

Wildcat Gals Can't Rally In Opener

SALINA—The memories for a lifetime were tarnished but not broken Thursday, March 7, in the first round of the 1991 Class 4A Girls State Basketball Championships here at the Bicentennial Center.

The Mulvane High School girls crumbled before a state-wise Sabetha club which was making its fourth consecutive trip to a state tourney as the Bluejays ousted the Wildcats, 56-44. Coach Gregg Wolgast's Lady Wildcats were making their first trip ever to the 4A state tournament.

"I think that state tournament experience they had was invaluable," said Wolgast after surveying the damage of a poor start by the Cats. "No matter how many times you tell them not to be tight and no matter how hard

they try to keep from getting tight, you're in that kind of atmosphere. The girls came out tight and Sabetha had been there the last couple of years so they were able to jump on us."

It was an ominous opening for the Wildcats, who ended their season at 19-5. The first four trips down the Bicentennial floor resulted in three MHS turnovers and a foul on Cat standout Kendra Banzet. Sabetha was able to gain a small lead and continued to drive points in that wedge until the Bluejays representing the Big Seven League were comfortably ahead by 15 points (55-40) in the final period.

"We never completely recovered from the start," admitted Wolgast. "We tied them once and got it to two once, but never could

get over the hump. They had tournament experience and played with poise."

The Bluejays stretched their lead to six, 16-10, after one quarter and fended off Wildcat attempts to scratch back into the game, although Mulvane pulled to within two, 34-32, with two minutes left in the third quarter when Banzet came alive with four consecutive buckets and senior Lisa Heersche hit two free throws.

"They had us well-scouted, too, because they knew what we liked to do and disrupted our offense," said Wolgast. "They did a good job defensively to keep us from getting the ball inside to Kendra. They fronted her, then brought over some weak-side help and they also did a good job of putting pres-

sure on the ball. That's one of the best ways to deny the ball to the post and it make it very difficult. They have a very good defensive ball club, probably the best we've seen. And when you have some good, balanced scoring to go along with it, that's a pretty good combination."

Sabetha coach Scott Burger, who is coaching the Bluejay girls for the first time this season, agreed. "Our defense really keyed that victory," said Burger, whose Bluejays went on to take second to the 4A state champs from Larned. "We tried to stress defense and I tried to make the girls understand that when you get to that level, every team about the same. The difference is who applies the most pressure and plays the best defense. That's who's going to win."

Burger said he also picked up several Mulvane tendencies after obtaining a film and those were invaluable. "We knew they liked to do certain things and wanted to make it difficult to do the things Mulvane was comfortable with," said Burger. "As far as stopping Banzet, it wasn't our goal to stop her. We just wanted to slow her down. We moved one player into the middle of the lane to help on her."

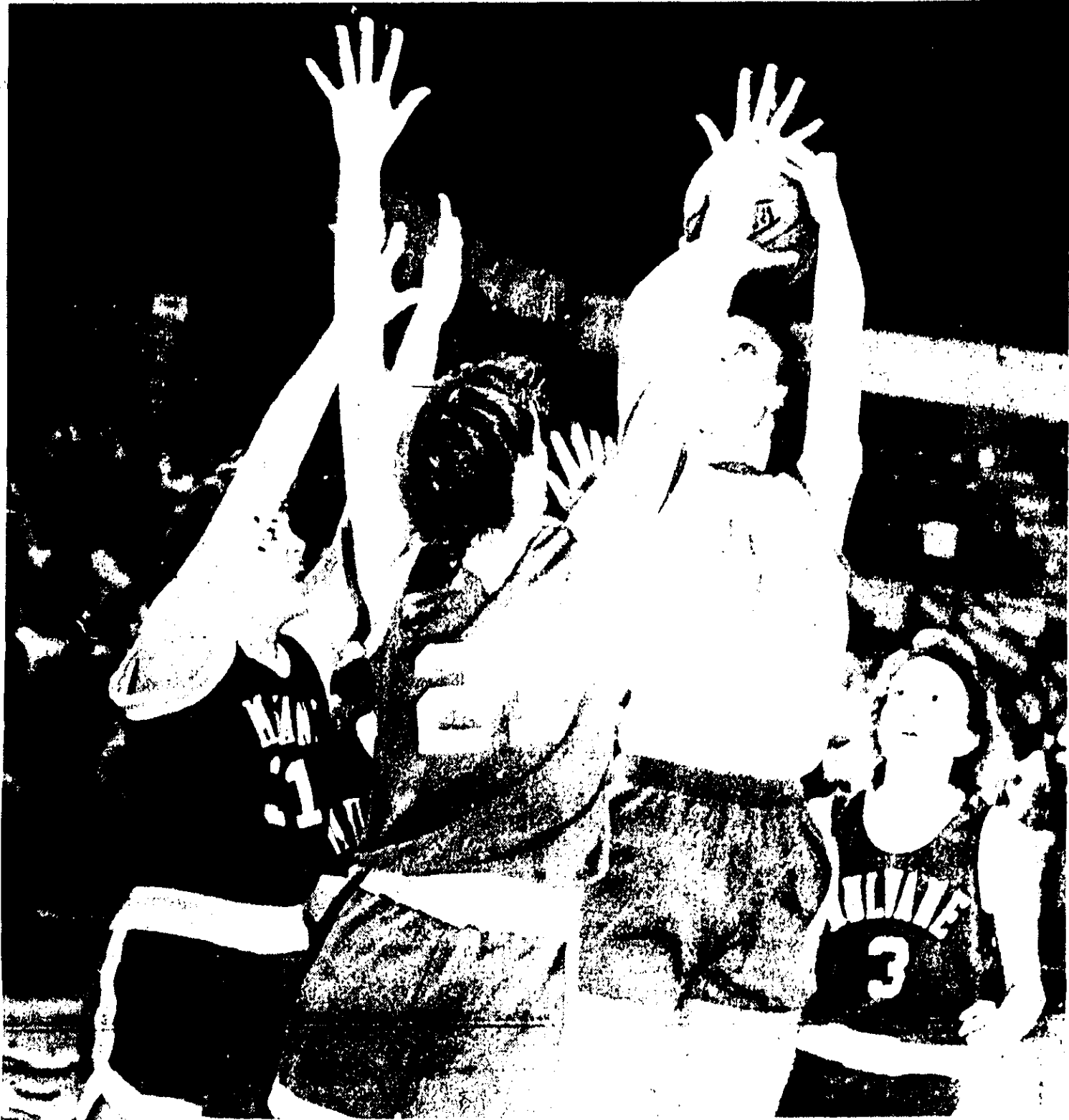
Burger said when the Wildcats pulled to within two, 34-32, he called a time out to remind his weakside helper about the game strategy. "She kind of forgot what she was supposed to be doing and after I reminded her, the defense started working again," said the Bluejay coach.

