

Second Half Swoon Kills Girls' Hopes

A strange thing happened to the Mulvane Wildcats on the way to third place in the 18th annual MHS Wildcat Girls Classic Saturday evening, Jan. 31.

Coach Kelly Dennis' Wildcats lost their way.

Mulvane nursed a three-point lead into halftime against old nemesis Andale, but the Indians roared in the second half while the Cats only whimpered as Andale zipped past the host Cats, 46-36, to take third place.

Clearwater had no trouble rolling up its first Classic championship since 1982, blasting Andover, 61-39, in the tournament finale at the MHS gym. Campus clipped Arkansas City, 45-40, for fifth place and Garden Plain nailed down seventh place by downing Wellington, 47-37.

Mulvane's only "claim to fame" in the tourney is that the Cats gave Clearwater its only struggle on the way to the title. The Indians had to struggle mightily to sweep past MHS, 54-48, in the semifinals. Andover reached the title game earlier Thursday night, Jan. 29, by squeezing out Andale, 60-49, in two overtimes.

"I thought we played pretty well during the whole tournament for the most part," said Dennis. "We just happened to play two good teams. I thought we played our best game of the season against Clearwater. I thought we could finally get Andale because they are not playing at the top of their game. They're struggling and out of rhythm but they still had enough to beat us. When we struggle, we lose."

For a half, Mulvane didn't struggle. The shots were falling and the Cats took a 30-27 lead into the locker room at intermission. Once the second half started, though, the shots started missing.

"We continued to play well in the early stages of the second half but then we went through 15 possessions in a row without making a basket," said Dennis. "We missed put-backs. We missed open threes. We missed easy shots. We couldn't buy a basket."

"I really thought we out-played Andale from the beginning to the end but that stretch without a basket really killed us. I

Mulvane Wildcat Girls Classic Results

THIRD PLACE

Andale 8 9 14 15-46
 Mulvane 11 9 7 8-35
 Andale—Maggie Eck 6, Betsy Eck 3, Mirai Eck 9, Kampling 11, Sarah Horsch 6, Audrey Martin 8, Rhonda Smith 3. FG 13 (1), FT 17-27, F 23.
 Mulvane—Melissa Buchanan 8, Kristin Buchanan 2, Shelley Richards 4, Kassie Hargrove 2, Heather Williams 1, Lindsay Kendrick 10, Michelle Fowler 4, Ashley McCoskey 4. FG 10 (1), FT 12-25, F 21.

FIRST PLACE

Clearwater 61, Andover 39

FIFTH PLACE

Campus 45, Arkansas City 40

SEVENTH PLACE

Garden Plain 47, Wellington 37

SEMIFINALS

Mulvane 13 10 11 14-48
 Clearwater 16 11 13 14-54
 Mulvane—Melissa Buchanan 22, Heather Williams 2, Kassie Hargrove 2, Shelley Richards 16, Lindsay Kendrick 6. FG 20 (2), FT 6-10, F 18.
 Clearwater—Amy Bloomer 6, Rikki Hall 16, Emily Chambers 12, Faith Struthers 16, Emily Dunn 2, Megan Loger 2. FG 21 (3), FT 9-17, F 17.

Andover 60, Andale 49 (2 OT)
 Arkansas City 47, Wellington 30
 Campus 71, Garden Plain 60

Varsity Girls

Fredonia 10 7 17 9 43
 Mulvane 6 7 9 10 32
 Fredonia—Alanna Sharp 6, Olson 4, Alyssa Sharp 2, Funk 6, Taylor 6, Christy Ogle 14, Ward 3. FG 19 (0), FT 5-17, F 21.
 Mulvane—Melissa Buchanan 5, Shelley Richards 10, Kassie Hargrove 10, Jackie McColpin 2, Lindsay Kendrick 2, Heather Williams 2, Michelle Fowler 1. FG 11 (2), FT 8-20, F 19.

was really pleased with the way we played. We could have done some things better. It wasn't because we weren't getting good shots. We got a lot of good shots but couldn't hit them."

The Andale game was one of those classic "let-them-hang-around" games. The Cats were much the superior team in the early going but could only muster a three-point lead through the opening two quarters. "I felt like we should have been up by at least 10," said Dennis. "We were taking it to them and they looked like the team that was struggling, but because of our inability to put it through the hoop, they hung in there. I remember going in at halftime and telling Coach (Dale) Landes 'golly, we played great and are up only three.'"

