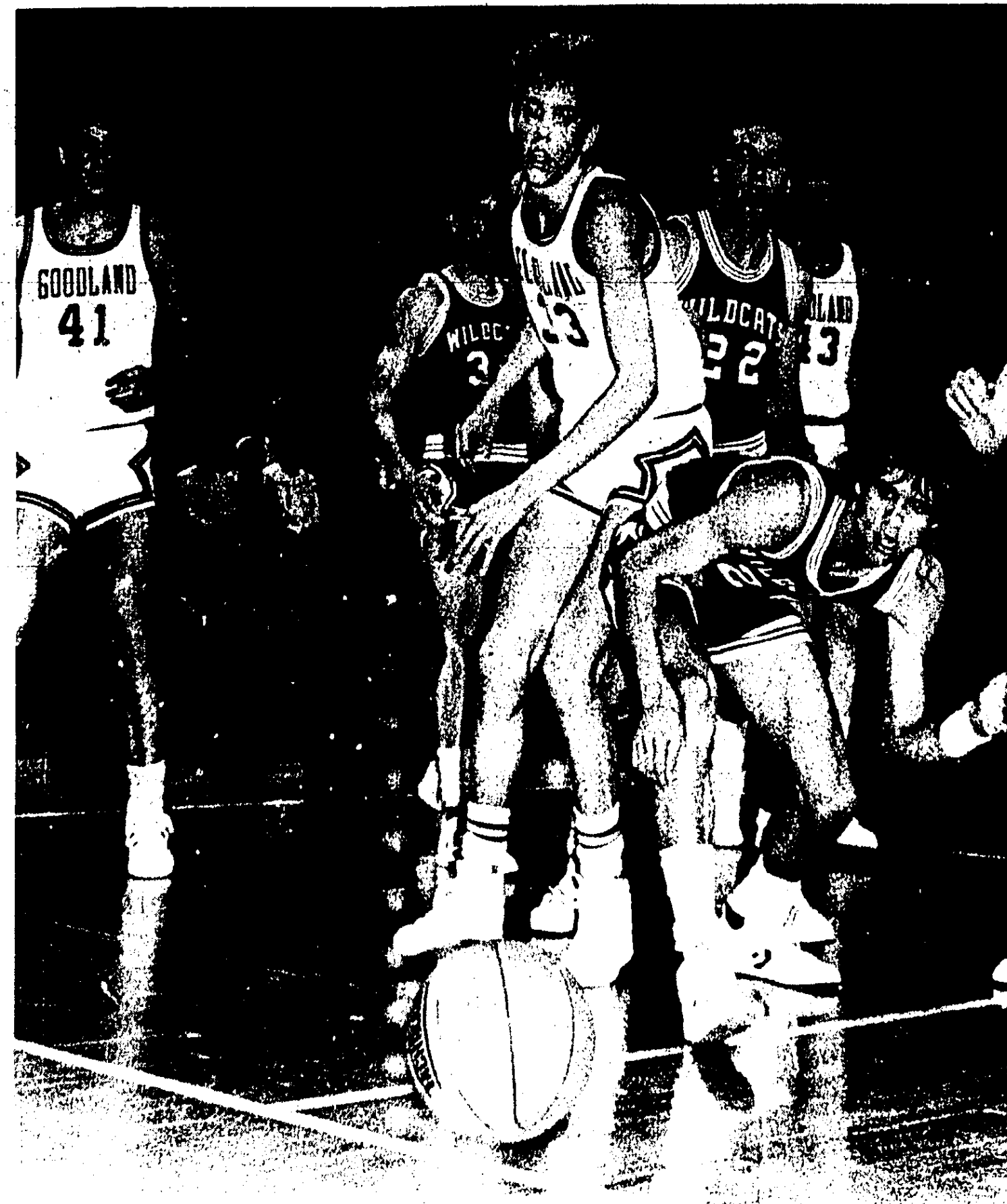


Cowboys Outdraw Cats In 1st Game



Morgan LeClair [25] scrambles for loose ball at State Tournament as Bryson Butts [22] and Andrew Swayne [30] move in

Photo by Rick Ebersole

'First Game Theory' Proves Itself, Junior Fox Scores 'A Quiet 35'

SALINA--Although Mulvane's appearance in the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) Class 4A State Tournament this year may have been abbreviated, Coach Charlie Mason's Wildcats left their mark.

