

# MHS Coach Still

## Seeks 'His Team'

Mulvane High School girls basketball coach Jayson Miller has been on the job for four games, but he's yet to see his team.

Miller isn't going blind but he has had to turn a blind eye toward injuries and that's slowing down the Wildcat progress. The Wildcats finished second in the Mulvane Girls Varsity Tip-Off Classic by winning two games but losing the one that mattered Friday night, Dec. 11, when they butted heads with the touted Rose Hill Rockets. The Rockets pounded out a methodical 50-24 victory, then went on to win the annual Mulvane four-team tournament, which was held at the MHS gym, by posting a 3-0 record in the proceedings. All three RH games were runaway victories.

The Wildcats finished the tourney strong, however, by holding on against a second-half challenge by Douglass Saturday night, Dec. 12, to take a 44-41 verdict. In the first game of the tournament, Miller's Cats came from behind with a second-half rally for a 51-41 victory over Oxford's girls.

The tournament left Mulvane at 2-2 for the year as they head into the final game before the Christmas holiday. That game will be at around 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 18, when the girls battle Chaparral in their first Chisholm Trail League game.

"The thing I don't like is that we're still banged up injury-wise," Miller said expressing his viewpoint of the tournament, "and that's having a major influence on our team. What I do like is that we had some younger girls step up and look good. Our bench has given us some major moments. We're trying to develop a bench but our bench has been thrown into the forefront a little more than I had expected."

Miller might have to do something different when it comes to taping ankles. It isn't working. Starter Jackie McCoplin saw little action because of an ankle injury. Starter Lindsay Kendrick, who was an all-tournament selection primarily based on two games and a quarter of a third, went out in Saturday's outing in the first quarter with an ankle injury. And starter Kassie Hargrove has yet to be able to rid herself of an ankle problem, although she played in the tournament. "She's getting to about 75%," said Miller. "We're lucky that we had kids like Natalie Turner and Jackie Burkhart step up with some nice minutes, and Kristal LaPlant had a nice game off the bench Saturday night."

The Wildcats played their best quarter of the tournament in the first frame of the Douglass game, racing out to an 18-4 lead. They hung on to win but not before the Bulldogs had come back and taken the lead in the final three minutes. Mulvane responded with back-to-back buckets by veteran Shelley Richards and Kristin Buchanan to regain the lead, then put it away when Richards hit a free throw.

"I thought the girls just lost their focus after getting the big lead early," pointed out Miller. "A lot of times, when you get up easily quickly, you have a lapse and that's what happened. We tried to tell the girls that Douglass is a feisty team that was going to battle all the way, which it did. You can't just come out and play one quarter. It takes four quarters to get the job done."

### Mulvane Girls Varsity Tip-Off Classic

#### THIRD ROUND

Douglass	4	7	10	20-41
Mulvane	18	5	9	12-44
Douglass—Mary McClure 4, Amy McBee 4, Michelle Cummins 6, Shelly Ahlerich 1, Cazzi Cales 5, April Cummins 13, Stacy Nichols 2, Angie Fritz 1, Beth Ketterman 5. FG 8 (0), FT 25-48, F 27.				
Mulvane—Kristal LaPlant 11, Shelley Richards 10, Kristin Buchanan 12, Lindsay Kendrick 2, Arin Leonard 4, Jackie Burkhart 3, Natalie Turner 2. FG 17 (0), FT 10-29, F 36.				

Rose Hill 60, Oxford 25

#### SECOND ROUND

Rose Hill	14	11	8	17-50
Mulvane	4	5	2	13-24
Rose Hill—Summer Pearson 18, Chelsea Stancoff 17, Rachel Swenson 2, Andrea Dinkel 11, Kara Brockmeier 1, Lindsay Anthis 1. FG 17 (1), FT 15-39, F 20.				
Mulvane—Kristin Buchanan 3, Lindsay Kendrick 13, Shiriah Craft 2, Kassie Hargrove 2, Shelley Richards 2, Kris Lazar 2. FG 8 (2), FT 6-12, F 26.				

Oxford 47, Douglass 41

#### FIRST ROUND

Mulvane	11	5	16	19-51
Oxford	6	13	10	16-45
Mulvane—Lindsay Kendrick 15, Shelley Richards 13, Jackie McCoplin 1, Kassie Hargrove 2, Kristin Buchanan 5, Natalie Turner 6, Shiriah Craft 8, Kris Lazar 1. FG 16 (2), FT 21-29, F 26.				
Oxford—Jennifer Danler 12, Mandi Wiseman 7, Ashley Venskus 4, Trisha Skibbe 21, Kristen Houk 1. FG 16 (0), FT 13-29, F 28.				

Rose Hill 69, Douglass 31

As Miller put it: "The game got to be a lot more exciting than we really wanted it to be."

Buchanan paced the Wildcats, who had three players in double digits. She had 12 points. LaPlant had a career-high 11 points and Richards finished with 10. Arin Leonard chipped in four and Burkhart had three.

The Wildcats gave Rose Hill its closest game but the Rockets were in charge from the start, plowing ahead for a 14-4 lead at the first-quarter break. By intermission, it was 25-9 and it was late in the third quarter before Mulvane reached double digits.

"We didn't do what we had to do to win the ball game," said Miller. "We didn't play very good on defense. We broke down and they just killed us. Offensively, we really didn't do anything."

Kendrick powered Mulvane's offense with 13 points. The only other Cat with more than two points was Buchanan with three.

"Our first game (against Oxford) was our best game for four quarters worth of basketball," emphasized Miller. "We stuck a little more to our offense and played better defense. I'm a stickler for defense. I felt like we grew a little more each game on defense. I think the girls are getting a little more comfortable with what we're trying to do defensively."

The biggest statistic of the game, though, came at the free throw line. Mulvane hit 21 of 29 at the stripe and that was the difference in the game. Oxford's Wildcats hit only 13 of 29.

"We took advantage of the free shots they were giving us but I felt we got those shots because we ran our offense better," said Miller. "We got the ball in good position to score and they had to foul us."

Kendrick spearheaded the offense with 15 points and Richards finished with 13. Shiriah Craft scored eight points, Turner had six and Buchanan scored five as Mulvane showed its best diversity on offense as eight girls helped in the scoring column.