One of the areas that pleased the Wildcat coach was Mulvane's defense. "Our defense was great," said Dennis. "I don't know the last time I looked in the paper and saw that Maggie Eck had only six points. That right there says something for our defense. We just didn't put them away when we had the opportunity early, but I don't know if we can put anybody away. We don't score enough points. You can look at our Chaparral game for proof of that. We were much better physically, but we couldn't put

them away. That's what made the Augusta game so frustrating. We should have put them away but couldn't."

And it didn't help that the Cats hit only 12 of 24 from the free throw line. "When you're not hitting the basket, you can still survive in a close game by hitting your free throws, but we didn't," said Dennis.

Junior guard Lindsay Kendrick was the only Cat in double figures. She had 10 points. Melissa Buchanan scored eight points and Shelley Richards, Michelle Fowler and Ashley McCoskey pitched in four points each against the Andale Indians.

Two nights earlier against Clearwater, the Cats got a career game from Buchanan, a senior, who scored 22 points. Richards had 16 points and Lindsay finished with six but Clearwater had three players hit double figures, helping to pull out the victory.

"We played Clearwater better than anyone else has this year," pointed out Dennis. Three tournament victories put Clearwater's Indians at 13-0 for the campaign.

"In fact, we played them tough a week ago at Clearwater. Our girls aren't intimidated by Clearwater. We beat them three times last year and I think the girls feel like they can beat Clearwater. But what brought us down against Clearwater is the same thing: shooting. We're not a real good shooting team and they are just a little better offensively than we are."

It helped to have Buchanan check in with her best game ever. "The girls knew Melissa was hot and kept getting her the ball," said Dennis. "It was one of our best team efforts of the year. Our lack of quickness really cost us down the stretch, though. They had a three-point lead with about three minutes left and we tried to go into a man-to-man defense because they started to hold the ball. We don't have the quickness to keep up with other teams."

The Cats played Fredonia in a non-league game Tuesday night, Feb. 3, and came away with a 43-32 loss as the lack of offensive production once again came to the forefront for the MHS girls.

The Yellowjackets stretched a four-point halftime advantage into double figures in the third quarter by out-scoring the Cats, 17-9, to pull away.

Richards and Hargrove paced Mulvane with 10 points each but Melissa Buchanan was the only other Wildcat with more than a

18th Annual Wildcat Girls Classic All-Tournament Team

Player	School	Ht.	Yr.
Sarah Ramey	Andover	5-11	Sr.
Faith Struthers	Clearwater	5-7	Sr.
Tracie Strothman	Wellington	5-8	Jr.
Shelley Richards	Mulvane	5-5	Jr.
Rikki Hall	Clearwater	5-9	Fr.
Maggie Eck	Andale	5-7	Jr.
Tara Pauly	Clearwater	5-5	Sr.
Jenni Leis	Garden Plain	5-9	So.
Stephanie Willig	Campus	5-8	Sr.
Emmy Horsch	Andale	5-9	Sr.

C.V. Hartung Award: Tara Pauly, Clearwater
 Outstanding Coach: Dale Luckert, Clearwater
 Sportsmanship Trophy: Mulvane Wildcats

bucket. She scored five points.

The loss dropped Mulvane to 5-9 with their fourth loss in the last five games.

Richards Named To All-Tourney

Mulvane junior Shelley Richards joined three repeat performers named to the 18th annual Mulvane Girls Classic all-tournament team announced Saturday, Jan. 31, at the conclusion of the week-long event.