Beaten in the opening round, 68-63, by a good Goodland team, the Wildcats' Todd Fox lit up the scoreboard with his finest 32 minutes of basketball. The skinny 6-foot, one-inch junior scored a "quiet 35" points, barely missing the tournament record set by Jim Baxter in 1959 when Baxter poured in 39 points in one game.

"Todd had a ball game," said Mason, who guided the Cats to the 4A state crown just two years ago. "It's one you only dream about...35 points, 10 rebounds and five steals. And it didn't seem like Todd was scoring that much. Usually when someone scores 35 points, you think of him dominating the action, but Todd just got his shots when he could. Someone on a Topeka radio station I understand said he got a 'quiet 35.' I was standing there after the game and they announced the scoring. I was surprised. I thought Curtis (Hicks) had more points."

The slender Fox put his points together in workman-like fashion, hitting 14 of 23 field goals to constantly keep the Wildcats in the game against the Cowboys.

It wasn't a "quiet 35" for Fox, though. He knew he had a bunch. "I guess it was (a 'quiet 35')," said Fox. "I felt I was hitting and just kept on going. I had an idea how many I had but I didn't know for sure."

Although it was a one-game high this year for the Cats (Andrew Swayne dumped in 31 in the first round of the sub-state against Wellington), it was by no means the school record. Chuck Glaser, now a math teacher at MHS, added up 54 points way back when.

Mason has always been a believer in the "first game theory." Even when the Wildcats made the state championship in 1984, Mason predicted the first game would be the toughest and it was.

"I don't really know why but it seems to be true that that first game is always the toughest," said Mason, who completed his 7th season at the Cats' helm. "I think if we could have gotten by Goodland, we could have reached the finale. That's all speculation now, of course because we didn't get that first one. I know two years ago, our first one



was the toughest."

In the 1984 rush to the championship, the Cats had to pull off an amazing rally in the final three or four minutes to pass Nickerson, 65-60. After that, the Cats mowed 'em down by a 57-34 count (Tonganoxie) and by 64-50 (Topeka Hayden in the finals).

"I think one of the reasons that first game is so tough is because of the Bicentennial Center," added the Cat bossman. "Kind of like the Abilene coach said, playing in the Bicentennial Center is like playing no place else because of the vast openness behind the baskets at each end. It makes it difficult to judge distances because the kids always have played with something—a wall, people, a curtain—behind the basket."

"It's an imposing space but that really isn't what beat us. We went up against a 20-3. That beat us. You can't be 20-3 and get there (in the state tournament) and not be something."

Goodland coach Don Smith played on the Goodland team in 1963 that went to the state championship game before losing to Russell. A guard on that Cowboy outfit, Smith readily admits he was a member of that team.

What he didn't tell this paper prior to the game was that Goodland set a record that year, a record in facility. Goodland scored the fewest points in 4A history that year when Russell won the championship by a 20-16 count.

"I remember that game very well," said Smith, anticipating the question of just how many points he contributed to the outcome. "I scored 10 points. One other kid on the team scored six in the first half and I scored all 10 of our points in the second half. We went into that game figuring the only way we could win would be to slow it down because in those days, Russell had a powerhouse."

The shooting by Fox didn't really surprise the Cowboy coach, although the length and scope of Fox's effort did. "We had scouting reports that said he was a good shooter and a good streak shooter in particular," said Smith. "If that's true, he maintained an outstanding streak that continued the whole game. We only had one other boy all

season long score more than 20 points and that was Norman Schippers of Thomas More Prep. He scored 28 on us when they beat us at home earlier. The next time, though, we held him to 14." Schippers, of course, is an outstanding prospect and on everybody's "all" lists. "I'll tell you, you're boy (Fox) should really be proud of the game he had."

The community of Mulvane also was represented in the 3A State Tournament at Hutchinson in a round-about way. Official Rod Spatz of Mulvane was one of the "zebras" who worked the 3A tournament games all three days.

Mulvane and Goodland could have had a previous meeting in the state tournament. Both schools made it into the "Elite Eight" in 1965 and both were knocked off in the first round.

Mulvane, coached by Jerry Webster that year, went 13-7 in 1964-65 and lost in the first round at Hutchinson to Larned, 49-44. Ironically, the Larned team was coached by Jerry's brother, Marvin.

