

Bitter Pill For Wildcats

HAVEN—Instead of finding heaven in Haven, the Mulvane High School softball girls found heartbreak.

The Wildcat girls were trying to return to the Class 4A State Softball Tournament last week in the Haven 4A Regional but instead, the Cats found out that No. 1 seeded Clearwater was no laughing matter as the Indians nudged Mulvane, 3-2, Wednesday evening, May 19, to advance to the 4A State Tournament this weekend in Manhattan.

It was a bitter pill for the Wildcats to swallow, especially since they had made the State field in 1996 and 1998.

"We never could get the big hit when we needed it," confessed MHS Coach Charlie Mason. "We left seven runners on base. It was a clear case of missed opportunities, and we kind of hurt ourselves on the bases, too. We could have broken the game open in the 4th inning but we didn't get it done. You can't take anything away from Clearwater because they got it done when it counted."

Mulvane scored first and had hard-throwing Kassie Hargrove on the mound. In fact, Hargrove and her relief, freshman Sara Simpson, yielded only four hits but Clearwater bunched three of them in the 5th to score all three of its runs. In the 2nd, Ashley Wirths reached on a walk and scored when Hargrove banded out a single and an error gave Wirths the plate.

The 4th inning left a burning memory for the Cats, who finished the season at 16-6 but short of the "Promised Land." Jessica Sheridan started things with a single and stole second. Wirths reached on an error with Sheridan scoring. After two outs, Aubrey Benjamin kept it going for the top of the order with a single, putting runners on the corners, but that was it.

Mulvane had two more hits in the 5th when Shelley Richards and Sheridan singled with two out but that rally also faded with no runs.

Meanwhile, Hargrove was on cruise control, facing the minimum 12 batters through four innings before bad things happened. Two hits scored a run and Mulvane failed to get anybody out in a rundown situation which gave the 18-4 Indians another run to tie it before they won it on a base hit and an error.

In semifinal games, the Cats handled Wellington, 4-0, behind a two-hit shutout by Shelley Richards, who also struck out 12. Sheridan had two RBIs and two hits in that one and Richards also had two hits and an RBI as the Wildcats broke out early with a three-run 1st inning.

Haven Class 4A Regional Softball Tournament

CHAMPIONSHIP

Mulvane 010 100 0—2 9

Clearwater 000 030 x—3 4

Kassie Hargrove, Sara Simpson 5, and Shelley Richards; Biby and Loger.

SEMIFINALS

Wellington 000 000 0—0 2

Mulvane 300 100 0—4 9

Holly Meeker and Sandell; Shelley Richards and Danielle Vanderhoof.

Clearwater 8, Haven 4