

# Hold Off Clearwater

# Lessons Learned For MHS

If nothing else, the Mulvane High School Wildcat boys are exciting! But can Coach Ryan Herra stand all that excitement?

The Wildcats' penchant for getting the lead, then watching it wash away in the fading moments of a game continued in the final two rounds of the Andale Arrowhead Shootout Friday and Saturday, Dec. 13-14, but the last round had a slightly different twist: the Cats won!

And they followed that up Tuesday night, Dec. 17, at home by getting away from the script...they got ahead, then, oh my, held on down the stretch to hand Clearwater a 62-57 setback in a game played at the MHS gym.

This time it was different. This time, the Cats handled the pressure. Ahead 58-52, with about 1:50 to play, Clearwater hit a three-pointer to cut the margin to 58-55 with 1:44 left. Guard Luke Gunter answered with a slick pass cutting down the middle to Gavin Snider under the bucket. Two points. Greg Flores followed after an Indian miss with a free throw but Clearwater cut it to four again, 61-57 with 48 seconds to tick.

And the Cats held their ground. Good defense, blocking out under the offensive boards and playing for the moment. Zach Kimble put a lid on it with one free throw with 18 seconds left.

Junior Guard Greg Flores knocked down five "threes" and finished with 22 points for the Wildcats. Kimble scored 18, Gavin Snider had 10 and seniors Tyler Hennes and Dusty Sorensen scored six and four, respectively, as the Cats won their second game in a row.

In their first win, the Wildcats followed "their script" to perfection in the first three quarters, burying Douglass under a mountain as they took a 30-20 halftime lead and made it 41-24 going into the final 12 minutes before putting the Douglass boys down in for Mulvane's first victory of the season, a 49-33 conquest of the Bulldogs.

A night earlier against Rose Hill, the Wildcats led much of the contest only to let Rose Hill scramble from behind in the final quarter for a 53-45 Rocket victory.

The Douglass game gave the Cats a 1-3 record. "That's the good part of that game, we got a 'W,'" said Coach Herra. "I wasn't overly impressed with our play, but we execute really, really well. What I am concerned most about is that we don't finish things. When we start hitting those shots, we're going to be a good team. Right now, I think the kids are thinking too much. You just need to forget about it and play ball. Quit thinking about all the scenarios."

In Mulvane's three previous losses, the Cats were ahead or right there going into the final quarter but they have had difficulty closing a game. You snooze, you lose!

"I have been very pleased with the way

we are running our offense and getting good shots," admitted the Wildcat taskmaster. "I can honestly say in the four games we have played to date, there were only about four shots that I didn't agree on. The kids are really working the offense and taking great shots. I am really proud of them in that respect.

"Our big problem is we think too much. I keep telling the kids you have to play for the moment. I tell them that all the time. You have to not worry about the future, you need to play for this moment, and when they start doing that, they are going to be a really good team."

They "played for the moment" against Douglass Saturday afternoon. The Cats simply pulled away from the Bulldogs. They outscored Douglass by 10 in the first half. There was no letdown in the 2nd half. Gavin Snider pumped in a team-best 12 points but balance was more critical. Eight players scored. Kimble had nine points and Tyler Hennes and Flores had eight each. Gunter had five and Grant Snider scored four.

"These kids are having to invent how to win for themselves," said Herra. "For the first time, I have a group of kids who really want to. It really means a lot to them and each one wants to do whatever it takes to get a victory."