Members of that team were Steve Roney, Bruce Kimble, Richard Dame, Dallas Johns, Frank Cobb, Steve Iverson, Mickey Davey, Greg Farber, Steve Carmichael, Gordon Long and Ted Richardson.

Goodland attempted to add some new strategy just for the Wildcats but it backfired and nearly enabled the Cats to advance. Smith said his scouting report warned about an outstanding pressure defense applied by Mason's Wildcats.

"Mulvane caused us some difficulty with their fine press," admitted Smith. "We went into the game knowing they had a good one so we tried to change things and it kind of backfired. Instead of taking care of the ball better, we turned it over more. We changed back to our old press-break later in the game and we didn't have as much trouble."

The Cowboys finished with 20 turnovers (Mulvane had but 12) and most came in the first three quarters.

"We played about as good as we could, good enough to win but Goodland played just a little better," added Mason. "You can't take anything away from our kids, though. We were one of the top eight teams in the state of Kansas and I'm just tremendously proud of the fact that we got there."

SALINA--It's a three-inch wide stripe some 15 feet from the basket but it became a home away from home for Goodland Thursday afternoon, March 13, in the Cowboys' first-round battle against Mulvane High School in the Kansas State High School Activities Association Class 4A State Tournament here at the Salina Bicentennial Center.

For Coach Charlie Mason's Wildcats, the stripe led to the exit as Goodland cashed in on 11 of 14 tries in the fourth quarter alone to spearhead a 68-63 comeback victory. As Mulvane was eliminated, so were MHS's chances for a second 4A state championship in three years. Favored Atchison nipped Pratt, 38-36, for its second straight championship and Abilene clipped Goodland, 69-64, to take third place.

"The difference was the foul line," testified Mason, whose Cats closed out the year at 13-11 in spite of a five-junior starting line-up. "It seemed like they were there the whole fourth quarter. You have to give them a lot of credit, though, they made the free throws when they had to."

Overall, the Cowboys from the North West Kansas League who finished the year at 21-5, hit 24 of 32 from the line.

The loss soiled the top-drawer effort by Mulvane forward Todd Fox, who gunned in 35 points as the Cowboys jammed up the middle. Fox, who also had 10 rebounds, hit 14 of 23 from the field and just missed the tournament record of 39 points set back in 1959 by Russell's Jim Baxter.

"Todd had a super game," said Mason. "They were closing down the inside with Morgan (LeClair) and Andrew (Swayne) and Todd got the shots. He has been consistent all season long but he was really knocking them down."

"We feel very fortunate that we were able to hit some big free throws," said Goodland coach Don Smith. "If we hadn't been successful, the momentum could have swung the other way. I was impressed with Mulvane, though, especially their scrappiness." Smith added his club, after shooting very poorly at the stripe in the early part of the season, had reeled off 12 consecutive victories down the stretch and had hit less than 60% from the line only once during that period.

For much of this first game of the 4A state extravaganza, it appeared the Wildcats just might hang on, but the wheels started coming off in the closing stages of the third quarter after Mulvane had gathered as much as a six-point lead, 39-33, as the MHS pressing defense worked its spell to force four straight Goodland turnovers. The beginning of the end started harmlessly enough as guard Curtis Hicks picked up his third foul late in the third quarter and went to the bench as the Cats tried to cling to a five-point lead. The Cowboys quickly attacked, throwing a full-court press of their own and by the third horn, the game was tied, 45-45. Hicks picked up his fourth foul early in the last period and the pressure never was the same.

"We tried to take advantage of that problem, yes," said Smith. "We thought that one of the keys was when Mulvane had the five-point lead and we put the press on and got ourselves quickly back in the ball game. Until then, the momentum was all with Mulvane. The whole game, the game teetered back and forth. I thought at times we were in control and other times like we were on the ropes. That five points at the end of the third quarter was a huge, huge factor...the biggest factor in the game."

