

Cat Girls Scorch Field In 'Tip-Off'

What's this! Three-and-zero! Its new territory for the Mulvane High School basketball girls.

The Wildcats ran up three victories in a row to win the team title in the three-day Rose Hill Tip-Off Classic. Coach Jayson Miller's Cats drilled Douglass, 45-25, Saturday, Dec. 9, in the third and final game to claim the tourney title for the first time. The Wildcats started the Tip-Off Classic by rolling past Oxford, 43-20, Thursday night, then followed that up by blasting off against the host Rockets, 44-29.

Winning three in a row is certainly unfamiliar to the MHS girls. It marked the first

Rose Hill Girls Tip-Off Classic

THIRD ROUND

Douglass 3 5 9 8-25
Mulvane 13 10 15 7-45
Douglass—Tessa Keith 13, Becky Cross 4, Amber Raver 2, Crystal Seal 5, Erika Patterson 1. FG 8 (0), FT 9-20, F 17.

Mulvane—Andrea Valerio 2, LaShelle Parker 19, Kris Lazar 3, Jackie Burkhart 3, Melissa Doerfer 8, Sami Booth 4, Kari Leonard 2, Michelle Dinkel 4. FG 19 (0), FT 7-12, F 20.

Rose Hill 31, Oxford 19

SECOND ROUND

Rose Hill 10 7 0 12-29
Mulvane 10 7 12 15-44
Rose Hill—Porsha Purdy 2, Andrea Dinkel 2, Breanna McRae 4, Nicole Ringwall 2, Jessica Thomas 2, Amanda George 5, Dedria Decker 2, Katie Hoyt 4, Rachelle Hansen 2, Emily Roby 2, Chelsea Draper 2. FG 10 (0), FT 9-12, F 19.

Mulvane—Melissa Doerfer 10, Kari Leonard 1, Jackie Burkhart 2, Sami Booth 5, Kris Lazar 6, LaShelle Parker 14, Michelle Dinkel 2, Kayla Linnebur 4. FG 16 (0), FT 12-19, F 16.

Oxford 38, Douglass 36

FIRST ROUND

Mulvane 11 6 14 12-43
Oxford 5 2 3 10-20
Mulvane—Kari Leonard 1, Jackie Burkhart 1, LaShelle Parker 20, Kris Lazar 2, Sami Booth 6, Melissa Doerfer 7, Michelle Dinkel 4, Kayla Linnebur 2. FG 18 (1), FT 6-13, F 20.

Oxford—Katie Hauk 4, Lacey Rowe 7, Danielle Totten 5, Mandi Wiseman 3, Kari Stevens 1. FG 4 (0), FT 12-24, F 17.

Rose Hill 54, Douglass 45 (OT)

time the girls have started a season off with three straight victories since the 1979-80 season when Coach Bill Brown's Wildcats got off to a 4-0 start before losing. The Cats finished 10-8 that year.

"I was certainly pleased," said Miller. "We had set goals going into this year and one of the goals the girls have been talking about since last summer was winning the tournament. Coming into the tournament, we felt like we had the best team in the tournament. Going out and proving it, though, is sometimes tough to do, but the girls did that with a good, solid defensive effort and controlling the backboards."

Going into his third season, Miller has tried to put a heavy emphasis on defense in an effort to have a breakout year after two consecutive 8-12 seasons. "I felt the defense we played separated us from the other teams," said Miller. We came out and really tried to assert ourselves defensively every game. I told them that defense sometimes can carry you during times when your offense isn't doing well. Defenses are pretty steady. I think us setting up our defensive presence early in each game was really a key for us. I felt like we dictated the flow of every quarter of every game in the tournament except for one quarter against Rose Hill."

The scoring indicates that. The Cat girls gave up only 22 field goals during the entire tournament, and in the third quarters alone, Mulvane out-scored the three opponents, 41-12.

"Defense was the big thing, I thought," added Miller. "I thought the girls played very good defense. We played man-to-man every minute of the tournament and that's the first time in my years that we've been able to do that the whole game. We did it all three games, and I think that helped the girls feel that they CAN guard people and do it effectively without getting into foul trouble."

"One of the reasons our defense is so much better this year is repetition. Everybody playing in the tournament has played for me for a year at least, and things

are starting to rub off on them. They seem to be more comfortable playing with each other. That's one thing we wanted to reinforce this season."

In the finale, the Cats dominated every phase of the game and used their height advantage to perfection. Juniors LaShelle Parker and Kris Lazar took control on the boards inside, something they were able to accomplish all three games.

"We looked better offensively against Douglass," said Miller. "We had a good opening four minutes, then put them away in the third quarter. The girls did a pretty good job moving the ball around and got a lot of people in the scoring column. Our depth showed, and that was one of the biggest differences between us and Douglass."

Parker, the tournament's top scorer, tossed in 19 points against the Bulldogs. Guard Melissa Doerfer scored eight points and Sami Booth and Michelle Dinkel had four points each. Senior Jackie Burkhart and Lazar had three points apiece.

The Rose Hill game posed the biggest threat to the Wildcats. Playing at home, the Rockets are tough to beat, but Mulvane looked more like the Rockets than the Rockets did, controlling the glass and getting the break down the floor.

The Cats took the early lead only to stumble and fall late in the first quarter. "We ran into a major stupor in the last half of the first quarter and kept getting into trouble in the second quarter. We let them out-hustle us. That was the only quarter in the entire tournament where I thought we didn't dictate the game."

