

State

It's Lights Out Time For Hornets

The lights went out on Valley Center in more ways than one Saturday night, March 3, in the Augusta Class 4A Boys Sub-State Basketball Tournament.

And it was the typical Mulvane Wildcat pressure defense, using better quickness and speed, which pulled the plug.

Mulvane made a triumphant march to the sub-state championship and gained the school's first trip to the Kansas State High School Activities Association since the 1965 season. Coach Charlie Mason's Cats powered past Valley Center, 73-64, in the sub-state finale.

The victory boosted Mulvane's sparkling record to 21-2 and ended the year for the Hornets at 15-8. It also put Mulvane in the Class 4A State Tournament field at Salina's Bicentennial Center. The Wildcats, seeded No. 2 in the state field, will be playing Nickerson (16-7) at 3 p.m. today (March 8) in a first-round game.

"We're extremely happy about getting there (to Salina), and we're going there to win," said Mason, who is in his fifth season at the Cat helm. "Only eight out of 64 get there, so right now, even though we were ranked second going into the sub-state, we're one of the eight best teams in the state of Kansas. Before the season started, we set a goal of winning four tournaments. We've won three and there's one to go."

Nickerson finished third in the Mid-State League behind Pratt, a team which suffered only two losses during the regular season, both to Mason's Cats. However, the Mulvane coach said nothing counts except what you do at state. "Once you get there, there aren't any slouches," said Mason. "Teams have gotten there because they've done something right. We've got as good a chance as anybody else. We have to go to Salina and continue to play the type of basketball we've been playing for over half the year. If you don't play there, you sit and watch the last two games."

AUGUSTA CLASS 4A SUB-STATE Championship

Mulvane 16 21 16 20-73
Valley Center 21 14 13 16-64
Mulvane-Lonny Travis 26, David Belew 17, J.C. Shook 2, Kevin Bell 8, Todd Travis 16, Aaron Huslig 1, Greg Quigley 3, FG 30-61, FT 13-19, F 13
Valley Center-Rod Williams 6, Jamie Williams 12, Brian Lesperance 20, Mark Kennedy 12, Joe Witham 14, FG 27-50, FT 10-17, F 64

SEMIFINALS

Mulvane 18 14 14 17-63
Circle 12 8 9 14-43
Mulvane-Lonny Travis 22, David Belew 19, Kevin Bell 12, J.C. Shook 0, Todd Travis 8, Aaron Huslig 2, FG 27-56, FT 9-12, F 11
Circle-Brent Perry 13, Barry Carter 9, Kevin Wright 1, Bud Cole 8, Rod Ellison 8, Scott Jones 2, FG 18-46, FT 7-17, F 15

Valley Center 68, Eureka 62

The Wildcats and Hornets had split during the regular season and in reality, it was a two-point mid-season loss to Valley which kept the Cats from sharing the Chisholm Trail League title with Buhler. Saturday night, it was all Mulvane as Mason's club quickly wiped out a 21-16 lead by the Hornets after one quarter to take a 37-35 halftime lead.

Mulvane's lead bounced between five and eight points until a power blackout halted play with 4:51 left in the third quarter. After a wait of approximately 15 minutes, Mulvane rolled out to a 10-point advantage early in the final period. Senior Todd Travis canned a baseline jumper and younger brother Lonny followed with a steal off the press and a slam dunk, his second in two nights...and it was on to Salina.

"I thought Valley got a little tired in the fourth quarter," said Mason. "They played a very physical and emotional ball game the night before and they seemed physically worn down."

The Cats hit 49% from the field for the night (30-61) but the Hornets hit 54% (27-50) to stay in the game most of the way.

The 6-foot-3 junior Travis led the Mulvane scorers with a game-high 26 points while junior guard David Belew, whose play dazzled throughout the sub-state, scored 17 and senior T. Travis added 16.

Senior Kevin Bell was one of the ringleaders two nights earlier in a first-round 20-point victory over a strong Circle team. The Cats buried the Thunderbirds, 63-43, ending Circle's season at 18-4.

Bell scored 12 points while L. Travis pumped in 22 and Belew had another 19. Mason departed from his pressing man-to-man defense with a 2-3 with Lonny in the middle in an effort to hold down Circle's fine 6-7 center Bud Cole. It didn't shut Cole down, it shut him off-eight points.

"We gave him fits all night," emphasized Mason. "When he got past Lonny, there was Todd or J.C. (Shook) or Aaron (Huslig). They also got into foul trouble outside and we felt that was to our advantage because we didn't feel they had much bench."

Mulvane was on the march early against the Thunderbirds, coasting out to an 18-12 lead after one period, then during a 50-second stretch early in the second period, the Cats roared out to a 30-16 lead as Lonny popped a 10-footer, reserve Huslig hit underneath after a turnover and Belew matched two steals with two buckets.

