

# Gads! Cat Girls Going For Gold



Wildcats Kendra Banzet (21) skiles as Cats' Jenny Ray waits for rebound

The first part of a dream was fulfilled as the Mulvane High School Lady Wildcats hopped around at mid-court Saturday night, March 2, hugs in their hearts and tears in their eyes.

"We're going to State," four little words that mean a lifetime of memories.

The Wildcat girls qualified for the Class 4A State Basketball Championship showdown this week by slipping past the host Augusta Orioles, 67-65, in two overtimes in the Augusta 4A Sub-State Saturday in the title game.

It marked the first sub-state championship ever for the MHS girls and, naturally, the girls' first trip to the state tournament. Coach Gregg Wolgast's Cats (19-4) will play Sabetha's No. 3 seeded Bluejays, who are 21-2, at 4:45 p.m. today (March 7) in a first-round game.

Paola (22-1) and Chanute (18-5) will open the 4A Girls State Championship at the Salina Bicentennial Center at 3 p.m. today. No. 1 seeded Larned (22-1) will play Topeka Hayden (12-11) at 6:30 p.m., followed at 8:15 by the No. 4 seeded Andale (21-2)-Abilene (21-2) contest.

If the Wildcats win today, they will play in a 3 p.m. semifinal Friday, March 8, against the winner of the Paola-Chanute game. The girls' championship game is at 6 p.m. Saturday, March 9, at the Bicentennial Center.

The Wildcats used an unbelievable format to secure the two-point victory in a thrilling sub-state finale at Augusta, running the Mulvane record to 19-4. The Cats kept Augusta in the game by missing 14 free throws, 11 of them the front ends of one-and-ones, in the last eight minutes of the game. That includes the last two minutes of regulation and the two three-minute overtimes. Overall, Mulvane finished with a sour 13 of 35 mark from the stripe as the Orioles developed a fouling strategy which caused 30 personals.

The heroics littered the floor in the stunning contest. The Cats eventually pulled it out when senior Kerri Taylor hit from point blank range with around a minute left. Augusta couldn't score the rest of the way, partly because of two key blocked shots by 6-foot, 3-inch standout Kendra Banzet. It didn't matter that the Cats missed three one-

## Class 4A Girls State Championship Pairings At Salina Bicentennial Center

TONIGHT (MARCH 7)

Game 1 — No. 2 seeded Paola (22-1) vs. No. 7 Chanute (18-5), 3 p.m.

Game 2 — No. 3 Sabetha (21-2) vs. No. 6 Mulvane (19-4), 4:45

Game 3 — No. 1 Larned (22-1) vs. No. 8 Topeka Hayden (12-11), 6:30

Game 4 — No. 4 Andale (21-2) vs. No. 5 Abilene (21-2), 8:15

FRIDAY, MARCH 8

Game 5 — winners of games 1 and 2, 3 p.m.

Game 6 — winners of games 3 and 4, 6:30

SATURDAY, MARCH 9

Game 7 (Third Place) — losers of games 5 and 6, 1 p.m.

Game 8 (Championship) — winners of games 5 and 6, 6 p.m.

and-ones in the final, dramatic seconds.

Banzet had sent the game into double overtime after Augusta had taken only its third lead of the game, 63-61, with nine seconds left. Taking the in-bounds pass, Banzet dribbled the length of the floor and hit a four-foot jumper from the left side that settled into the nets with two seconds left.

Banzet, who finished the game with 30 points, also hit two pressure-packed free throws with 51 seconds left in regulation, giving the Wildcats a 55-53 lead only to have Augusta's sophomore guard Megan Little pop a 15-footer over Banzet which found a home with two seconds left to send the game into the first overtime.

Mulvane seemed firmly in control in the early going, jockeying out to as much as a nine-point lead in the opening moments of

the 4th quarter, 49-40, with 4:37 left in the game before the "free throw jitters" seemed to paralyze Mulvane's offense and give Augusta hope as the lead shrunk. However, the longer the game went, the fewer starters Augusta Coach Tom Restivo had on the floor, which would play a big role later in the game.

"It's a helpless feeling," said Wolgast about the MHS free throwing, which ended up being 13 of 35. "You can come down and play good defense, come down and rebound and shoot and execute, but if they foul you before you get the chance, it doesn't matter."

