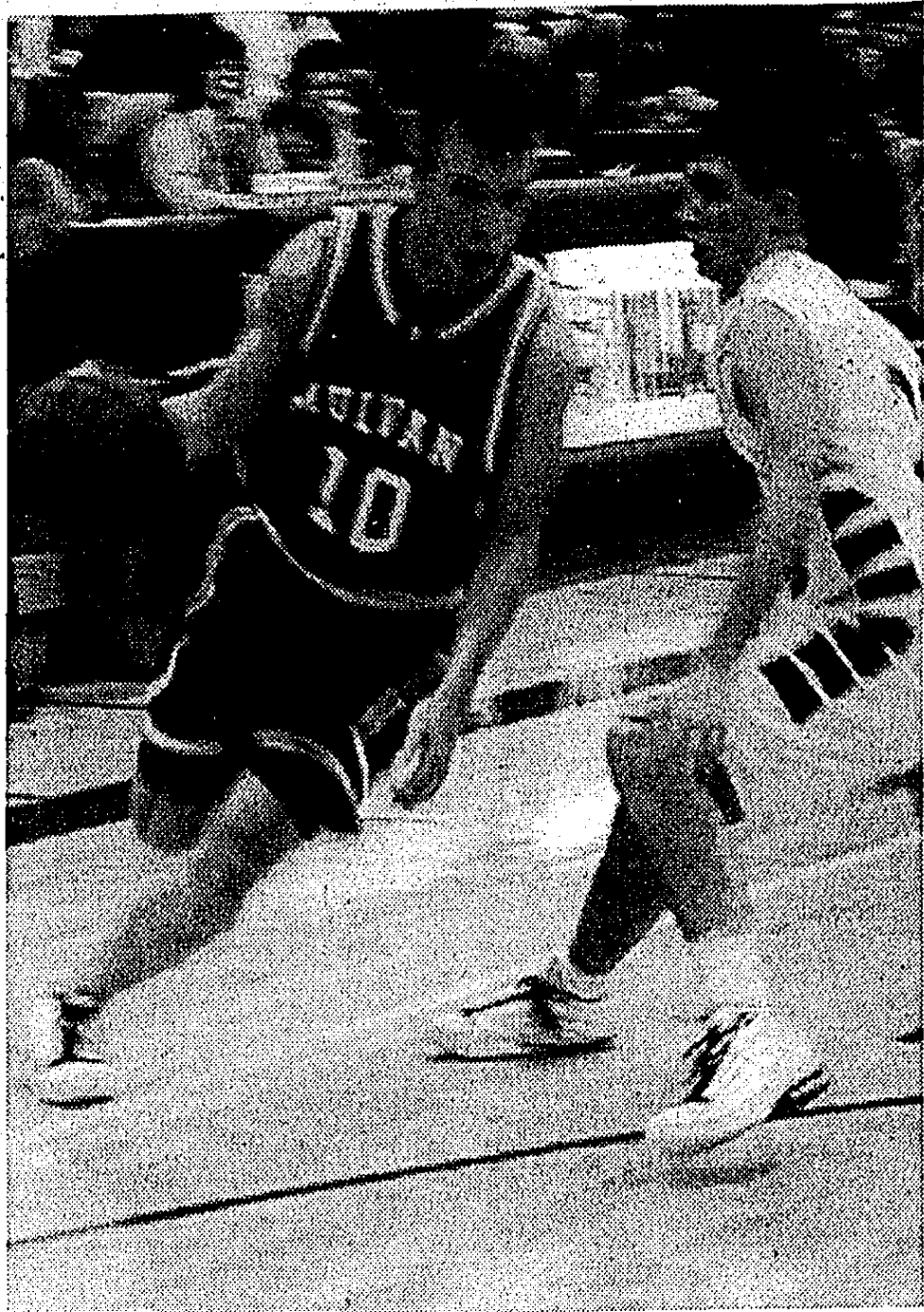


Math Didn't Add; Too Many Misses



Junior Dusty Sorensen (10) dribbles past a Rocket player on the way to a bucket

For Mulvane High School boys basketball coach Ryan Herrs, winning the Oxford Early Season Tournament Saturday night, Dec. 8, was simply a lesson in math.

"We made it as difficult as we possibly could," said Herrs, "meaning we had a season high in turnovers and a season low at free throw line. We hit nine of 25 at the line and lost by 10 points. We missed 16 free throws. That's the answer to the math problem. And we ended up with 26 turnovers, by far our worst this year."

The Wildcats, winners of one game all of last season, doubled that figure by blasting through Oxford and Douglass in the first two nights but in what proved to be the championship game Saturday afternoon, Dec. 8, the Rose Hill Rockets were up to the task and dropped the Cats, 52-42, to take first place in the early-season meet.

The Wildcats started the tournament Thursday night by pounding Oxford, 58-34, in their first game of the season. The next night, the Cats bounced Douglass by a 51-38 score.

Overall, Herrs was happy to start with two wins but felt like it could have been three. "Our free throw shooting was disappointing because we fight very hard and in practice, we work hard every day at the free throw line. You just have to make those shots, so from that standpoint, it hurt to not make them which was one factor that led to us losing the game."

