

Cat Defense Carrys Load; Coach Looking For 'O'

If Mulvane girls basketball coach Kelly Dennis can get just a couple of players to step up offensively, no telling how far the Wildcat gals could go this season.

The Wildcats continued their strong defensive showing this season Friday night, Jan. 16, at Chaparral, but had to wait until the fourth quarter to turn the lights out on Chappy's girls. Mulvane won by a 41-25 count.

It snapped a two-game skid and marked the fifth game that the MHS girls had held their opponent under 44 points. The girls improved their record to 4-5 overall and to 2-4 in the Chisholm Trail League.

The Cats had trouble really putting the game away despite 29 turnovers by Chappy and 15 steals by Mulvane. "I thought we played better in the fourth quarter and actually we played pretty decently throughout the game," said Dennis. "It wasn't as good as we played last time out at Clearwater. The girls kind of lost their offensive focus for a while, but I'm still happy with the win. Anytime you get a win, it's a plus.

"I just think the girls can be much better and that's where I want them to get. We shot so poorly (28% from the floor) that we never could pull away until the last quarter. I thought we were a lot better team than they were, but when you don't show it on the scoreboard, it doesn't mean anything."

Mulvane seemed in control the entire game but the Roadrunners simply hung around for the first three quarters within striking distance. That is, until the fourth quarter when Mulvane sprinted to a 15-5 edge during that eight-minute stretch and had a 41-22 lead until a three-pointer at the gun by Chaparral.

"Defensively, we're playing really well," emphasized Dennis. "I'm happy with the way we have been playing defense all year. When you hold teams to 40-45 points, that's good. You should win. The girls are playing well defensively and that has been our strong point so far this year. I think we're going to keep getting better and better on defense, but it's hard to win a game when you don't score over 40 points. We need to get it going offensively. We need to have some kids step up and expect to score every game."

The key statistic in the game was the 15 steals by the Wildcats and 29 Chappy turnovers. "We tried to put a little pressure on them and they turned it over," said Dennis. "They're not a real good ballhandling team to begin with."

Chaparral went to a man-to-man defense in the last quarter and that helped spring the Cat offense into gear. "Kristin (Buchanan) got a couple easy shots on the block and Kassie (Hargrove) knocked down a three once they went to a man-to-man," said Dennis. "We were able to wiggle loose for some shots close to the basket. They had to try something because we were ahead. They wanted to try to put more pressure on us to get back in the game but it kind of backfired on them."

One player to stepped to the forefront

offensively was junior Shelley Richards, who finished with 14 points. Melissa Buchanan scored nine points and Hargrove had six.

"Shelley had her best game overall," pointed out the Mulvane coach. "She got her points but she also had six rebounds, four assists and two steals. She's one of the few girls we have who looks to score every time she touches the ball. She's starting to penetrate more, too. We just need to have some of the others start looking to score.

"I thought we had better shooters this year than we did last year but we're not showing it yet. To beat the better teams, you have to shoot well from the field and knock down the free throws. I think we could have had two or three more wins if we would have been hitting from the free throw line the whole season. Right now, we're hitting only 43% from the line."

And that figure wasn't helped at Chaparral Friday night. Mulvane made only

9 of 23 at the stripe.

Mulvane also had a good rebounding game, though, with Hargrove pulling down nine boards and Michelle Fowler getting a season-high six rebounds.

Mulvane's girls will have one more tune-up before hosting the Wildcat Classic next week. They play Augusta Friday night, Jan. 23, in a non-league contest. "Last year, we played some of our best ball in our tournament, then we started rolling," said Dennis. "We need to do that and start our run again."

In the junior varsity contest at Chappy, Mulvane bombed the host Roadrunners, 52-33, as Piper Roy and Shiriah Craft dumped in 10 points each. Jana Smith finished with seven points while Natalie Turner and Arin Leonard scored six points each.

Pairings for the Wildcat Classic were announced and Mulvane will play at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27.



"Defense" -- Michelle Fowler (10) gets all over Roadrunner ball handler

Mulvane Wildcat Girls Classic Pairings

MONDAY, JAN. 26

Game 1 -- Andover (4-3) vs. Arkansas City (3-6), 6 p.m.

Game 2 -- Andale (7-2) vs. Wellington (3-6), 7:30

TUESDAY, JAN. 27

Game 3 -- Mulvane (4-5) vs. Wellington (4-5), 6 p.m.

Game 4 -- Clearwater (9-0) vs. Campus (2-6), 7:30

THURSDAY, JAN. 29

Game 5 -- losers of games 1 and 2, 3:30 p.m.

Game 6 -- losers of games 3 and 4, 5:15

Game 7 -- winners of games 1 and 2, 7

Game 8 -- winners of games 3 and 4, 8:45

SATURDAY, JAN. 31

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

Varsity Girls

Mulvane 12 8 6 15-41

Chaparral 9 4 7 5-25

Mulvane--Shelley Richards 14, Lindsay Kendrick 4, Michelle Fowler 4, Melissa Buchanan 9, Kassie Hargrove 6, Kristin Buchanan 4. FG 15 (2), FT 9-21, F 19.

Chaparral--Emily Misak 2, Tabitha Stolsworth 3, Kari Troyer 4, Kara Kastens 9, Julie Befort 4, Tabitha Cullop 2, Lauren Fallis 1. FG 10 (1), FT 4-14, F 23.

Junior Varsity Girls

Mulvane 19 11 10 12-52

Chaparral 5 8 5 15-33

Mulvane--Natalie Turner 6, Andrea Hufford 4, Jana Smith 7, Kristal LaPlant 2, Piper Roy 10, Shiriah Craft 10, Erin French 2, Arin Leonard 6, Aubrey Benjamin 2. FG 22 (1), FT 7-16, F 26.

Chaparral--Kim Kerschen 3, Tamara Hall 4, Alisha Barker 2, Amber Schaffer 14, Tabitha Stolsworth 8, Lauren Fallis 1. FG 13 (0), FT 7-28, F 12.