

Cats Push Circle Hard

Back-to-back games against the Circle Thunderbirds showed Mulvane High School cage coach Todd Barker something.

"It showed me we weren't as bad as we looked in the first game," said Barker. "We really played a good ball game. It would have been nice to be on the winning side of it, but for the most part, I was pleased. They difference is they just shot the ball extremely well. They didn't seem to miss in the second half, which makes it extremely tough to make up ground."

Circle's T-Birds came to Mulvane Tuesday night, Dec. 11, for the first Chisholm Trail League game for both teams and they rocked the Cats, 79-73. Three nights earlier, Circle had demolished Mulvane in the finals of the Circle Tournament.

"We were in it all the way but they made their free throws as well as their field goals down the stretch and we never could make up ground," said Barker, whose Wildcats slipped to 2-2 after a hot start. "We got within two in the fourth quarter but had a turnover and they started sitting on it. We also had a couple wild plays and the ball fell through the hole for them."

Varsity Boys

Circle	18	20	15	26-79
Mulvane	16	16	13	28-73

Circle—Justin Shelman 3, Tony Zager 5, Josh Wilshire 4, Casey Hummel 19, Jared Swilley 15, Dan Claycamp 26, Ryan Murphy 7. FG 26 (2), FT 25-33, F 19.

Mulvane—Jeremy Brown 20, Mike Abasolo 15, Greg Nunn 14, Neil Gosch 5, James Baker 17, Brad Canfield 2. FG 25 (6), FT 17-21, F 26.

Circle Thunderbird Boys Classic Results

CHAMPIONSHIP

Circle	4	30	13	17-64
Mulvane	13	10	0	23-46

Circle—Tony Zager 8, Dan Claycamp 18, Casey Hummel 10, Justin Shelman 4, Jason Swilley 7, Jared Swilley 3, Ryan Murphy 7, Josh Wilshire 7. FG 16- (5), FT 27-43, F 21.

Mulvane—Neil Gosch 10, Brad Canfield 7, James Baker 9, Jeremy Brown 2, Greg Nunn 11, Luke Cox 4. FG 16- (2), FT 12-18, F 28.

THIRD PLACE

Andover 68, El Dorado 65

FIFTH PLACE

Independence 67, Wellington 57

SEVENTH PLACE

Arkansas City 68, Chanute 53

SEMIFINALS

Andover	11	13	23	22-69
Mulvane	17	20	17	24-78

Andover—Chris Zerbe 19, David Jack 6, Casey Wilson 3, Brett Watson 14, Mike Brown 11, Wes Middleton 8, Mau Baldwin 8. FG 22 (5), FT 20-27, F 24.

Mulvane—Mike Abasolo 22, Brad Canfield 5, James Baker 17, Jeremy Brown 21, Neil Gosch 8, Darrin Erbert 3, Luke Cox 2. FG 32 (1), FT 13-29, F 24.

Circle 48, El Dorado 45

Wellington 72, Chanute 65

Independence 84, Arkansas City 75

What really hurt the Cats' effort, though, was Circle's shooting. The Thunderbirds hit 10 of 13 shots from the field in the second half and also went 18 for 25 from the free throw stripe in the 4th quarter alone, which kept the Cats at bay although they chalked up 28 4th quarter points as senior Jeremy Brown scored 11 and James Baker had six.

"The biggest difference in the two games is that we had everybody on the floor," noted Barker. "Mike (Abasolo) played the whole game and both Jeremy and James were out there. I think the kids were more confident and didn't get shook like they did last Saturday."

Brown led the Wildcat scoring with 20 points but he had plenty of help from Baker with 17, Abasolo with 15 and reserve Greg Nunn with 14. Nunn popped in four three-pointers to help keep the Cats in the game.

The Thunderbirds, now undefeated at 4-0, took the lead early and expanded it by 10 points several times during the game before Mulvane turned up the heat and got back into it late in the game.

