

Indians Prevail, But Cats Respond

It was light day and night, like sweet and sour, like heaven and ...well, you get the picture.

The Mulvane High School basketball girls searched their souls after one of their worst games of the season and rebounded Friday night, Jan. 9, with one of their best as they gave Clearwater a run before bowing by a 65-55 count.

The loss dropped Coach Kelly Dennis' warriors to 3-5 for the year and 1-4 in the Chisholm Trail League, but it could prove to be one of those "good losses." "I thought we played much, much better than we did the game before," said Dennis after Clearwater stretched its record to 7-0 by dumping her Wildcats. "There was no comparison with the way the girls played. It was the hardest we have played all year long and it's that type of effort we need. If you play hard like that, you have a chance, and we had a chance the whole ball game. If we could have gotten a couple of threes to fall late in the game, we could have won it. Lindsay (Kendrick) came down and hit one three and I thought that was the spark, but Clearwater came right back and hit one. We just never could get over the hump."

The Wildcats were within a couple of baskets in the last two-to-three minutes but the Indians used that leverage to force Mulvane into gambling late in the game, which helped Clearwater stretch its lead to a comfortable margin by the time the clock had expired.

"One of the big factors is that we gave them too many good shots," said the Wildcat mentor. "When you give up 15 layups in a game, it's tough to beat anybody. That enabled Clearwater to shoot much better than we did percentage-wise."

And it spoiled Mulvane's best shooting game of the season. The Cats hit 38% from the floor (17 of 45) but Clearwater was 20 of 42 (48%).

"Many of their layups came off our turnovers," said Dennis. "We were about even on turnovers, we had 22 and they had 19, but they did something with their turnovers. Their turnovers came in our end and we weren't able to convert them to points. It seemed like every time we had a turnover or a bad pass, they were gone down the floor and hitting for two points. We always had to set up the offense and run something after getting a turnover."

Dennis finally got the kind of effort she expected, though, as the Wildcats battled and scrapped against the Indians. "We did a lot of good things out there," said Dennis, "and much of it was because we played harder. I thought we were more mentally into the game than at any time this season. This is the kind of intensity I thought we

Varsity Girls

Mulvane	11	8	18	18-56
Clearwater	20	13	17	15-65

Mulvane—Lindsay Kendrick 13, Jackie McCoplin 8, Kassie Hargrove 5, Melissa Buchanan 2, Kristin Buchanan 15, Shelley Richards 12. FG 20 (3), FT 12-18, F 25

Clearwater—Amy Bloomer 8, Emily Chambers 8, Rikki Hall 29, Emily Dunn 2, Tara Pauly 4, Faith Struthers 10, Megan Loger 4. FG 24 (4), FT 13-37, F 14.

Junior Varsity Girls

Mulvane	4	13	3	10-30
Clearwater	10	10	6	16-42

Mulvane—Ariin Leonard 12, Natalie Turner 2, Jana Smith 6, Shiriah Craft 3, Kristal LaPlant 3, Piper Roy 4. FG 12 (0), FT 6-10, F 27.

Clearwater—Mary Gannaway 3, Denise Seiter 4, Robyn Gerlach 1, Ericka Simon 2, Ashli Gardner 2, Della Lister 7, Brenda Seiter 10, Bonnie Charles 13. FG 14 (0), FT 14-33, F 14.

could have this season, and we finally showed it."

Clearwater jumped ahead quickly as freshman sensation Rikki Hall scored 13 points in the opening half. The Indians marched out to a 20-11 lead after one quarter but couldn't put Mulvane away because of poor free throwing. The Indians hit only two-of-13 tosses in the second quarter.

That seemed to set a fire because after intermission, Mulvane won the game, outscoring Clearwater, 36-32, in the final two periods. "Early in the game, we had difficulty getting the ball past their press," said Dennis, "which led to a lot of easy baskets."

Another problem was that Cat insider, Melissa Buchanan, picked up three fouls in the first quarter and had to take a seat. She ended up with only two points. Her younger sister, Kristin, however, picked up the slack, scoring a career-best 15 points off the bench. "Those early fouls kept Melissa on the bench and she never got untracked," said Dennis. "Luckily, Kristin picked it up with the kind of game we've been expecting her to have all year, so hopefully, there will be more of that to come. Heather Williams also gave us some good moments off the bench, and (guard) Jackie McCoplin had her best offensive game of the season."

Kendrick hit her season high, too, scoring 13 points. Junior Shelley Richards scored 12 points and McCoplin scored eight to give the Wildcats their best balance of the year in the scoring department. Kassie Hargrove finished with five points as Mulvane scored its highest points in a game this season.

Sure, it was disappointing to lose but Dennis was mostly encouraged. "There were a lot of encouraging angles to this game," stressed Dennis. "We did a lot of good things that we can build on Friday night, so it wasn't all lost. Now, we have to go into the next game like it was a sub-state and play well. We need to build some more. These next two games are big ones for us because we have to win them both."