as good as we have ever played on Wednesday. The kids were exceptional in their execution, they had very few let-downs and they played consistent ball. I really thought it was a breakout game."

Indeed, Mulvane rolled like a pinball against Clearwater, posting its highest scoring game since scoring 84 points in a double-overtime loss to Clearwater in the Chaparral Tournament in the 1996-97 season. The 34-point difference was Mulvane's widest margin of victory since the program's "gravy days" under Coach Charlie Mason. Sixteen years ago in a December game, the Wildcats humiliated Goddard by 37 points, 76-39, and went on to finish 3rd at the 4A State Tournament.

Mulvane could have matched its 3rd place finish of last year at Chappy by handling Winfield, but the Vikings' quick start could never be overcome. The Vikes took a 17-8 lead after one quarter and had a 35-21 edge at halftime.

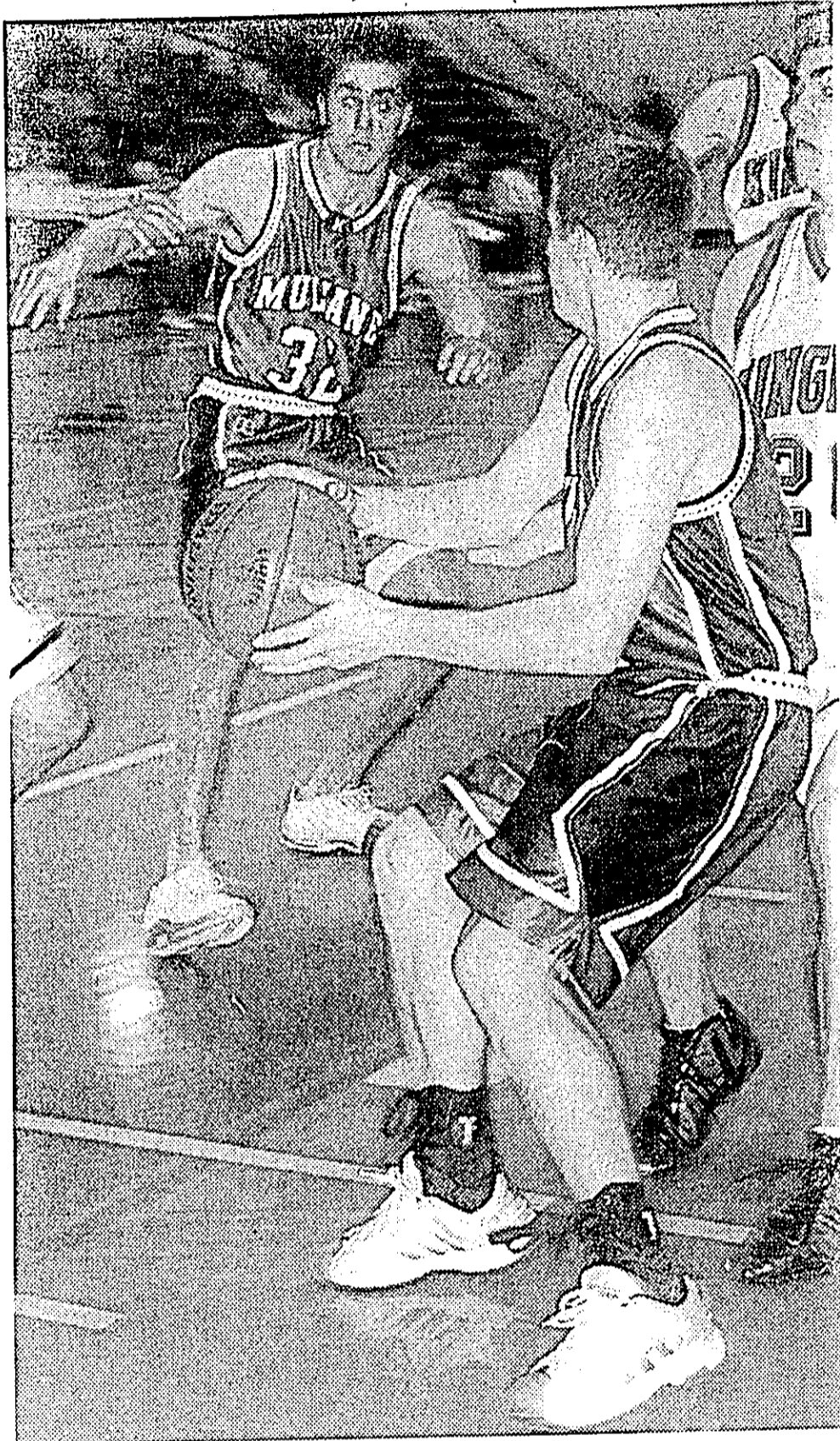
"It was a pretty disappointing first half," admitted Herts. "We didn't come out with any emotion and one of their kids gets hot with four three-pointers. The kids battled back, got it down to four or five a couple of times but couldn't pull it out."