Mulvane actually jumped out quickly on the RH boys, leaving by as many as six points in the first quarter before Rose Hill made a run to get back to within two, 10-8, at the quarter break. After that, it was Rocket night.

"We never could get inside 10 points on a consistent basis," said Herrs. "We had it to six or so a couple of times in the 4th quarter but we couldn't get a stop and they had the answer every time we got it down there."

The biggest problem was that Mulvane hit only nine of 25 at the line. You can't make a run missing free throws. And Herrs wasn't sure how many turnovers his Cats had but it was enough to keep the Rose Hill run fuelled.

"They came out and trapped and that bothered us," stressed Herrs. "Decision-making and ballhandling, those are things that killed us. That's why I was very disappointed in that game. It was a winnable game for us. It was one of those games we wanted to take advantage of. I think it hurt our pride, so maybe it can be one that we can learn from."

Herrs went back to one area which has been a problem for Mulvane basketball—confidence, or lack of it.

"They came out and threw everything and the kitchen sink at us and we just lost our confidence," said Herrs. "The kids dripped their heads. I could see it in their eyes at halftime. Confidence is something we showed in the earlier two games but we started missing a few shots and they threw a triangle and two at us, manning up on Luke (Gunter) and Troy (Johnson) and nobody

else stepped forward. We have enough talent that somebody should have. These kids are capable of being the guys to step up, but they didn't Saturday night."

Nine players scored but only Johnson with 16 points showed much consistency. After that, the production dropped off to six points by Dusty Sorensen and four each by sophomores Zach Kimble and Nick Hansen and senior guard Gunter.

Johnson did break the school record in rebounds for a single game when he raked in 23 boards against the Rockets. The old record was 20 rebounds by Courtney Gammon (Kendall's older brother) in 1978 and Todd Fox in 1987.

Johnson also had a game-high 16 points,

too. Junior Dusty Sorensen scored six points and Gunter and sophomores Nick Hansen and Zach Kimble finished with four apiece.

Mulvane had better balanced scoring against Douglass Friday night, Dec. 7, as Johnson hit for 15, Gunter scored 13, Sorensen had six and Tyler Hennes and Hansen scored five.

"We played a really good ball game against Douglass, but we still had too many turnovers," said Herrs. "What set us apart was our shooting. It was our best shooting night, especially in the third quarter."

The Wildcats jumped out early on Oxford, giving Herrs plenty of time to look at everybody. "We ran on them and we got some easy shots," pointed out Herrs. "We also were able to get the ball inside on them."

Johnson led the scoring again with 17 points. Sorensen finished with 10 points, Jeremy Adams had eight and John Beggs and Kimble had seven and six, respectively.

The Cat boys will have to bring their "A game" Friday night, Dec. 14, when Valley Center comes to town for the first league game.

Oxford Early Season

Boys Tournament

CHAMPIONSHIP

Mulvane 10 11 7 14-42
Rose Hill 8 19 11 14-52

Mulvane—Brian Blue 2, Luke Gunter 4, Dusty Sorensen 6, Troy Johnson 16, Gavin Snider 2, Tyler Hennes 2, John Beggs 2, Nick Hansen 4, Zach Kimble 4. FG 16 (1), FT 9-20, F 24.

Rose Hill—Ben Karlake 5, Brad Hoglund 3, David Dickerson 7, Brandon Eicher 12, B.J. Whitelock 15, Steve Parker 7, Lance Frey 2, Jake Scott 1. FG 15 (3), FT 19-30, F 19.

THIRD PLACE

Douglass 49, Oxford 45

SECOND ROUND

Douglass 14 8 6 10-38
Mulvane 13 13 11 14-51

Douglass—Tyler Condon 5, Kyle Slay 5, Nick Barnes 4, Brian Stiner 2, Brandon Hermreck 9, Dallas Cockrell 13. FG 15 (1), FT 7-17, F 14.

Mulvane—Tyler Hennes 5, Gavin Snider 3, Troy Johnson 15, Zach Kimble 4, Nick Hansen 5, Luke Gunter 13, Dusty Sorensen 6. FG 20 (5), FT 6-11, F 20.

Rose Hill 61, Oxford 42

FIRST ROUND

Mulvane 17 14 12 15-58
Oxford 7 13 2 12-34

Mulvane—Dusty Sorensen 10, Caleb Alexander 3, Luke Gunter 2, Grant Snider 1, Zach Kimble 6, Nick Hansen 3, Troy Johnson 17, John Beggs 7, Jeremy Adams 8, Tyler Hennes 1. FG 21 (1), FT 15-30, F 22.

Oxford—Mark Cornejo 4, Brady Short 2, Bryce Bartelson 3, Adam Cornejo 2, Matt Lowry 5, Aaron Korte 5, Jon Kilts 4, Josh Hill 4, Andy Short 1, Jason Emley 4. FG 10 (0), FT 14-21, F 25.

Rose Hill 77, Douglass 56