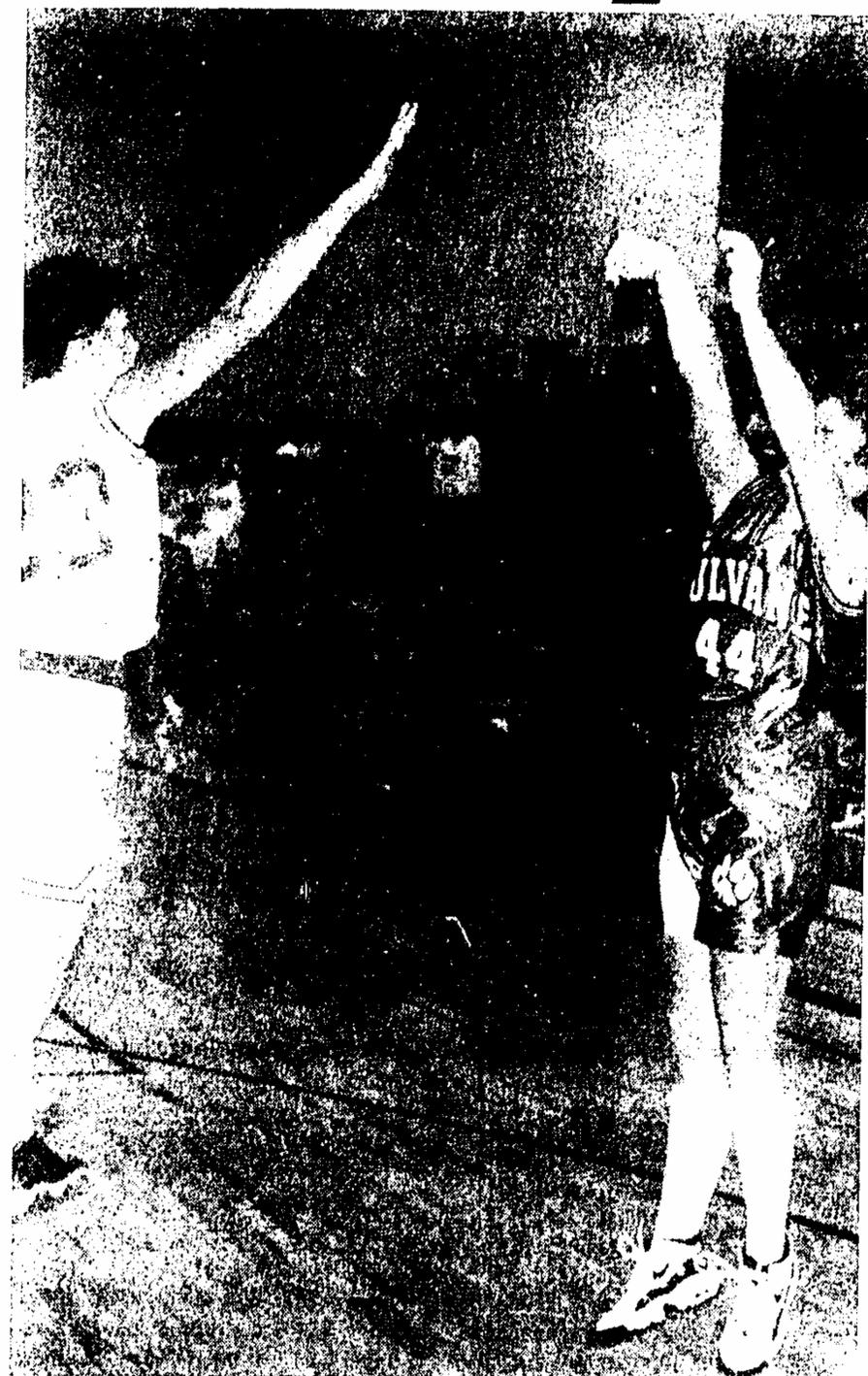
Richards' play helped lift the host Wildcats into 4th place. She scored 32 points as the Cats went 1-2, losing the 3rd place game to Andale. Joining Richards and making the all-tournament unit for the second year in a row were Clearwater senior Tara Pauly, Campus senior Stephanie Willig and Andale junior guard Maggie Eck.

Joining those four as all-tourney selections were Andover senior Sarah Ramey, who was the tournament's leading scorer with 61 points; senior Faith Struthers and freshman Rikki Hall, the second and third leading scorers in the tournament from Clearwater; Jenni Leis of Clearwater, a sophomore; Emmy Horsch, a senior from Andale; and junior Tracie Strothman of Wellington.

The one-two punch of Struthers and Hall carried the Indians to first place for the first time since winning it in 1982.

Pauly also garnered the C.V. Hartung Award given by the MHS tournament and Dale Luckert of Clearwater was named to the tournament's "Outstanding Coach Award."

Coach Kelly Dennis' Wildcat squad was selected for the eight-team tournament's "Sportsmanship" trophy.



Mulvane's Shelley Richards (44) beats the defense with a 2-pointer against Clearwater

Wildcat Girls Classic 1998 TOP SCORERS

Player	Pts.
Sarah Ramey, Andover	61
Rikki Hall, Clearwater	49
Faith Struthers, Clearwater	41
Jessica Reyes, Campus	38
Jenni Leis, Garden Plain	34
Amy Cook, Garden Plain	33
Shelley Richards, Mulvane	32
Melissa Buchanan, Mulvane	32
Maggie Eck, Andale	32
Tracie Strothman, Wellington	31
Stephanie Willig, Campus	29
Amber Yunker, Wellington	28
Lindsay Kendrick, Mulvane	25
Heidi Stinson, Arkansas City	25