By intermission, the Cats had the game nearly tied up (18-16) and took control in the 3rd quarter by out-scoring RH, 21-9. "We came back with a nice run in the last half of the second quarter and got the game tied up and that was a big momentum swing for us," emphasized Miller. "Knowing we had played a pretty poor first half and were still tied with Rose Hill gave us momentum. We came out in the third quarter and played our best quarter of the tournament. Our defense was excellent and we didn't allow them to score for much of the quarter to take a 12-point lead. That showed the girls what they could do if they remained focused the whole quarter."

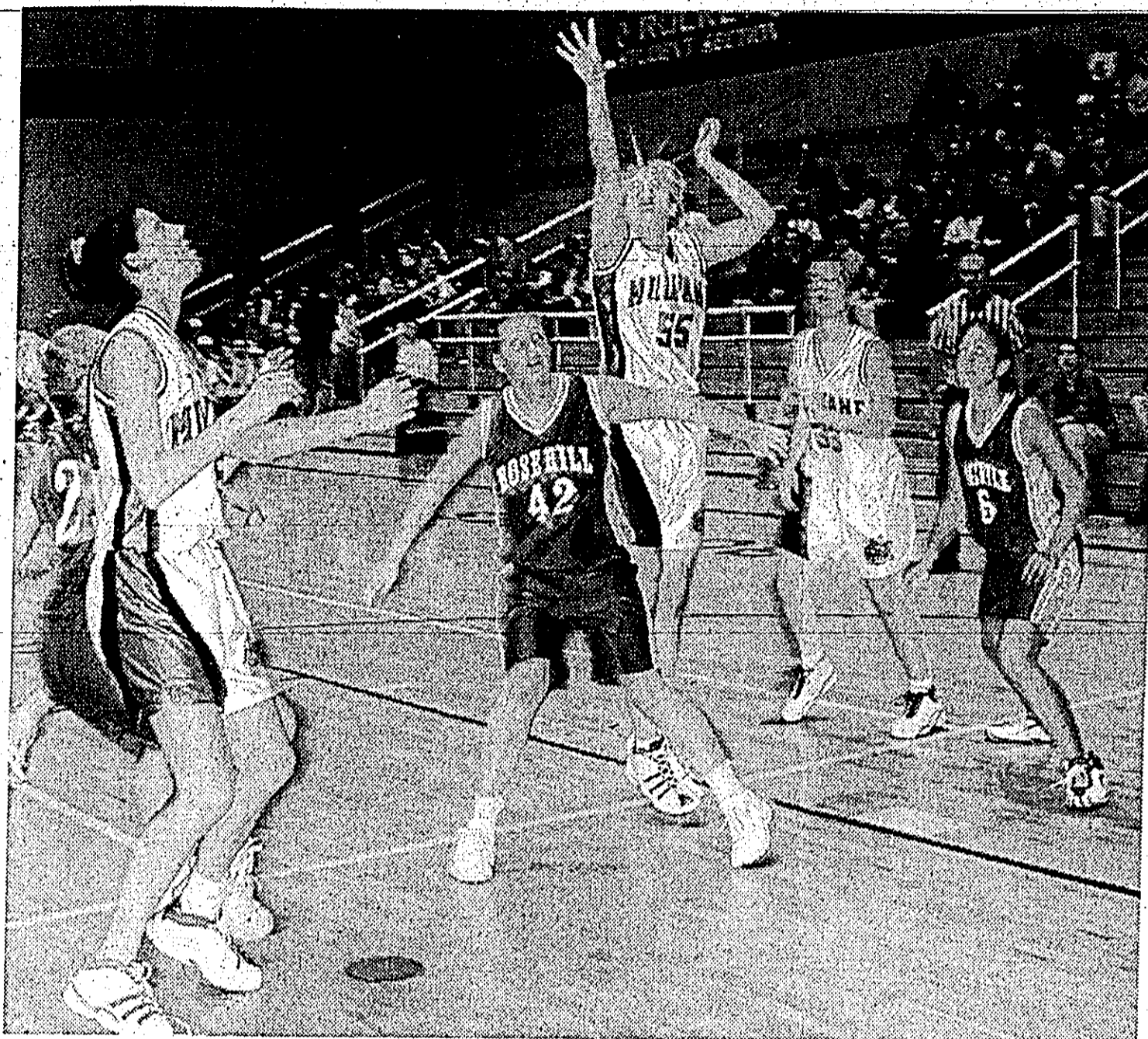
Mulvane opened their tournament run by trouncing Oxford. The MHS defense held Oxford to only eight points in the first half and Oxford's Wildcats never scored more than nine points in any quarter.

"We came out pretty slow," confessed Miller. "I think we were up by 10 at half-time but it was our first game and the offense wasn't together yet. Our defense kept us in the ball game and forced a lot of turnovers. I think the offense was just a little nervous. We sat back and kind of wanted for them to make mistakes. We talked about that at halftime and the girls came out and were a lot more active offensively."

The Wildcats made it their game in the third quarter by out-scoring Oxford, 14-3 to run out to a 31-10 advantage.

"Our height also played a big role, too, we really dominated the boards," said Miller, pointing out both Lazar and Parker had 11 rebounds to guide the Cats to a 48-26 edge in rebounding. "We really controlled the boards the whole tournament."

That's a trend Miller would like to see continue as the MHS girls head into Chisholm Trail League play in the coming months.



Senior Andrea Valerio, left, gets into position as LaShelle Parker (55) shoots from the lane in victory against Rose Hill.