

In 1st Round

VC Squeezes MHS Girls

Sluggish from the start, the Mulvane High School girls never could turn the corner on Valley Center Monday night, Feb. 28, in the first round of the Bluestem Class 4A Sub-State.

The game was played in Mulvane because Coach Ron McMahon's Wildcats picked off the No. 4 seeded in the sub-state and Valley Center was seeded No. 5. But that luck of the draw forced the Wildcats to bottle up VC for the third time this season—and it didn't happen. The Hornets pulled away in the last three minutes for a 47-39 victory which marched Valley into the sub-state semifinals tonight (March 3) against Andover in the 7:30 p.m. game.

Circle and Rose Hill will meet in the 6 p.m. semifinal game at Bluestem.

For the surprising Cats, who nabbed third place in the Chisholm Trail League when everybody was picking them to finish in the basement, the loss ended the season at 9-12.

"Valley Center played the best game they have played against us and we probably didn't play up to what we had the previous two meetings," said the first-year Cat coach McMahon. "It's tough to get people three times in a row. The problem was we didn't get an equal performance out of our people. We missed some easy shots early, shots we had been getting to fall in the earlier games. And we also got into foul trouble with some key people."

The Wildcats missed a golden opportunity to waltz ahead in the first six minutes when VC was ice cold. The MHS girls, using their 1-3-1 zone trap to perfection, didn't let Valley score until there was 2:55 left in the first quarter. While the defense was doing its part, the offense wasn't and Mulvane was ahead only 4-2 after Valley Center's initial basket.

"We really missed a good opportunity there," admitted McMahon. "We came out cold, too, and we didn't convert on the fast break. We just didn't play very good on offense. We could have had a great opportunity to get a big lead but we didn't do it. The first quarter is always important to set the pace. We just didn't hit the shots we needed to hit early."

The Cats came up empty late in the game, too. Earlier this season, Mulvane dropped VC, 58-52, in Valley and 46-42 15 days ago in Mulvane. The common denominator in those two victories was a late surge offensively with some easy baskets off the pressure defense.

That didn't happen Monday night as the Hornets, who improved their record to 9-11, were the ones who pulled away. It was 35-35 with 3:53 left in the game and Mulvane's

Bluestem 4A Girls Sub-State Results

FIRST ROUND

Valley Center	9	11	11	16—47
Mulvane	8	16	7	8—39

Valley Center—Amy Crawford 13, Heather Barbosa 7, Laura Pavlyak 4, Christine Fowler 4, Betsy Robinson 2, Katie Talbot 5, Diane Long 2, Lee Anne Sitts 2, Sarah Hanes 8. FG 16 (1), FT 10-20, F 20.

Mulvane—Janelle Wenke 13, Lee Banzet 8, Kristi McDowell 6, Heather Taylor 2, Cody Watson 8, Courtney Renfro 2. FG 15 (0), FT 9-18, F 23.

Andover 81, Wellington 53

Circle 58, Clearwater 30

Rose Hill 64, Bluestem 54

Kristi McDowell dropped in two free throws to give the Cats their last lead of the game as they scored only two points in the last three and one-half minutes when the outcome was decided.

Two turnovers by Mulvane led to baskets by Valley to take the lead. Junior stand-out Cody Watson tried to drove down the side of the lane for a jumper but was called for a charge at 2:29, which signaled the beginning of the end. It was her fifth foul and Valley went down and got a bucket to lead 41-37.

The Hornets put the game away with a flurry of free throws as Mulvane pressed to score but couldn't buy a bucket. In the earlier two games, it was Mulvane that coolly made the key buckets in the stretch and VC which turned the ball over and missed shots.

"It was obvious they were going to work on their press break after our earlier successes and this time, they were more prepared," said McMahon. "They broke it a little better and were better prepared to deal with our pressing tactics. We went away from the press because it wasn't getting us anything because of our cold shooting."

McMahon said he didn't want to comment about Watson's fifth foul, which could have been called on Valley Center. "That didn't help (losing Watson)," said McMahon. "She had just scored a couple buckets earlier in the quarter and was warming up. You lose a strong player like that and it hurts big-time. What cost us the game, though, was the fact that we just didn't put the ball in the hole."

That was especially noteworthy in the second half when VC out-scored MHS, 27-15.

Center Janelle Wenke, a sophomore, led the Wildcat scoring with 13 points. Senior Lee Banzet had eight points, Watson had eight and McDowell finished with six.

"You've got to give our girls credit, though," said McMahon. "They had a good year. They worked hard. The girls have gained a lot. They have earned self-respect and they've learned how to win."