"I told the girls afterwards that a variety of things had gone on in the game and it just kept building. I don't think any of these people are that bad of free throw shooters, but we kept putting pressure on ourselves each time we went to the line and it kind of kept building. I told the girls to put this behind them now and get ready for Thursday. For the most part, the girls know they are better free throwers than that."

For the season, Mulvane's free throwing hadn't been half-bad, as the girls hit 55% from the stripe. "The strategy was to foul us just as soon as they could to stop the clock and make us win it at the free throw line," said Wolgast. "But that was a big factor in the second overtime because they had only one starter on the floor and Kendra was able to dribble all the way down the floor and score. They didn't have a lot of experience out there."

The victory fulfilled one goal which had been living in the backs of a lot of minds after getting knocked off a year ago in a first-round upset in the 5A sub-state at Haysville. "The whole team is pretty excited, and I'm just like all the girls, pretty excited," said Wolgast. "I think that Haysville game helped get the girls prepared for this year's tournament."

Mulvane made it two straight over Augusta after losing, 72-62, two months ago. The Cats controlled the tempo and the boards, two key factors.

"Neither team played well early," said Wolgast. "It was a big game and I think both teams came out tight but toward the end of the first quarter and in the second quarter, we started doing what we wanted to do. We wanted to control the tempo, didn't want to get into a running game with them, and we didn't. It was our tempo."

Mulvane built up a 29-24 halftime lead which held up in the 3rd quarter despite Mulvane starting the 3rd quarter with four consecutive turnovers. The Cats got it going late in the quarter to build a nine point lead as Banzet heated up with three consecutive baskets in the paint and a fastbreak bucket by Lisa Heersche.

good team," said Burger. "We lost only one player, a very good one, though. So it's no surprise to be in the first round of the playoffs, but it's always tough to get to state, no matter how good you are."

Burger said the Bluejays play a running game, but they also can adapt to a slower style if they have to. "Offensively, I like to run the ball up the court," said the Bluejay coach, whose team is averaging 67 points a game.

On defense, Sabetha has been good enough to hold the opposition to only 33 points a game by using a variety of defenses. "Our best is a man-to-man but we'll throw everything at Mulvane we can," said Burger. "We've never faced a girl that tall (as 6-3 Kendra Banzet) so it's going to create a problem. Once you get to state, I basically believe you just play your game. If you make a lot of changes it's going to hurt you more than it helps. We're going to wait and see what happens and hope we can adjust to it."

Wolgast, whose club will be trying to post a 20-victory season for the first time, said his scouting sources are limited on Sabetha. "I do know they have some great three-point shooters and they do a lot of full-court man-to-man," said Wolgast. "We're not planning to do anything differently ourselves. I think the team what goes out, plays hard and does a good job on fundamental basketball will come out ahead."

## Good Shooting, State Experience Bluejays' Forte

Shooting is the name of the game for the Sabetha Bluejays and so far this girls basketball season, the Bluejays have lost only two of their 23 high noon shootouts.

Coach Scott Burger's Bluejays will be squared off with the Mulvane Wildcat girls in a 4:45 p.m. game today (March 7) in the opening round of the Class 4A Girls State Championship at the Bicentennial Center in Salina. The Bluejays have a 21-2 record and are in the state tournament field for the fourth consecutive season.

Burger, who is in his first season at the helm of the Sabetha girls cagers after being an assistant coach with the Sabetha boys for the last six years, is anxious to see his girls in action at Salina. "It's kind of unusual, especially for a girls team, but all five of our starters are shooting over 50% from the field," noted Burger. "That's unusual for any team but especially for a girls team. And our scoring us generally from outside or inside, so we're not just getting the easy shots."

Senior Amy Scoby (5-foot, 9-inch) is the club's No. 1 scorer with a 21 point average. She was a first team selection in the All-4A team a year ago. Junior Kristen Orton (5-11) is the club's No. 2 scorer, averaging 14 points an outing. The other three starters are junior Melissa Emert (5-7) and seniors Jodi Niehaus (5-11) and Angie Renyer (5-7) and they each are averaging around the six points a game level.

