

Wildcat Girls' High Hopes Shattered As Clearwater Camps At FT Line

The light at the end of the tunnel turned out to be a train for the Mulvane High School girls basketball team Monday night, Feb. 26, in the opening game of the Rose Hill Class 4A Sub-State.

Just when the MHS Wildcats were starting to play better, Clearwater charged out of the tunnel to bury the Wildcats, 63-26, ending Mulvane's season. Clearwater was the No. 2 seed in the sub-state and earned the home site, and the Indians made the most of it.

The Cats hung around most of the game but only because Clearwater was totally dismal at the free throw stripe. But in the final quarter, the Indians broke the game wide open, scoring at many points as Coach Kelly Dennis' Wildcats had in the entire game.

"We all thought we would win that game so our expectations were high," said Dennis after the contest. The Cat girls had won their last two games and had played well in their last five games. In fact, just two weeks earlier, Mulvane had taken Clearwater into overtime before losing, 44-39.

"We all thought we had a great chance of winning; so it's a real downer to lose like that," added Dennis. "When you come out and play like we did, it's pretty unsatisfactory."

Clearwater jumped out to a 10-0 lead in the first quarter and held a 13-2 lead after one quarter. The Wildcats hung right in there in the next quarter and trailed only by a 26-13 count at intermission. It wasn't until the 26-4 explosion in the last quarter when foul woes finally caught up with Mulvane did Clearwater pull away.

"In the first half, we played on their end of the court 90% of the time," said Dennis. "We couldn't keep from fouling them. We had three post players foul out and that usually translates into your offense at the other end.

"They shot a terrible percentage at the free throw line, which kept us in the game basically," added Dennis. "They missed 15 free throws in the first half alone. But when you score only two points in the first quarter and have a four-point quarter, I don't know how you ever expect to win a sub-state game."

Clearwater's defense kept the Wildcats

from their strength, their inside game. In recent games, Mulvane's game in the paint had been coming on but junior Dannelle Hughes scored only six points at Clearwater, senior Janelle Wenke had only four and reserve Valeri Larson scored five. Both Hughes and Wenke fouled out in the fourth quarter.

"They zoned us and really packed it back on the inside," said Dennis. "That made it tough to get it inside. They had somebody in front of our post and somebody behind. They were really daring us to shoot the ball from the outside and when we did, there was absolutely no rebounding."

Mulvane guards Lindsay Kendrick and Lee Cates scored five and four points, respectively.

"Everything seemed to roll their way, too, and that hurt," said Dennis. "Sure, we played tentatively but they were throwing things up and they would go in. We were down just by 10 points just before half but they hit a three-pointer to make it a 13-point edge. That was only their second three-point bucket all year. And the officials didn't do us any favors either. We went to the line nine times and they went 40 times. Explain that one."

Mulvane was hit with 29 fouls and Clearwater made only 19 of 40 at the stripe, making 12 of 18 in the second half.

"Nothing went our way," added Dennis. "It was really frustrating for us. We can't have too many things go wrong for us to survive."

The Cats ended the year at 3-19, Dennis' first season at the helm.

The Wildcats ended their regular season on a high note Thursday, Feb. 22, as they won their second straight game, a 52-44 shelling of Circle in a Chisholm Trail League contest.

The victory enabled Coach Dennis' gals to tie the Thunderbirds for fifth place in the CTL with a 3-9 record.

In the junior varsity game, the Wildcats made it a unanimous night as Melissa Buchanan rebounded a missed free throw and put it back in for a 39-38 Mulvane victory. That ended the year for Coach Dan Booc's girls at 8-6.

"We played a terrific ball game," said Dennis. "They came out and jumped right on us when they hit their first five shots to take a 11-2 lead, but we really didn't panic. We started getting the ball inside to our big girls and we got things back together to pull it out. The girls really did a nice job."

The Wildcats finally utilized their inside strength, getting the ball on the blocks and senior Janelle Wenke, Junior Dannelle Hughes and sophomore Anna Wenke made the most of it. Mulvane scored 37 points on the blocks, which is probably a season high.

Hughes continued her surge with 16 points and Janelle Wenke had 14. Anna

Wenke finished with seven points, Crissy Carpenter scored six and freshman Lindsay Kendrick had five.

By the end of the first quarter, the Mulvane comeback was in full swing and the Cats had the lead. By the middle of the fourth quarter, Mulvane had a 10-point lead, then held on down the stretch.

"We got some good balanced scoring and our wing people did an excellent job getting the ball inside tonight," said Dennis. "We passed the ball really well, in fact, it was probably our best passing game of the season. We had good ball movement and the girls inside were breaking to the ball. That's what I thought the key to the game was, our ball movement and good entry passes."

The jayvee game ended on a stunning play by the Cats. Trailing by two, 38-36, Mulvane's Shelley Richards was fouled and made her first free throw but missed her second one with three seconds left. Buchanan got the rebound and put it back in for the victory as the buzzer sounded.

Richards finished with a 12-point night. Buchanan scored eight points, guard NiChelle Bruce had seven and Jennifer McCoskey chipped in with four points.

Rose Hill Class 4A Sub-State Girls Pairings

Tonight (Feb. 29)

6 p.m.—Andale (16-5) vs. Wellington (5-15)
7:30—Rose Hill (12-9) vs. Clearwater (12-9)

Saturday, March 2

6 p.m. (Girls Championship)—Thursday's winners

Rose Hill Class 4A Girls Sub-State Results

FIRST ROUND

Mulvane	2	11	9	4-26
Clearwater	13	13	11	26-63

Mulvane—Lee Cates 4, Lindsay Kendrick 5, Valeri Larson 5, Dannelle Hughes 6, Janelle Wenke 4, Anna Wenke 2. FG 10 (1), FT 5-9, F 29.

Clearwater—Faith Struthers 8, Sara Struthers 4, Angie Pauly 10, Katie Campbell 20, Katie Grusing 4, Bloomer 2, Adrinne Loger 3, Doll 5, Kelly Engel 6, Dunn 2. FG 22 (1), FT 19-40, F 17.

Rose Hill 67, Augusta 31
Andale 67, Chaparral 41
Wellington 64, Circle 47

Varsity Girls

Mulvane	17	7	12	16-52
Circle	15	5	10	14-44

Mulvane—Carrie Burkhart 3, Crissy Carpenter 6, Lindsay Kendrick 5, Lee Cates 1, Anna Wenke 7, Dannelle Hughes 16, Janelle Hughes 14. FG 21 (0), FT 9-15, F 14.

Circle—Cassie Patterson 9, Brandy Laughlin 6, Brandi Hummel 2, Keri Seidl 14, Shannon Hall 2, Dana Hall 7, Erica Collins 2, Jessica Ammerman 2. FG 17 (1), FT 7-15, F 20.

Junior Varsity Girls

Mulvane	6	7	8	18-39
Circle	10	13	7	8-38

Mulvane—Rachelle Fitzwater 2, Heather Williams 2, NiChelle Bruce 7, Renee Herpolsheimer 2, Tara Leonard 2, Melissa Buchanan 8, Jennifer McCoskey 4, Shelley Richards 12. FG 15 (0), FT 9-24, F 20.

Circle—Amber Baker 2, Jennifer Sherwood 2, Anna Short 2, Jackie Bishop 5, Becky Purcell 2, Jill Berry 9, Kristy Hodgins 3, Jessica Ammerman 8, Barb Pond 3, Dana Hall 2. FG 15 (0), FT 8-19, F 22.



Mulvane guard Carrie Burkhart (11) whips to the basket at Clearwater