The Wildcats were led by senior Zach Kimble with 15 points. Junior Greg Flores scored nine points and senior Dusty Sorensen had his best game with seven points. Tyler Hennes, Gavin Snider and Luke Gunter all had five points and Grant Snider scored four.

"We just never could get it down to a bucket and they pulled away hitting free throws at the end," said Herts.

A night earlier, the Cats again stumbled coming out of the starting gate. Against CHL sister, Kingman, the Cats fell behind by eight points by intermission (29-21) and had to scrap the rest of the way to have a chance to tie it at the gun. With one second left, an in-bound pass to Kimble resulted in a desperation shot from the corner that missed.

"We had a lot of turnovers early against Kingman," said Herts. "Their guards are pretty strong and they were ready to play. I thought we would be after that big win



Luke Gunter (12) readies a bounce pass to teammate Gavin Snider (32)

against Clearwater but we didn't come out with the intensity we needed. The kids have to understand that they have to come out with fire in their belly like they did against Clearwater. And they also have to learn to deal with pressure. They have to learn to deal with people in their face, which is something we don't do well.

And the Wildcats also couldn't deal with the Eagles' 6-foot-7-inch junior Stephen DuCharme, who hit 23.

Flores paced the Wildcat offense. He had 19 points, Kimble scored 18 points and Tyler Hennes had 10. Sorensen finished with four.

The opening round game Wednesday night, Jan. 22, was a thing of beauty for Wildcat fans. "We came out, got into a rhythm, passed the ball well and our pressure on them was devastating," said Herts. The Cats forced 25 turnovers out of the Indians and also had 26 assists in the game.

"They didn't pressure us, they tried to play us man-to-man and when we can run our half-court offense, we can be pretty good," said Herts. "I still think this was a big game for us. Why, because I think it lets the kids see what can happen when they get things rolling, when they come out with that mind-set."

Kimble went crazy on the inside, scoring a career-best 26 points. Hennes and Gavin Snider had 10 points each and Flores and Sorensen scored nine apiece.

Mulvane will slip back into league play Friday night, Jan. 31, when Rose Hill comes to town. The Cats will go up against the Rockets looking to avenge an earlier 51-45 loss.

32nd Chaparral Roadrunner Tournament Results

THIRD PLACE

Winfield 17-18-13-15-63
Mulvane 8-13-14-14-50

Winfield: Michael Heitsman 4, Joel Wilke 3, Cody White 9, Nick Patton 9, Ade Manga 4, Jaden Bailey 2, Glen Dale Berry 2, Ryan Bennett 6, Casey Jackson 2. FG 22-66, FT 13-23, F 16.

Mulvane: Gavin Snider 6, Tyler Hennes 5, Zach Kimble 15, Luke Gunter 5, Greg Flores 9, Dusty Sorensen 7, Grant Snider 4. FG 18-41, FT 10-16, F 21.

FIRST PLACE

Andover Central 61, Kingman 48

FIFTH PLACE

Chaparral 65, Clearwater 60

SEVENTH PLACE

Arkansas City 53, Conway Springs 48

SEMIFINALS

Mulvane 9-12-11-19-51
Kingman 13-16-11-14-54

Mulvane: Tyler Hennes 10, Zach Kimble 18, Dusty Sorensen 4, Luke Gunter 0, Greg Flores 19. FG 18-42, FT 13-18, F 19.

Kingman: Tyler Swartzendruber 2, Chet Hartley 6, Andrew Hook 6, Stephen DuCharme 23, Erik DeWeese 2, Jacob Miller 6, Andy Strong 5, Scott Adlehardt 4. FG 20-41, FT 13-23, F 18.

Andover Central 58, Winfield 54
Chaparral 64, Arkansas City 61 (2 OT)
Clearwater 53, Conway Springs 48

FIRST ROUND

Mulvane 19-22-19-21-81
Clearwater 11-10-10-16-47

Mulvane: Zach Kimble 26, Grant Snider 3, Luke Gunter 4, Greg Flores 9, Tyler Hennes 10, Dusty Sorensen 9, Nick Hansen 3, Kiel Mangus 2, Chris Simon 2, Gavin Snider 10, Jason Turner 1. FG 29-63, FT 20-26, F 17.

Clearwater: Craig Mellen 4, Matt Westbrook 8, Jeff Brady 7, Chris Lang 17, Jason Brady 3, Mark Batten 2, Nate Carr 2, Mark Bailey 2, Jacob Laha 2. FG 17-41, FT 12-18, F 23.

Kingman 53, Conway Springs 49
Andover Central 55, Arkansas City 43
Winfield 77, Chaparral 45