The pressure defense by MHS forced

admitted Mason. "We've played good quarters before but against Circle, we played a good 32 minutes."

21 turnovers to only 11 for Mulvane. "We just played a tremendous ball game both on offense and defense,"



Mulvane's Kevin Bell (20) gets set to strike against Hornets in sub-state finale

Tournament Notebook

Wildcats Ending 19-Year Drought

Mulvane has seldom enjoyed the tradition in basketball as it has in football. Over the years, the Wildcats have turned out some outstanding gridiron teams--remember the long three-season winning streak back in the 1960s?

Coach Charlie Mason's Wildcats have the opportunity to establish a school record for a number of victories in one season. Now at 21-2 heading into the first-round game today (March 8) against Nickerson in the Class 4A State Tournament in Salina's Bicentennial Center, the Cats could come away with the state championship and 24 victories.

Mulvane has had few 20-game winners in the last 35 years. This year's group marks only the fourth time MHS has chalked up 20 or more basketball victories in one season.

In 1949-50, the Wildcats went 20-6, then came back with a 20-3 mark in 1953-54. And they were hot again in the 1958-59 season when the Wildcats went 20-2 under Coach Jim Parker. That was the last 20-game season for Mulvane.

Can we talk? About state tournament teams, that is. Mulvane has mustered only three during that same period, according to local historian Jim "The Clipper" Sharpe.

This year's club is the first since the 1964-65 squad which caught fire at the end of a 13-7 season and advanced to Hutchinson only to lose in the first round by a 49-44 count to Larned. Guess who was the No. 1 Larned player that year? John Zook, the former pro football player.

Previous to that, the Cats advanced at the end of the 1949-50 campaign and actually marched into the second round by bombing Hamlin, 52-32, in the opening game. Coach George Johnson's boys stumbled in round No. 2, however,

BOYS CLASS 4A STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT AT SALINA BICENTENNIAL CENTER Today (March 8)

Game 1--Mulvane Wildcats (21-2) vs. Nickerson (16-7), 3 p.m.

Game 2--Osawatomie (21-2) vs. Tonganoxie (18-5), 4:45

Game 3--Girard (20-2) vs. Colby (17-4), 6:30

Game 4--Concordia (23-0) vs. Topeka Hayden (10-13), 8:15

Friday, March 9

Game 5 (Semifinal)--Winner of Mulvane-Nickerson vs. Osawatomie-Tonganoxie winner, 4:45 p.m.

Game 6--Winner of Girard-Colby vs. winner of Concordia-Topeka Hayden, 8:15

Saturday, March 10

Game 7 (Third Place)--Loser of game 5 vs. loser of game 6, 2:45 p.m.

Game 8 (State Championship)--Winner of game 5 vs. winner of game 6, 8:15

losing to Elsmore, 61-52.

Entering play today, Mulvane has the largest student body among the eight finalists at Salina, which just might be a plus for Mason's troopers.

Mulvane is one of the larger class 4A schools in Kansas with an enrollment of 371. Only Atchison (the biggest) with 379 students and DeSoto with 377 are larger Class 4A teams.

Concordia is next with an enrollment at the first of this year at 359, followed by Topeka Hayden with 354, Nickerson with 315, Tonganoxie with 299, Colby with 271 and Girard with 264 students. The smallest Class 4A State Tournament entry is Osawatomie, which boasts of 245 students.

Nickerson sophomore Curtis Stange is not only playing for school tradition, he's also playing for family tradition in a rather unusual way.

The Panther starter is following in some heavy footsteps and has helped guide Nickerson to its third state tournament with a Stange in the starting line-up.

In 1981, an older brother, Randy Stange, was an all-stater and lifted the Panthers to a state tourney berth.

In the late 1950s, Curtis' father, Herb, was a Nickerson standout, sparking Nickerson into the state meet at Hutchinson before going on to be a little All-American at Fort Hays.

A review of the last seven years hasn't produced a glowing report for Chisholm Trail League teams in state tournament fields. The Wildcats hope to change that trend this year.

A year ago, Andover advanced surprisingly into the Class 4A state meet only to get slaughtered by eventual champ-

ion Topeka Hayden. Dunler crusaded into fourth place in the Class 5A meet.

The only CTL team to qualify for a state meet in 1981-82 was Rose Hill and the Rockets finished fourth. The previous season none of the CTL teams advanced into state tournament action.

Kingman made the league's best showing in 1979-80 by waltzing to the Class 4A championship, winning every game by 12 points or more. Goddard was eliminated in the first round of the 5A state meet in the 1978-79 season, as was Valley Center in the 4A state meet that same year.