Burger also felt his depth and state experience were critical factors in pushing past the Chisholm Trail club into the trophy rounds.

"There was a difference (in the two teams)," noted Burger. "Amy Scoby had started four consecutive years in the state tournament and four of our girls were starting in their second state games, so we had a lot of experience. You could see the difference against Larned. Larned was another team that had been to the state tournament four straight years."

Chisholm Trail League Final Girls Standings

Team	League		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
x-Mulvane	9	3	19	5
x-Augusta	9	3	17	6
Goddard	7	5	13	8
Buhler	7	5	13	9
Valley Center	7	5	14	8
Wellington	2	10	8	14
Maurer	1	11	4	17
x—tied for CTL championship				
DIVISION II				
x-Andale	12	0	22	2
Rose Hill	10	2	14	8
Chaparral	7	5	10	11
Curtis	6	6	10	10
Kingman	5	7	10	13
Clearwater	2	10	5	17
Andover	0	12	3	22
x—won CTL championship				



Mulvane's Tricia Turner (3), Ticia Nicholson (31) and Kendra Banzet (21) swarm over Sabetha shooter at state.



Class 4A Girls State Championship

FIRST ROUND
 Mulvane 10 11 11 12-44
 Sabetha 16 12 12 16-56
 Mulvane—Tricia Turner 2, Kendra Banzet 18, Kerri Taylor 0, Ticia Nicholson 4, Lisa Heersche 19, Dawn Hicks 1. FG 17-38 (0), FT 10-13, F 17.
 Sabetha—Amy Renyer 8, Melissa Emert 6, Kay Thompson 4, Amy Scoby 18, Jodi Nishues 6, Kristen Orton 14. FG 24-47 (1), FT 9-18, F 13.

Paola 58, Chanute 44
 Larned 51, Topeka Hayden 49, OT
 Andale 52, Abilene 49
SEMIFINALS
 Sabetha 68, Paola 55
 Larned 49, Andale 45
CHAMPIONSHIP
 Larned 63, Sabetha 58, OT
THIRD PLACE
 Andale 52, Paola 48

stellar career with 18 points and 13 rebounds for the Cats. Senior Ticia Nicholson was held to only four points and guard Tricia Turner scored only two points.

The Cats had one of their best games ever at the free throw line, hitting 10 of 13 free throws.

Cat Game Film Helps Prepare Sabetha For Defensive Combat

SALINA—The "spy in the sky" is a valuable tool. Just ask Iraq.

Most teams these days tape their games so that the coaching staff can review the games and pick out problem spots as they start.

After the Mulvane High School sub-state championship victory over Augusta, Mulvane High School girls coach Gregg Wolgast called everybody he knew to get a video of the Sabetha girls, the Cats' first-round opponent here in the Girls Class 4A State Tournament, but was unsuccessful.

Sabetha's Scott Burger wasn't. "We picked up a film of a Mulvane game and it really helped," noted Burger. "It was a great opportunity to pick out some of Mulvane's tendencies and there were some. The point guard always liked to go right and their offense, nine times out of 10, went to the right, for example. And there were some others which helped defense them."