Mason agreed the Wildcats weren't

LeClair, Fox, Hicks

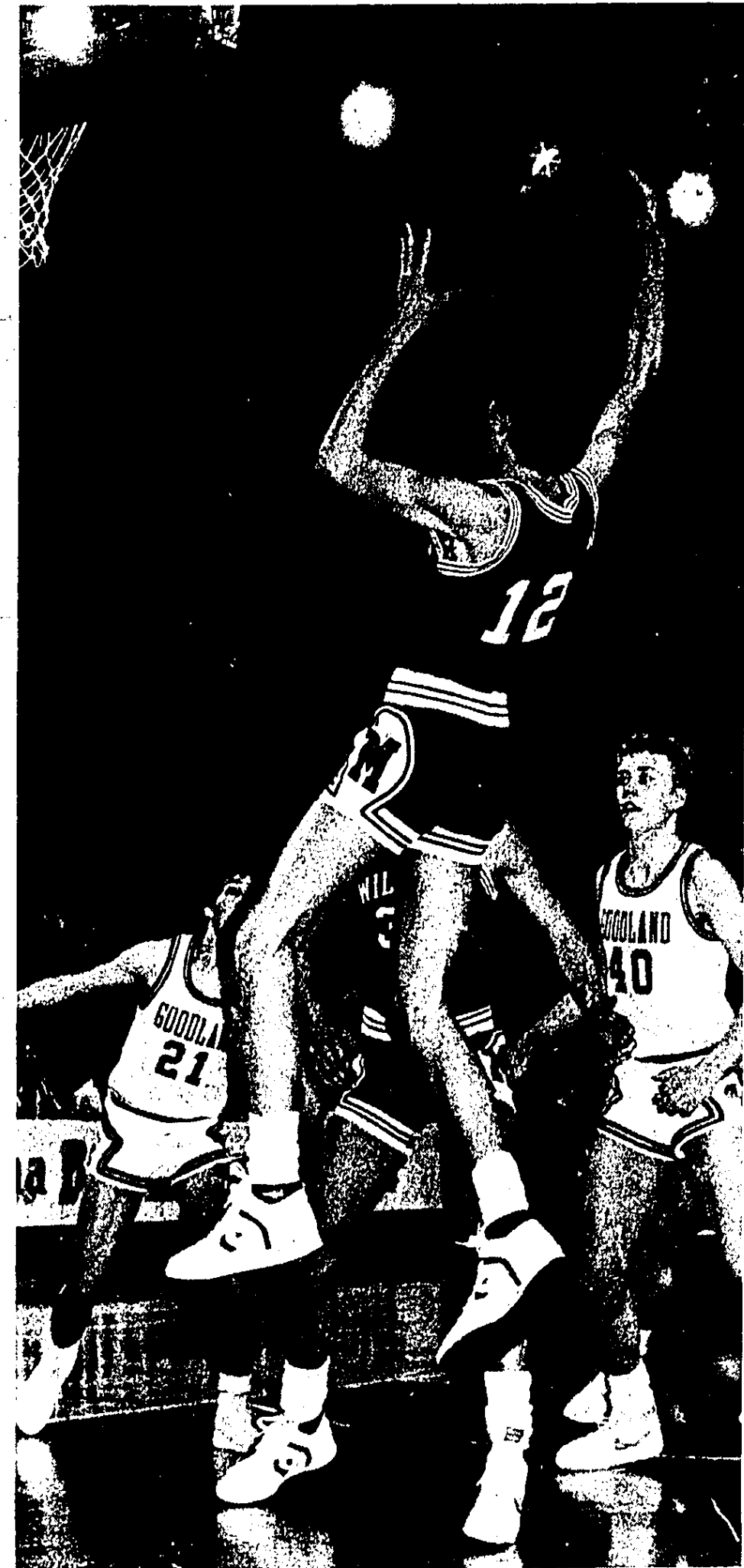
Three MHS Cagers All-League

Three Mulvane High School juniors were selected to the Chisholm Trail All-League team in the Division I at a coaches' meeting held Monday night, March 17, at Bush's Restaurant in Andale.

The meeting was hosted by Kingman. Coaches from all CTL teams were present and only those in Division I helped select Division I all-stars, and those coaches of Division II teams voted on the Division II standouts.

The three Wildcats making the all-league team were Morgan LeClair, Todd Fox and Curtis Hicks. The trio, fresh from guiding the Wildcats to a Class 4A state tournament berth, were selected along with nine other players for the Division I team.

Fox, who nearly shattered the single game 4A scoring record with a 35-point outburst in the Cats' first-round loss to Goodland, paced Mulvane with a 15.4-point scoring average, beating out frontcourt mate LeClair, who finished with a 14.6 average. Hicks, a guard, was the No. 3 scorer for Coach Charlie Mason's Wildcats with an 11.4 average. LeClair was the club's No. 1 rebounder.