With a squad which has been to the state tournament four consecutive seasons, experience also will be a big factor for the Bluejays. Mulvane's girls will be making their first-ever trip to the state meet.

Last year, the Bluejays finished 3rd. In 1988, Sabetha finished 2nd in the 3A state meet and in 1989, the Bluejays were 4th.

Coach Gregg Wolgast's Wildcats will be trying to bring the Chisholm Trail League its third state championship in four years. Chaparral's girls won the 4A state crown in 1988 and Rose Hill is the defending state champion.

Sabetha plays in the Big Seven, which includes Nemaha Valley, Jefferson West, Royal Valley, Holton, Hiawatha, Effingham, Maur Hill and Atchison Academy.

The only two losses for Sabetha this season came at the hands of league champ Nemaha Valley, which is ranked No. 1 in class 3A and is in the 3A state tourney. Nemaha Valley eased past the Bluejays, 66-59, and 69-65.

Burger knew he had a diamond in the rough when he took over for Bob Good this season. "We went 22-4 last year and returned four starters, so I was expecting a

The Wildcats also controlled the backboards with a strong showing. They had 48 boards to only 22 for the Orioles with Banzet pulling down 14 rebounds and both Ticia Nicholson and Heersche grabbing eight. "Controlling the boards also helped us control the tempo because they couldn't get their fastbreak going without the ball," pointed out Wolgast.

"And I think our experience showed, too, especially at the end. These girls have gone through a lot together. They took it on the chin a few times when they played as sophomores but each year, you could see the experience growing. The experience showed Saturday night. It would have been easy for a team that had missed that many free throws to get down, but the girls didn't panic."

Banzet's 30 paved the way for Mulvane but Heersche added 14 points and Nicholson scored 10. Guards Tricia Turner and Taylor had some big scores and finished with six and five points, respectively. Reserve Jenny Ray scored a bucket, too.

The Wildcats reached the sub-state championship game by dumping Rose Hill, 43-35, in a semifinal Friday night, March 1. Augusta scrambled past Circle, 81-66, in the other semifinal.

"We did a good job defensively and also controlled the boards against Rose Hill," said Wolgast. "The defense was good on (Shelly) Swaney on the outside and (Barb) Hartnett on the inside. On offense, though, we struggled. They sagged a lot inside and we didn't adjust to it."

Hartnett was held to only seven points, the first game this year she didn't hit double figures. The Cats held Rose Hill to only 11 points in the second half and took control of the game by out-gunning the Rockets, 16-6, in the 3rd quarter after trailing, 20-18, at intermission.

"In the second half, the girls played a lot harder on offense and Kendra got herself a little more involved," said the Wildcat coach. "And Lisa hit several baskets in that wing area at critical times which seemed to pick us up."

The veteran senior Heersche powered the against RH, scoring a game-high 17 points. Banzet scored 10 points and both Nicholson and Turner scored eight points.

## Augusta 4A Girls Sub-State Results

### CHAMPIONSHIP

Mulvane 19 10 12 14 (8) (4) 67  
Augusta 14 11 9 21 (8) (2) 65  
Mulvane - Kendra Banzet 30, Kerri Taylor 5, Ticia Nicholson 10, Tricia Turner 6, Lisa Heersche 14, Jenny Ray 2. FG 27-53 (0), FT 13-35, F 17.  
Augusta - Megan Little 27, Paula Rodriguez 10, Samantha Restivo 9, Shannon Shryock 7, Bonnie Jackson 4, Rikki Rogers 8. FG 26-48 (3), FT 10-18, F 30.

### SEMIFINALS

Rose Hill 10 10 6 5-35  
Mulvane 9 9 16 9-43  
Rose Hill - Brandi Nickell 3, Shelly Swaney 7, Tehri Litmanen 14, Barb Hartnett 7, Gina Brockmeier 1, Rachelle Pribbenow 2, Delena Dyson 1. FG 13-31 (1), FT 8-18, F 16.  
Mulvane - Lisa Heersche 17, Ticia Nicholson 8, Kendra Banzet 10, Tricia Turner 8, Kerri Taylor 0. FG 17-44 (0), FT 8-18, F 18.

Augusta 81, Circle 66