

Life Fine At Line For MHS Girls

The Mulvane High School girls "died" by their free throwing Friday night but got life from the line Tuesday night, Feb. 15, with a stunning victory on the road against Circle.

The Wildcats hit 8 of 12 free throws in the last quarter to hold off the Thunderbirds, 53-44, in a Chisholm Trail League battle for third place in the CTL. The Cats are now 5-4 in the league and 7-9 overall. Circle tumbled to 4-6 in the league and 5-13 overall.

"Anything on the road is a great win," emphasized Coach Jayson Miller. "We came out and had a good first half, they closed it down to three but we pulled it back out with good free throwing at the end. It was really one of our better games. Arin (Leonard) stepped up and hit four out of four at the line in the last quarter and Kari (Leonard) hit a couple. We just made our free throws at the right time."

The Cats broke loose early, taking a 12-6 lead after one quarter and chugging into the last stanza with a 12-point lead after outscoring the T-Birds, 17-12, in the third quarter. But Circle started coming back and got within three points before 9th grader Melissa Doerfer hit a runner in the lane to make it a five-point game with less than three minutes to play. The Leonards took care of things at the stripe down the stretch as Mulvane pulled away.

"They made a great run at us in the last quarter, using some transition buckets," said Miller. "We got a little winded but finally got it back together and made our free throws. For the first three quarters, we played excellent ball. We had good ball movement. We got the ball inside to people in the right places for easy buckets and LaShelle (Parker) had a big game. They tried to take her away in the second half but Arin came through for us from the high post with some big baskets."

Parker, a promising sophomore who had 10 by intermission, finished with a game-high 17 points and 15 rebounds, dominating the inside game. Arin Leonard scored a

career-high 16 points. Sami Booth finished with eight points and Natalie Turner and Kari Leonard scored four points each.

"I was kidding Arin about liking that floor," pointed out Miller. "She broke her career high in scoring, and her previous best also came on the Circle floor last year when, I think, she had 12 points.

"Toward the end of the game, we had a time out and I reminded the girls about the way we played against Wellington," said Miller. "We had a big lead and played not to lose. They understood what I was talking about and came out and regained the momentum and finished out the victory."

It started as a trickle, but it turned into a flood. That's how Miller and his Cat girls felt Friday night, Feb. 11, when Valley Center came to Mulvane.

At first, the Cats were in the game, playing well and the score was close but the Hornets pulled away by just a tad, then by a few and finally by a bunch. Valley outscored Mulvane, 20-4, in the 2nd quarter and 15-7 in the third to blast the Cats, 50-28, in a non-league outing.

"It was frustrating after a while because we came out in the first quarter and played really good ball," said Miller. "We were down by only three points after one quarter but Valley started getting their shots to fall. We were getting good shots, but they weren't falling. The next thing I saw when I looked up at the scoreboard was that we were down 20. They got hot at the foul line and got hot from the field and we went cold. Boom! We were down a lot. It was frustrating because we were playing good basketball but the shots weren't falling."

The Hornets made six of nine fielders in the second quarter and also cashed in on eight of nine free throws to blow the game apart.

"When you're playing good and getting shots and they start making their shots, you have to answer and we didn't," said the Cat coach. "We couldn't buy one and that started the downslide. When you're in that kind of a situa-

tion, you start to struggle and get frustrated.

"I told the girls at halftime that we needed to just go out and play good ball and try and cut into the lead but when you're not hitting the shots and they're good shots, you tend to press. You stop moving toward the ball and you tend to self-destruct."

It didn't get any better in the third quarter as Valley Center continued sinking shots at an alarming rate and the Cats continued to struggle offensively.

It didn't help the Wildcat cause to have one of the team's worst rebounding efforts. Getting only one shot at a bucket during a cold streak helps perpetuate that streak.