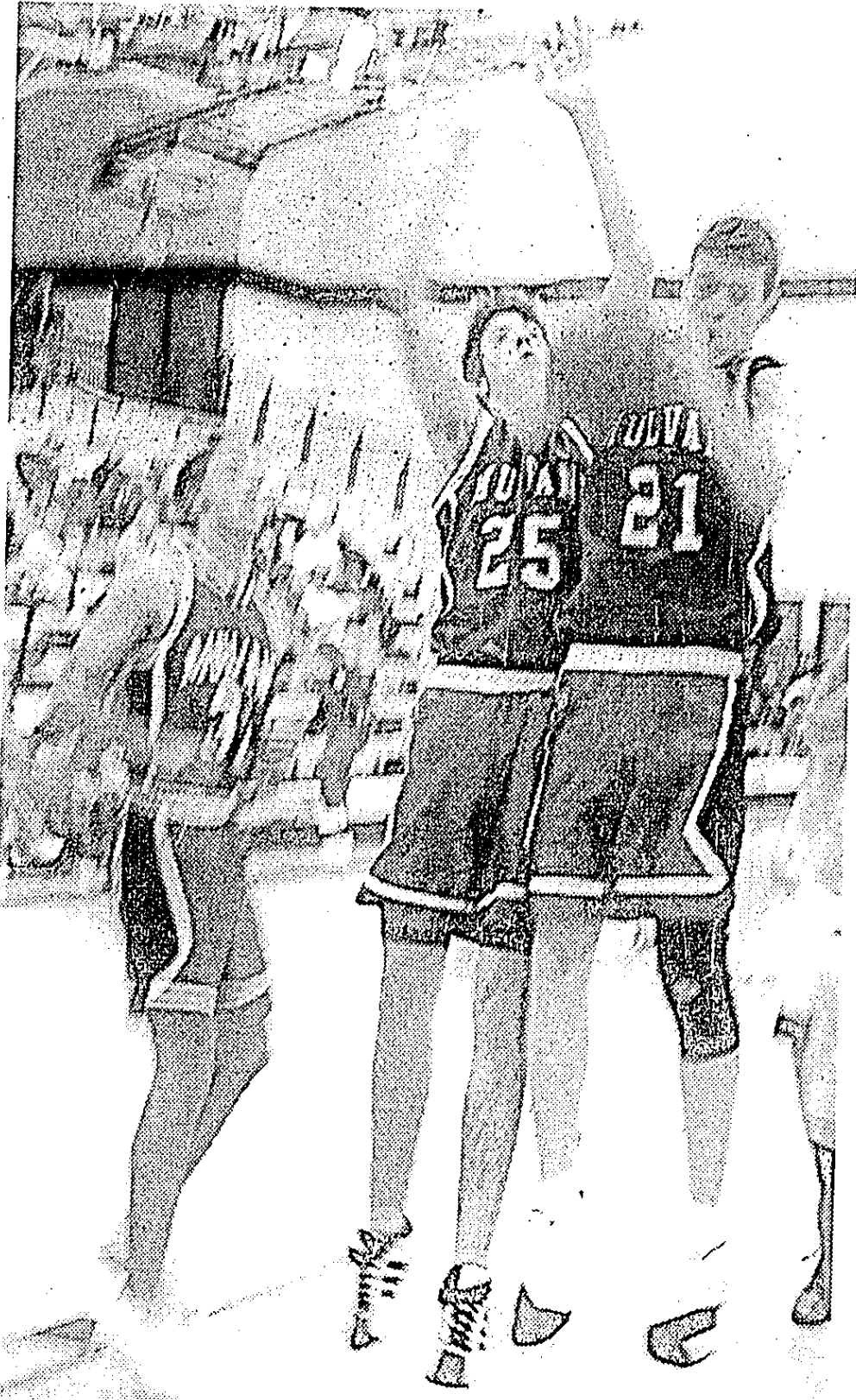
Herra was really happy with his club's defense. "Until the last 1:30 of the 4th quarter, they had only hit three shots from the field in the second half," said Herra. "That tells you something. Our kids are running their offense and running out every play. That's discipline. That's mentally tough and I think that's the way they're have to play the rest of the season for us to be successful."

Perspective is something that Herra keeps a good eye on. "We didn't beat a great, great team," said Herra, "but we won."

The Wildcats were locked up with the Rockets Friday until Rose Hill pulled away behind a 15-7 outburst in the 4th quarter. "We started thinking and worrying about things we can't control. We know people are going to pressure us. We had 16 turnovers in the first half but were still ahead of Rose Hill at halftime by three (27-24). The kids know how to get through that and it's just a matter of doing it."

Herra anticipates a season of excitement. Either the Cats will learn what it takes against pressure defenses or every game will be a nail-biter. "If people pressure you, you have to beat it and make them pay at the basket," said Herra. "Our kids want to get past that struggling against the press, and I believe they will."

Kimble was outstanding against the Rockets, who raised their record to 3-0 against the Cats, scoring 19 points. Gunter scored eight points, Hennes and Gavin Snider



Zach Kimble (21) and Tyler Hennes (25) control the boards against Clearwater

scored six each and Sorensen scored five.

The Cats will be going to Augusta Friday night, Dec. 20, for their last game before the

holiday break. It also will be their first Chisholm Trail League game and it comes against the defending 4A State champs.

## Varsity Boys

Clearwater 15, 14, 15, 13, 57

Mulvane 14, 19, 10, 19, 62

Clearwater: Derek Pike 4, Jacob Laha 14, Matt Westbrock 7, Mark Batten 5, Chris Lang 19, Jeff Brady 5. FG 23-44, FT 7-15, F 17

Mulvane: Tyler Hennes 7, Gavin Snider 10, Greg Flores 22, Dusty Sorensen 4, Luke Gunter 2, Zach Kimble 18. FG 21-51, FT 15-22, F 18

## Andale Arrowhead Shootout

### THIRD ROUND

Mulvane boys 17, 13, 11, 8, 49

Douglass boys 12, 8, 4, 9, 33

Mulvane boys: Grant Snider 12, Zach Kimble 9

Gavin Snider 4, Tyler Hennes 8, Greg Flores 8, Nick Hansen 3, Luke Gunter 5. FG 20-31, FT 6-8, F 16

Douglass boys: Nick Barnes 5, Matt Carselovey 8

Dallas Cockrell 11, Josh Wilson 2, Jared Peterson 3, Drew Logsdon 2, Derrick Keith 2. FG 13-31, FT 6-14, F 10

Andale boys 43, Rose Hill boys 35

### SECOND ROUND

Rose Hill boys 11, 13, 14, 15, 53

Mulvane boys 11, 16, 11, 7, 45

Rose Hill boys: Lance Frey 9, Blake Ringwall 5, Ben Karlsake 7, Brandon Eicher 16, Dennis Shirley 2, Steve Parker 9, Brad Hoglund 5. FG 17-41, FT 7-13, F 19

Mulvane boys: Luke Gunter 8, Greg Flores 1, Tyler Hennes 6, Dusty Sorensen 5, Zach Kimble 19, Gavin Snider 6. FG 15-21, FT 9-17, F 14

Andale boys 41, Douglass boys 34