

'Reset' Button Off; Wildcats Bow

Jayson Miller kept hitting the reset button Thursday night, Dec. 9, but the scene just wouldn't reset and it wouldn't go away.

The second-year Mulvane High School girls basketball coach wished he had a reset button for the Wildcats' third and final contest in the round-robin Douglass Early Season Basketball Tournament. But all Oxford did was fast-forward, leaving the Wildcats in the rearview mirror in the 58-35 drubbing.

Oxford ended up winning the tournament by sweeping past all three of its opponents, but it took the Oxford Cats a quarter before the fast-forward started working against the MHS Wildcat girls. Mulvane was in the game in the opening period, trailing only 6-4 going into the second quarter, but that's when Oxford took off, out-scoring Mulvane, 15-9, before putting the game away with a 21-4 edge in the third quarter.

"I felt like it was just one of those games where I wished I could hit the reset button," said Miller. "I mean, I didn't feel like we were all there at the start of the game and by the end of the game we were finally starting to get with it but it was way too late for us to make a move. Hopefully, the girls can use this to learn that you have to be ready from the opening whistle."

What made Miller, whose Wildcats tumbled to 1-3 for the campaign, feel the way he did is simple. "A coach can see whether or not the team is executing the game plan and we weren't. We had no control. I don't

Douglass Early Season Girls Tournament

THIRD ROUND

Oxford	6	15	21	16—58
Mulvane	4	9	4	18—35
Oxford—Kristen Houk 6, Mandi Wiseman 13, Trisha Skibbe 25, Sarah Lee 4, Melissa Wheeler 7, Skye Browning 2, Becky Klein 1 FG 16 (0), FT 26-46, F 20				
Mulvane—Natalie Turner 2, Kris Lazar 6, LaShelle Parker 6, Arin Leonard 5, Kari Leonard 4, Kim Mangus 4, Jackie Burkhardt 5, Andrea Valerio 2, Melissa Doerfer 1 FG 13 (2), FT 7-16, F 36.				

Rose Hill 36, Douglass 31 (OT)

think we ever had control out there but we hung around for a while even though we weren't doing what we wanted to try to do.

"We wanted to run on them and we didn't do that. We wanted to double up on their big gun and we didn't. We wanted to force her to go to her right shoulder but we didn't. There were about five or six things that we wanted to get done, but when one or two of those ideas started going wrong, everything went out the window. That's when we started having a lot bigger problem than (Trisha) Skibbe. They were able to get a lot more people than just her involved and that meant a lot of trouble for us."

Skibbe is Oxford's top player and the 6-foot, 2-inch senior finished with 25 points and 15 rebounds against the shorter

Mulvane girls.

"I just thought we came out fatigued, both physically and mentally," added the Wildcat boss. "We just didn't play well. We didn't have any energy at the start of the game and it didn't take long for that to catch up with us."

"You also have to give a lot of credit to Skibbe, too. She was the best player in the tournament and we knew that going in. What we wanted was to try and stop the other girls. We knew she was going to get hers but we wanted to keep everybody else from getting into the game for them."

That didn't happen though. The Wildcats always seemed to be a step behind, which forced 35 fouls. Oxford shot 49 at the free throw stripe and made 26 points there, which is where the big difference was. Mulvane went 7-for-16, so the Oxford Wildcats out-scored Mulvane by almost 20 points at the free throw stripe.

One bright spot for the MHS girls was the fact that nine girls scored against Oxford. Kris Lazar, a junior, led the team with seven points. Another junior, LaShelle Parker, finished with six points. Arin Leonard had five points and both Natalie Turner and Andrea Valerio had three points.

"We don't have a dominant player," said Miller. "We have had four games and haven't had anybody score in double digits yet. If we can just get a few more points out

of each girl, we'll be going in the right direction. We need to get eight or nine from a couple girls and five or six from a few more and three or four from some more, and we can complete. I don't want to lose that overall scoring depth."

Mulvane was still hanging around at intermission, trailing only by a 21-13 count, but Oxford exploded quickly after halftime. "We just fell apart," stressed Miller. "We talked about taking care of the ball and trying to put pressure on them but about two or three minutes into the half, it was evident we weren't getting it done. I think Skibbe got 10 points in the third quarter alone. The next thing I know is that the game is a blow-out."

One thing that disappointed Miller is that the Cats looked like they were getting things together in two earlier games in the tournament. They won against Douglass, then lost a tight one in overtime to Rose Hill. "I felt like we took a step backwards against Oxford," admitted Miller. "We played pretty good ball in the first two tournament games and wanted to build on that. We didn't, though."

Miller is still optimistic about Mulvane turning things around, however. "I'm still so excited about this team," said Miller. "I think we have the potential, it's just a matter of maturing and getting better. If we keep working hard, I think we can see some results. We want to keep our heads high and keep working hard."