

'Learning Curve' Looking Straight

The "learning curve" is starting to get straight, and in the case of the Mulvane High School girls basketballers, that's straight as in up.

The inexperienced Wildcats looked more like veterans when they tangled with Rose Hill Friday night, Jan. 14, in a Chisholm Trail League game as they posted a come-from-behind victory in the second half against the Rockets. Mulvane out-scored Rose Hill, 30-15, in the final two quarters to complete a 44-40 comeback triumph on the road.

It was the third consecutive victory and gave Coach Jayson Miller's team a 4-4 record as they head into a CTL showdown Friday night at Andale. The Wildcats will turn their attention next week to the annual Mulvane Wildcat Girls Classic starting Monday, Jan. 24. Mulvane is the No. 4 seed and will go up against No. 5 seeded Andover (4-5) in the Classic's opening game at 6 p.m. Monday.

"I was pleased with the effort, in fact, I've been pleased with the effort the last several games," said Miller, "but we do some really nice things, then we make some silly mistakes. We talked earlier about going through the learning curve this year and that's been the story of the season."

The story Friday night is one of two halves. The Rockets won the first one but the Cats won the one that counted by cutting down on their mistakes, forcing RH into turnovers and making free throws when they counted most—down the stretch. The Cats hit 8 of 10 from the charity stripe in the last quarter, which means the rest of the game, they made only three of 13. But it was enough to give the Wildcats the victory and a split on the season so far. Rose Hill beat Mulvane in December.

"I thought the difference in the second half was that we created more and better opportunities for ourselves after halftime," said Miller. "We worked the ball inside better in the second half and when they doubled down on LaShelle (Parker), Kris (Lazar) and (Kim) Mangus got the ball back out for good outside shots. When they didn't double up, those three got their buckets."

Lazar finished with 10 points against the Rockets. Mangus scored six points and Parker hit four. Guards Kari Leonard and Natalie Turner scored eight points each and Arin Leonard had three points.

"I think all of our guards are getting more confidence in their shooting the last few games," said Miller. "Rose Hill frustrated us in the first half and we turned the ball over too much. We did a sloppy job on the boards but after intermission, it was like a new team. We started hitting the boards, we kept track of the ball better and we started making our shots."

Varsity Girls

Mulvane	9	5	13	17-44
Rose Hill	9	16	5	10-40
Mulvane—Kris Lazar 10, Kim Mangus 6, LaShelle Parker 4, Arin Leonard 3, Natalie Turner 9, Kari Leonard 9, Jackie Burkhart 1, Andrea Valerio 2. FG 15 (3), FT 11-23, F 18				
Rose Hill—Jessica Thomas 3, Karissa Thomas 14, Chelsea Stancoff 11, Nicole Ringwall 7, Andrea Dinkel 4, Natalie Hamlin 1. FG 17 (0), FT 6-20, F 19.				

Junior Varsity Girls

Mulvane	3	4	9	13-29
Rose Hill	8	6	6	5-25
Mulvane--Michelle Dinkel 4, Natalie Turner 2, Andrea Valerio 2, Jackie Burkhart 3, Kim Mangus 5, Sami Booth 7, Kris Lazar 6. FG 10 (0), FT 9-18				
Rose Hill--Breanna McRae 4, Diedra Decker 7, Emily Roby 2, Amanda George 10, Stephanie Wright 2. FG 11 (0), FT 3-9				



The learning curve straightened out. "I think we're making strides; I hope so," said Miller. "You think you're getting more comfortable with each other and you think you're improving, but I think we still have a lot to learn. I do know that the girls are excited about the success they are having."

In the junior varsity game, the Wildcats rallied in the last quarter, out-scoring the Rockets, to take a 29-25 decision. Sami Booth led the scoring for Mulvane with eight points. Lazar finished with six points, Mangus scored five and Michelle Dinkel and Jackie Burkhart had four and three points, respectively.

Mulvane Wildcat Girls Classic

(Records As Of Jan. 17)

Monday, Jan. 24

- Game 1 -- Mulvane (4-4) vs. Andover (4-5), 6 p.m.
- Game 2 -- Garden Plain (8-1) vs. Wellington (2-6), 7:45

Tuesday, Jan. 25

- Game 3 -- Arkansas City (5-4) vs. Campus (3-6), 6 p.m.
- Game 4 -- Andale (8-2) vs. Clearwater (3-7), 7:45

Friday, Jan. 28

- Game 5 -- losers of games 1 and 2, main gym, 4 p.m.
- Game 6 -- losers of games 3 and 4, auxiliary gym, 4
- Game 7 -- winners of games 3 and 4, 6
- Game 8 -- winners of games 1 and 2, 7:45

Saturday, Jan. 29

- Game 9 (Seventh Place)-losers of games 5 and 6, 2 p.m.
- Game 10 (Fifth Place)-winners of games 5 and 6, 3:45
- Game 11 (Third Place)-losers of games 7 and 8, 5:30
- Game 12 (First Place)-winners of games 7 and 8, 7:30