35 points...and he rebounds, too--Mulvane's Todd Fox [12] boards one

Photo by Rick Ebersole

the same without Hicks but he also pointed to a couple of crucial misses from point-blank range when Mulvane was up by five. "Those missed lay-ups really hurt because we got the turnovers but didn't convert and that gave them the opportunity to go down and run their offense and get the fouls," said Mason.

Goodland's strategy of zoning tightly around the basket seemed to work because LeClair, the Cats' No. 1 scorer going into the state meet, and Swayne were held to only 11 points. LeClair scored seven and Swayne scored four. Together, they just managed 13 shots. That strategy also enabled the western Kansans to control the backboards. Goodland, with 6-foot, 3-inch Ted Busse pulling down 12 boards, had 37 rebounds to Mulvane's 27.

"Rebounding has been one of our major strengths," admitted Smith. "We have simply annihilated most teams on the boards this year. Several games we had 70 or 80 percent of the rebounds, so we feel to be successful, we have to have the boards. We got out-rebounded only four times all

season, two of those came in the state tournament and we lost both of those games."

Mason said Goodland's size did cause problems, especially for Mulvane's inside game. "They had four pretty good-sized kids in there and really jammed it inside," said Mason.

Behind Fox's outburst, Hicks was the only other scorer in twin figures, scoring 16 points.

KSHSAA CLASS 4A STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT AT SALINA'S BICENTENNIAL CENTER

Championship	
Atchison 38, Pratt 36	
Third Place	
Abilene 69, Goodland 64	
Semifinals	
Pratt 59, Goodland 56 (OT)	
Atchison 67, Abilene 60	
First Round	
Mulvane	14 15 16 18-63
Goodland	16 10 19 23-68
Mulvane-Todd Fox 35, Kyle Steadman 1, Curtis Hicks 16, Morgan LeClair 7, Andrew Swayne 4, FG 27-57, FT 9-15, F 22.	
Goodland-Derek Mull 6, Mitch Jamison 15, Lance Ithrig 1, Shad Brouillette 7, Jon Pfau 17, Ted Busse 21, Tony Brown 1, FG 22-42, FT 24-32, F 15.	

Pratt 60, Paola 48	
Abilene 70, Garnett 39	
Atchison 51, Topeka Hayden 33	

CHISHOLM TRAIL LEAGUE FINAL BOYS BASKETBALL STANDINGS

Team	League		Overall
	W	L	
x-Buhler	9	1	18 8
Valley Center	7	3	16 7
Mulvane	6	4	13 11
Augusta	3	7	9 12
Wellington	2	8	7 13
Goddard	3	7	7 14
x-won CTL championship			

Team	Division II		Overall
	W	L	
x-Clearwater	7	0	18 6
Andale	5	2	11 9
Rose Hill	4	3	15 8
Malze	4	3	12 9
Circle	3	4	9 13
Kingman	3	4	8 13
Andover	2	5	3 18
Chaparral	0	7	0 20
x-won CTL championship			

Others selected to the elite all-league team included Jed Buehler, David Howell and 6-6 Allen Martens, all of Buhler, the division champs; guard Kevin Shaw and center Mike Whitaker of Valley Center; Craig Sharp of Augusta; Jeff Roberts of Goddard and Rich McKain and John Wetta of Wellington.

Bergen was selected the loop's "most valuable player" after pacing the Crusaders to the Division I title and

third place in the 5A state tournament. Only four of the Division I honorees were junior, the three from Mulvane and Bagen.

"I'm pleased that we had three kids selected," said Mason. "I think that says something about the people we have. They are all deserving. This is the first year I can remember that the league has gone with 12 on the first team and no honorable mentions. It gives the kids some recognition and it's also good for our program."

Buhler won the league and Valley Center's Hornets finished second. The Wildcats took third with an all-junior line-up, finishing 13-11 overall.

The Division II CTL all-star unit announced included Kendall Gammon and Mark Potts of Rose Hill, Robbie Helm of Malze; Jeff Ramsey and Chris Hickman of Clearwater; David Allen of Andover; Jim Hollinger of Circle; David Yandall of Chaparral; Ron Beat of Kingman; and Steve Winter and Bill Nilles of Andale.

Clearwater sailed through the CTL Division II competition to post a 7-0 record. Second was Andale.