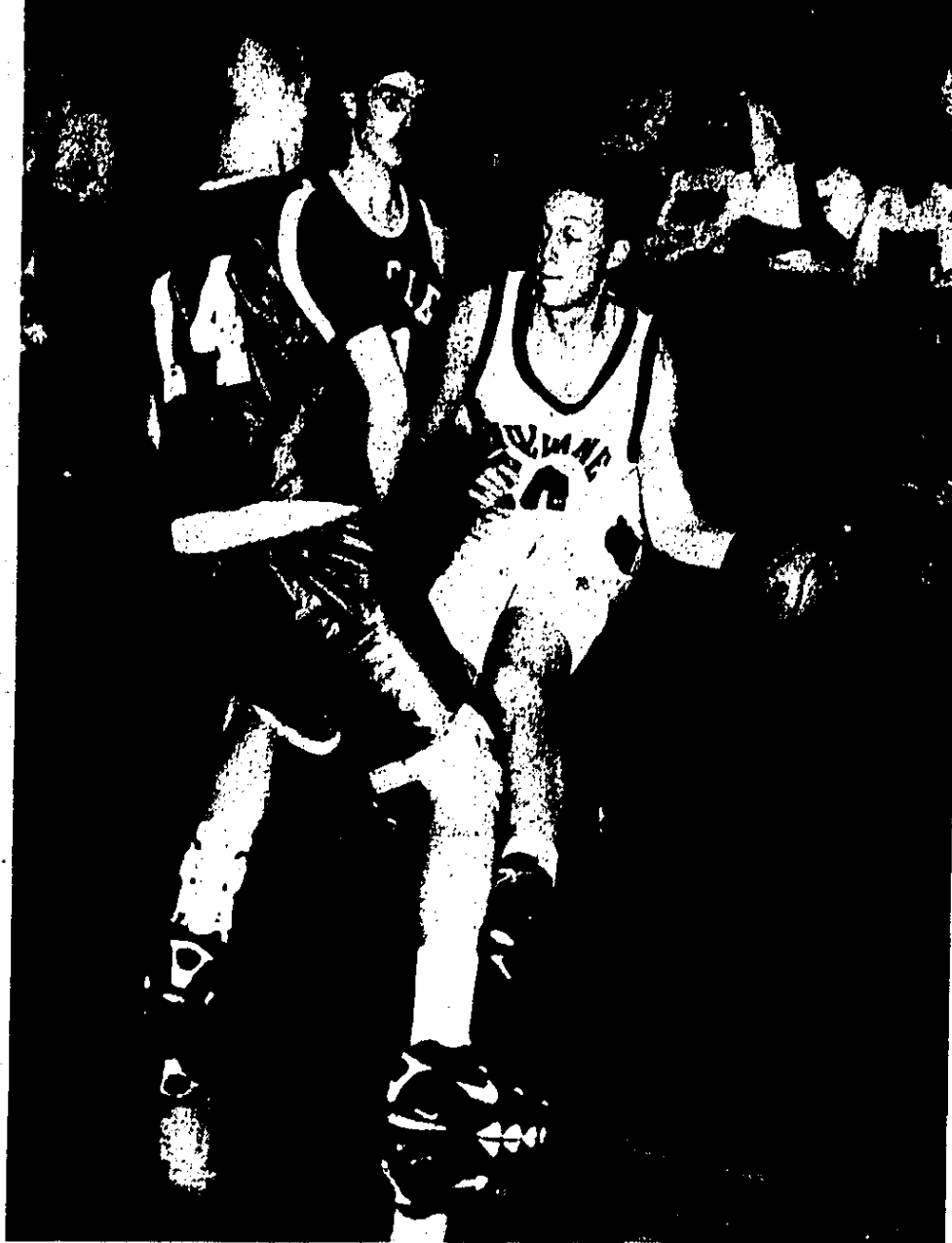
The Wildcats almost wrote a Pulitzer Prize winner in the Circle Thunderbird Boys Classic, but the bottom fell out in the championship game against the host Thunderbirds and Coach Barker had to settle for just a great start.

The Wildcats followed up their first-round shocker against Independence by trimming Andover, 78-69, Friday, Dec. 8, to reach the championship game, but Circle survived an early push by the Cats to run away with a 64-46 title game Saturday night, Dec. 9.

Mulvane nearly decked Circle early, rolling out to a 12-0 lead, but the T-Birds got it back together and befuddled the Wildcats the rest of the way. They out-scored Mulvane, 30-10, to get control in the second quarter, then held Mulvane scoreless in the third quarter.

It was an amazing game of runs. "I guess if we were writing the script, it would have been nice to have another winner," said Barker with a smile. "It was just a series of things that started going wrong. We couldn't buy basket and they started hitting everything they threw up there. They didn't make any magical changes but it just changed on us and we couldn't do anything for a while. We had a bunch of mental let-downs, and the technical didn't help."

It was as if the Evil Step-Sisters from Circle got boots out for the Cinderella Cats to try on—and they fit, as the Thunderbirds



Neil Gosch (40) looking for a pass inside against Circle in T-Bird Tournament

peeled off an incredible 50-10 gallop from the first quarter through the end of the third frame. It all started with a couple Circle baskets and escalated into a full-blown Mulvane retreat after a technical foul on MHS's Mike Abasolo turned into a seven-point play for Circle to take the lead early in the second quarter.

"We got off to a great start and everything was clicking but once the wheels started coming off, they all came off," admitted Barker. "We got shook for a while and it took us another quarter to get it back together, but by that time, it was too late. And let's not take anything away from Circle because they played a great game."

It also didn't help to have starters Jeremy Brown and James Baker go out with injuries, and Abasolo get into foul trouble early and sit out most of the game.

It fell to juniors Neil Gosch and Greg Nunn to spark the offense. Gosch finished with 10 points and Nunn finished with 11. Center Brad Canfield finished with seven points and Baker had nine while reserve Luke Cox finished with four.

A night earlier, the second chapter of that Pulitzer was written as Mulvane was all over Andover in another shocker. "We played really good against Andover," said Barker. "We led the entire game. Our transi-

tion game was working again and we played real good defense against them. These are the same ingredients that were important in our first game win."

Abasolo and Brown were on fire against the Trojans. Abasolo finished with 22 points and Brown scored 21. Baker tossed in 17 points and Gosch and Canfield chipped in eight and five points, respectively.

The Cats will be going to Kingman Friday night, Dec. 15 for their second Chisholm Trail League outing before returning home Tuesday, Dec. 19, for their final game before the Christmas break against Andale.

Chisholm Trail League Boys Basketball Standings

DIVISION II

Team	League		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
Circle	1	0	4	0
Andale	0	0	4	1
Kingman	0	0	2	1
Chaparral	0	0	2	2
Rose Hill	0	0	1	2
Clearwater	0	0	1	3
Mulvane	0	1	2	2

DIVISION I

Buhler	0	0	4	0
Goddard	0	0	3	0
Valley Center	0	0	3	1
Andover	0	0	3	1
Augusta	0	0	1	1
Maize	0	0	1	1
Wellington	0	0	2	2