"Valley Center did a fine job of going to the boards and that had been part of our game plan," pointed out Miller. "I don't have the rebounding statistics but I know when we only get one shot before the ball heads the other direction, and that's what was happening. We didn't do a very good job on the boards. With our size, that should be one of our strengths. We work hard on it every day, every game and right now, our guards have been out-rebounding our post people the last couple of games. We're big but we're not as athletic as other teams. Their players seemed to get into better position than we did and that's something that needs to get much better."

One of the rebounding problems is that Miller is losing people right and left to injury. Frontliner Kim Mangus was knocked out for the season a week ago with a knee injury, and another frontliner, Kris Lazar, isn't up to full speed either.

"We struggled at the foul line, too, and that can't help you when you're trying to come back," said Miller. "Earlier this year, we won a couple at the free throw line but Friday night, we couldn't hit anything. Valley went 15 of 20 and I'll take 75% at the line anytime." The Cats couldn't hit the bottom of the ocean, as they say. Mulvane went 12-for-30 at the line and LaShelle Parker was 9-for-13, which means the rest of the squad went 3-for-17. Ugh!

"I think we have a good free throw shooting team but when your heads get down when you're down by so much, you start thinking about what difference it makes," said Miller. "We need to make our free throws and that comes with maturity."

Parker put on a late surge to hit double figures, scoring eight points in the last quarter to finish with 15. Other than that, though, the MHS Wildcats were woefully inadequate. Reserve Sami Booth came off the bench and scored four points in the last quarter. The next best scoring came from three players with a bucket apiece—guard Melissa Doerfer, guard Jackie Burkhart and forward Carisa Ward.

One more week of the season grinds down as the Wildcats entertain Rose Hill Friday night, Feb. 18, in a Chisholm Trail League game.

Varsity Girls

Mulvane	12	8	17	16	53
Circle	6	7	12	19	44
Mulvane	Arin Leonard 16, Kari Leonard 4, LaShelle Parker 17, Sami Booth 8, Carisa Ward 2, Natalie Turner 4, Melissa Doerfer 2 FG 21 (0), FT 11-19, F 21				
Circle	Hecker 10, Sullard 4, Collins 4, Mills 16, Carson 4, Wendell 3, McFann 1, Hendrix 2 FG 15 (1), FT 11-19, F 20				
Valley Center	6	20	15	9	50
Mulvane	3	4	7	14	28
Valley Center	Amy Doty 10, Kristin Welk 14, Courtney Smith 3, Karah Covey 6, Chanel Oller 4, Crystal White 8, Crystal Wiechman 2, Janelle Klein 1, Kasey Porter 2 FG 17 (1), FT 15-20, F 26				
Mulvane	Sami Booth 4, LaShelle Parker 15, Arin Leonard 1, Natalie Turner 1, Kari Leonard 1, Carisa Ward 2, Jackie Burkhart 2 FG 8 (0), FT 12-30, F 19				

Junior Varsity Girls

Valley Center	12	11	16	7	46
Mulvane	6	6	5	12	29
Valley Center	Kelsea Oliphant 2, Courtney Smith 4, Ranae Brown 8, JJ McVay 6, Jami Relph 6, Emily Green 3, Janelle Klein 10, Melissa Cheney 3, Amy Doty 4 FG 22 (0), FT 2-3, F 20				
Mulvane	Kris Lazar 4, Cindy Hartley 2, Nicole Hackley 2, Michelle Dinkel 4, Natalie Turner 4, Melissa Doerfer 1, Kayla Linnebur 3, Andrea Valerio 5, Sami Booth 2, LaShelle Parker 2 FG 6 (1), FT 16-22, F 10				
Mulvane	2	4	8	11	25
Clearwater	6	5	4	2	17
Mulvane	Sami Booth 6, Kris Lazar 4, Melissa Doerfer 2, Nicole Hackley 5, Kari Leonard 2, LaShelle Parker 6 FG 12 (0), FT 1-2, F 4				
Clearwater	Ashlee Widler 6, Casey McMillen 2, Trae Loger 3, April Dodson 4, Lindsey Richardson 2 FG 8 (1), FT 0-0, F 10				