It played a huge role in Sabetha's game plan, too, and the ultimate victory of 56-44.

Sabetha over-played MHS point guard Tricia Turner to keep her headed left and also defended scoring ace, Kendra Banzet, with a player in the middle of the lane, which helped disrupt the Mulvane offense. The 44 points was the third lowest scoring game of the season for Mulvane.

Three of the eight coaches with teams at the girls 4A state tourney were graduates of Kansas State.

Wildcat chief Gregg Wolgast is a KSU graduate, as are Sabetha's Scott Burger and Gary O'Hair of Andale.

Surprisingly, two of the other girls 4A state coaches are Benedictine College grads—Rick Strecker of Topeka Hayden and Paola's Charles Leshar.

Three Class 4A schools qualified both their girls and boys basketball teams for the state shootout—Andale from the Chisholm Trail League, Sabetha's Bluejays and Topeka Hayden.

Only Sabetha brought back two team trophies to the northern Kansas farming community. The Bluejay girls were second and the Sabetha boys wrapped up a 3rd place finish.

Only the Andale girls brought home hardware, taking third, and for Hayden, a

school which plays 5A and 6A teams most of the season, the boys captured their second straight 4A boys state championship. In fact, it was Hayden's third in the last five year, having won the state crown also in 1987.

Mulvane fans should have a "special place" in their hearts for Hayden. You'll recall, the Hayden Wildcats were the team the MHS Wildcats thrashed, 64-50, in the 1984 state championship game in Salina, giving Coach Charlie Mason and Mulvane its first-ever state BB title.

The strangle hold that the Chisholm Trail League has had on the 4A girls state championship was loosened this year with both Mulvane and Andale Indians failed to cash in on the "mystique."

Chisholm Trail girls teams have won seven state championships, including 5A, since Chaparral won it all in 1981. Rose Hill was the 4A defending champion. Chaparral won back-to-back state crowns in 1987 and 1988. In fact, Buhler gave the CTL a 4A-5A sweep in 1987 by capturing the 5A crown.

Andale was the 1984 4A state tidist and Buhler was the 5A state winner in 1983.

For several of the senior Wildcats, it was the final hurrah in a stellar career of high school basketball.

Starters for three years, MHS's 6-3 standout Kendra Banzet, 5-10 Ticia Nicholson and Lisa Heersche and senior Kerri Taylor saw their prep careers come to a close, as did reserves Jenny Ray and Kristen Kuntz with the first-round loss to Sabetha by a 56-44 count.

This group has improved tremendously over the last three years, finally hitting the "big time" after barely missing a year ago.

"There were a lot of tears after the game," said Wolgast. "It was our first trip to the state tournament and the girls have nothing to be ashamed of. It was fun. I wouldn't have traded this for anything. After the game, I told the girls that there were a lot of good teams that never get a chance to get up there and it's something you have (the memories) for the rest of their lives. There was a lot of disappointment in the locker room afterwards, especially after it sank in for the seniors that this was their last basketball game, but the seniors accomplished

a lot."

The Cats went out following the game for a final team meal and Bonanza in Salina and it turned into a time for reflection for the team.

"The girls were pretty upset when we went out there, most of the seniors realizing it was over, but after we ate, the girls felt alot better about what they had accomplished," said Wolgast. "That gave them time to think about it. Then, we went back and watched the Andale-Abilene game."

Sabetha Coach Burger wasn't kidding when he reported a week ago that he had a good shooting team. The Bluejays took to the floor Thursday, March 7, in the opening round and proved it against Mulvane.

Sabetha shot 51% from the floor against the Wildcats, hitting 23 of 45.

Ironically, Sabetha's march toward a state title was chilled by cold shooting in the championship game against Larned.

"In the game against Larned, that was absolutely our poorest shooting game of the

season," said Burger, "and what a time to get it. We hit only 42% from the field. Our previous worst shooting night was 49% in a game earlier this year. In fact, we had only three games under 50% until the state tournament. When you think about it, only four games in 26 played with the team shooting less than 50% from the field, it's pretty unbelievable."

Mulvane's only distinction in the aftermath of "March Madness" week is that the Wildcats had the tallest player in the field of any of the girls state tournaments.

The 6-foot, 3-inch Banzet, a three-year star for the Wildcats was the tallest player listed on the rosters of any of the girls state teams, even the 6A and 5A schools.

The 6-2 senior Danika Kelley of Derby was the tallest player listed in the 6A rosters and Shawnee Mission Miego's 6-2 Mary Maurer, a senior, was the tallest player in the 5A state field. Sterling's 6-2 junior Debra Randolph was the tallest 3A player in the state field while in the 2A state tourney field, there were two players listed at 6-1. Tami White, a junior at Central of Burden and Garden Plain sophomore Katie Panek.