

Buhler, A Wake-Up Call; Girls Improve At Circle

Mulvane responded to a wake-up call in its opening game by giving host Circle all it wanted Monday night, Dec. 6, in the opening round of the Circle Thunderbird Classic.

The Wildcat of new coach Ron McMahon answered the bell with much better play Monday night before Circle pulled out to a 63-48 triumph in the first round. The loss left the Cats to try Andover at 8 p.m. tonight (Dec. 9) in a semifinal game in gym No. 2. Andover was knocked into the consolation bracket by a 68-67 loss to Arkansas City Monday night.

The other two first-round games found El Dorado burying Wellington, 60-32, and Independence smothering Sunrise Christian, 61-30.

Coach McMahon's Wildcats stepped it up a notch after being dismantled, 62-24, Friday night, Dec. 3, in a disappointing season opener at Buhler.

"We really made some strides from the first game to the Circle game," said McMahon. "We were much more physical in the second game than at Buhler. After the first quarter, it was 9-9 and I thought we were going to take it from there but they got things together and really did a number on us in the second quarter. At intermission, though, we made some major changes and came out in the second half and made a ball game of it. Some of those changes came in our offensive scheme. We put some different people in different locations. We put people in position to score, coming out with a whole different look and it helped because we got people to go to the basket."

McMahon said the difference in the Thunderbirds and Mulvane was the bench. Circle out-gunned MHS, 31-8, in the second quarter to take a commanding lead. "They got a good performance from their bench and we couldn't match it," said McMahon.

"For us to be successful, everybody counts. We need to have help off the bench and we didn't get it like they got it."

Still, it was a big improvement from the 24-point offensive at Buhler three nights earlier. Mulvane got production from eight different players with center Cody Watson scoring a team-high 16 points, senior Lee Banzet adding 10, senior Kristi McDowell tossing in eight and big sophomore Janelle Wenke adding five points.

"We scored much better and I'm real excited about that," said McMahon. "I told the girls after the first quarter that we were in against one of the top 4A teams and we were step-for-step. We were in that position because we had a lot more offensive thinking from a lot of girls. We scored and we shot better and we shot more often."

After the Buhler game, McMahon said he talked to each player individually and encouraged her to put the ball up more when the opening presented itself. "I have no problem with our shooting or the location of our shots," emphasized the Cat first-year coach. "So far, I have only seen unselfish play from our players. Everybody out there is trying to find the player who is open and that's one thing that will improve each and every game."

Mulvane did much better from the field, shooting it up 50 times and hitting 16 (32%). The T-Birds hit 23 of 56.

"By putting the ball up more, we had more opportunity to score," said McMahon. "But they just had too many fresh people off the bench for us to keep up in the second quarter and that was the difference."

McMahon was pleased with the work inside by Watson, the good defense by Banzet and a snappy effort by McDowell.

MULVANE Sports

"We got some good post play from Cody," said the Wildcat coach. "She was doing some good things and she rebounded well. She also shot very good at the free throw line, where she had problems last year. This time, she made eight with some excellent shooting. Banzet went up and down the floor playing good defense and scored 10 points, and McDowell really did a good job on the weak-side rebounding, playing up to her potential. Lee Cates also came through handling the ball and making a couple baskets and Wenke played great defense on their big girl. With more experience she'll do an even better job."

It was tougher to be enthused about the opener at Buhler, where the Crusaders simply left the Cats for dead in a furious first-half charge. By intermission, Buhler held a 32-10 lead after out-scoring Mulvane, 16-2, in the second quarter.

Mulvane had 11 bad passes in the second quarter to make things easy for the hosts. "That's when they killed us," agreed McMahon.

"What happened to us was bad passes," pointed out McMahon. "We had 24 of them and eight ball turnovers for 32 mistakes.

You can't have that and win a ball game. The basic problem is that we couldn't make any passes. Sound passing techniques. That's what really hurt us and that's something we're going to have to work on if we're going to win ball games."

Putting the ball up, or not putting the ball up also helped seal the Wildcats' loss. The girls shot only 34 times. Buhler shot the ball 54 times.

"We did an adequate job shooting but we didn't shoot it enough," said McMahon. "We got decent shots and we didn't force it up but you still have to shoot the ball to make baskets."

One positive was that the new coach got to look at a lot of different combinations on the floor. "I saw some good combinations on defense and some good combinations on offense," said McMahon. "You want to get good effort at both ends of the floor. One thing I did see, though, was that we never gave up. It's easy when you're getting beaten but we never did."

Watson's eight points paced the Cat offensive effort. Banzet finished with five points and both Wenke and Cates had four-point games.

Circle Thunderbird Girls Classic Pairings

Tonight (Dec. 9)

Game 5—Sunrise vs. Wellington, gym No. 2, 6:15 p.m.

Game 6—Mulvane vs. Andover, gym No. 2, 8

Game 7—Independence vs. El Dorado, gym No. 1, 6:15

Game 8—Circle vs. Arkansas City, gym, No. 1, 8

Saturday, Dec. 11

Game 9 (Seventh Place)—losers of games 5 and 6, 11:30 a.m.

Game 10 (Fifth Place)—winners of games 5 and 6, 1:15 p.m.

Game 11 (Third Place)—losers of games 7 and 8, 3

Game 12 (Championship)—winners of games 7 and 8, 7

Circle Thunderbird Girls Classic

FIRST ROUND

Mulvane 9 8 18 13-48

Circle 9 31 14 9-63

Mulvane—Kristi McDowell 8, Lee Banzet 10, Cody

Watson 16, Marcy Arnold 3, Lee Cates 4, Heather Taylor

1, Janelle Wenke 5, Amanda Larson 1. FG 16 (0), FT 16-

31, F 20.

Circle—Jacque Jenkins 17, Kristi Cooper 15, Jennifer

Prilliman 9, Amy Claycamp 2, Ann Patton 2, Jennifer

West 2, Cassie Patterson 2, Angie Darnell 14. FG 24 (2),

FT 15-22, F 24.

Arkansas City 68, Andover 67

El Dorado 60, Wellington 32

Independence 61, Sunrise Christian 30

Varsity Girls

Mulvane 8 2 7 7-24

Buhler 16 16 13 17-62

Mulvane—Cody Watson 8, Anna Wenke 4, Lee

Banzet 5, Kristi McDowell 3, Lee Cates 4. FG 11-34

(2), FT 2-6, F 11.

Buhler—Jennifer Bowman 5, Amber Spillum 9,

Susan Voth 17, Kristi Korinek 12, Amber Archer 4, Tara

Smith 2, Jodie Fleming 5, Renae Charlson 2, Sarah

Ratzlaff 2, Cathy Lindbloom 2, Mandy McKinley 2. FG

27-54 (3), FT 3-9, F 11.

Girls Junior Varsity

Mulvane 2 3 1 8-14

Buhler 12 13 8 17-50

Mulvane—Heather Taylor 7, Lee Cates 3, Courtney

Renfro 2, Jaime Hardison 0, Heidi Parker 2. FG 1 (0),

FT 10-18, F 21.

Buhler—Tara Smith 4, Lisa Baiman 4, Jaime Morris 2,

Kerri Hedrick 6, Amber White 3, Amber Archer 4, Holly

Vollweider 7, Kim Miller 2, Jennifer Bowman 2, Monica

McGee 6, Jennifer Nevian 2, Renae Charlson 4, Sarah

Ratzlaff 4. FG 20 (0), FT 10-19, F 19.