

Consolation Champs

Girls Regain Magic Touch

Better balance and some outside punch made Mulvane High School girls a potent opponent and helped the Wildcats to the consolation championship Saturday afternoon, Dec. 8, in the annual Circle Thunderbird Girls Classic.

Only a shocking first-round upset loss to Independence kept Coach Gregg Wolgast's veteran club on the sidelines later Saturday night as Augusta stopped Rose Hill, 56-50, for the tournament championship.

Independence took third place by blasting the host Thunderbirds, 56-38.

In semifinal action, Mulvane regained its touch Thursday, Dec. 6, by shelling Andover, 66-46, to move in against El Dorado for the consolation bracket title.

"I think we've regrouped," said Wolgast, whose highly-regarded team was popped, 60-50, by Independence in the first game of the season. Indy successfully jammed up the middle to stop Mulvane's Kendra Banzet, a tactic opponents will certainly consider this season. "Andover tried to do the same thing and they did keep Kendra from being involved in the game. But we had several other girls step forward and shoot the ball when they had the shots. They scored enough that it wasn't a problem, and this is what the girls are going to be faced with all year long. How well we do will depend upon how well we face up to that challenge."

El Dorado's Wildcats in the consolation title game went with a man-to-man in the second half and Mulvane buried them with Banzet busting loose with her finest game of the tournament, 28 points, as Mulvane out-gunned El Dorado, 30-10, in the final half to win going away.

"I was surprised El Dorado stayed with the man-to-man because Kendra just took over and dominated the game in the second half," said Wolgast. "It became just a matter of getting her the ball about every time and she scored. That's what she can do against a man defense."

El Dorado had played it tough in the opening two quarters and actually held a 30-24 lead at intermission. "We didn't play well in the first half and we got into foul trouble," said Wolgast. "We made a couple of changes and became more aggressive and worked harder on defense. That enabled us to shut them down in the second half."

Wolgast also singled out Kirsten Kuntz, who replaced a foul-ridden Banzet in the second quarter and played well to keep Mulvane in the ball game.

"One of the good things coming out of this tournament is we know we have some balance now," said Wolgast. "Kendra led the scoring in the last game. Lisa Heersche was the top scorer against Andover and Ticia led against Independence. When Andover tried to jam it up, we got great balance, so everybody stepped up and took their shots to open things up. Once they opened it up, we were able to get the ball back into Kendra.

"Other teams are going to have to make a choice. They take Kendra out of the game and we have others coming up to score. If they don't, then Kendra will dominate."

The 6-foot, 3-inch Banzet pumped in 28 points against El Dorado, hitting 14 of 19 fielders. Another senior, Heersche, finished with her second double-figure game, hitting 14 points. Guard Kerri Taylor scored four.

The Cats also dominated the boards with 30 rebounds to only 15 for El Dorado.



Wildcats Miss All-Tournament Team At Circle

Although they finished 5th in the tournament, Mulvane's Wildcat girls were blanked in the all-tournament team selected at the conclusion of the annual Circle Thunderbirds Girls Classic Saturday night, Dec. 8.

Augusta won the championship and had two players on the all-tournament team; Paula Rodriguez and guard Megan Little.

Joining the two Orioles in the tourney spotlight were Lynda Gregory and Barb Hartnett from runner-up Rose Hill, Shana Carter and Julie Cooper of Circle, Larissa Heath of Andover's 7th place Trojans, Jennifer Prather and Carly McEachern of El Dorado and Julie Cunningham of Independence.

Circle Thunderbird Girls Classic

Fifth Place

Mulvane	14	10	16	14-54
El Dorado	13	17	2	8-40

Mulvane—Tricia Turner 2, Kendra Banzet 28, Kerri Taylor 4, Ticia Nicholson 2, Lisa Heersche 14, Kristen Kuntz 2, Dawn Hicks 2. FG 24-45 (0), FT 6-12, F 16.

El Dorado—Keri Melcher 6, Regie Culbertson 3, Carlie McEachern 7, Jodi Brown 1, Jennifer Prather 17, Christina Whitney 6. FG 16-51 (0), FT 8-18, F 15.

Championship

Augusta 56, Rose Hill 50

Third Place

Independence 56, Circle 38

Seventh Place

Andover 57, Arkansas City 44

Semifinals

Andover	7	17	16	5-45
Mulvane	19	18	18	11-66

Andover—Angola Vogt 8, Lori Brooks 4, Larissa Heath 12, Brandi Beach 8, Kathy Hanson 4, Sharon Coleman 3, Lori Brooks 4, Connie Smith 4, Stacy Smith 2, Dee Widak 3. FG 17-60 (1), FT 16-25, F 14.

Mulvane—Lisa Heersche 17, Ticia Nicholson 13, Kerri Taylor 10, Kendra Banzet 10, Tricia Turner 8, Dawn Hicks 3, Robin Smith 5. FG 27-51 (0), FT 18-26, F 17.

Senior Ticia Nicholson had nine boards and Banzet had eight.

Heersche scored 17 points to lead four players in double figures Thursday against the Trojans. Nicholson finished with 13 points and both Taylor and Banzet had 10.

Mulvane had no trouble against Andover, either. Mulvane took a 12-point lead early and never looked back, as the Cats shot a hot 53% from the field and dominated the boards with 43 rebounds.