

Golden Plains girls post first win of season

By Judy Rogers

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The Golden Plains girls varsity got their first win of the basketball season at Healy on Dec. 14 as they defeated the Lady Eagles 52-35.

The Lady Bulldogs got the game off to a strong start and led the Lady Eagles 18-2 by the end of the first quarter. During the second, the Lady 'Dogs put in an additional 7 points while allowing the Lady Eagles only 4. At half-time, the score was 25-6.

Healy found its footing again in the second half and outscored Golden Plains 15-12 in the third quarter. However, the Lady 'Dogs put in 15 in the fourth while the Lady Eagles gained only 14.

Despite the close second half, the strong start in the first quarter carried the girls to their first win of the season.

Senior Melissa Ritter led the Lady Bulldogs with 18 points. Freshman Jordan Christensen scored 9, Angela Ritter 8, Jacy Moss 7, Kylie Jones and Hailee Spresser 4 each, and Avery Spresser 2.

The girls suffered another loss as they were downed by the Wheatland/Grinnell Lady Thunderhawks 22-40 on Dec. 17.

The ladies started the game with determination and kept the score close through the first quarter, which ended with the score 10-7. The Lady Bulldogs got buckets from Angela Ritter and Moss.

In the second quarter, Jones, Melissa Ritter, and Christensen each added two points to the Bulldog's 18-13 halftime score.

The girls started to falter under the Thunderhawks game, gain-



HAYDYN BEST/Golden Plains High School

Golden Plains basketball player Kylie Jones dribbled around a Wheatland/Grinnell Lady Thunderhawk on Dec. 17. Jones had 2 points and 5 rebounds for the Lady Bulldogs.

ing another two points each from Angela Ritter, Leea Juennemann and Melissa Ritter. With only three points gained in the fourth — a bucket from Christensen and a free throw from Melissa Ritter, the Lady Bulldogs couldn't gain enough to capture the win.

Melissa Ritter and Moss each had 5 points while Angela Ritter and Christensen had 4 each and Juennemann and Jones put in 2 apiece.

"We need to figure out how to score a few more points on of-

fense," said Coach Steve Shaw, "but the girls' hard work defense helped keep Wheatland/Grinnell from scoring over 40 points."

The girls totaled 29 rebounds, with Jones grabbing 8 and Melissa Ritter pulling down 7. Angela Ritter, Christensen, and Hailee Spresser each claimed 4 while Moss had 2.

The girls are now 1-5 and will play the St. Francis Lady Indians, who are 2-4, when they return to the floor Tuesday, Jan. 4.

Rexford middle-schoolers go 1-1 before holiday break

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The Golden Plains Middle School girls basketball team won one and lost one to the Sharon Springs Lady Wildcats on Dec. 16 in their last action before the new year.

The B-team girls started off the night with a 24-11 win. The girls gained a solid 16-2 lead in the first quarter, which they extended to 19-4 by halftime.

They held the Lady Wildcats scoreless in the third period while they put in an additional 5 points. However, the Lady 'Dogs went scoreless in the fourth and the Lady Wildcats added 7 to their final score.

Scoring for Golden Plains were Tayler Petersen, 10; Maddy Walz, 6; Gabrielle Schiltz, 4; Brianna Stoll, 2; and Arainna Camacho, 2.

The A-team girls game followed the B-team game. The girls scored 6 points in the first quarter and 4 in the second, but they entered half-time trailing 20-10. The gained another 10 in the second half, but the Lady Wildcats added 14 to their total as the Lady Bulldogs lost 34-20.

Brooke Wark put in 6 of the Bulldog points with Rachael Ritter and Taylor Todd adding 4 each and Kami Miller, Kaycie Clap and Ana Bermudez 2 each.

The girls will travel to Brewster on Thursday, Jan. 6, for their next set of games.

Rookie rallies Broncos for close win

DENVER (AP) — Tim Tebow has heard all about how he can't be a prototypical pro passer with his windup motion and his clunky mechanics.

And while he may need polish on his delivery and still has plenty of detractors, his awkward style didn't matter as much as his gumption Sunday.

Borrowing from the formula that made him a star at Florida — chuck it, and when that won't work, tuck it — Tebow rallied the Denver Broncos for a 24-23 vic-

tory over the Houston Texans.

"I love his will to win," receiver Jabar Gaffney said. "As long as he has that, we've got a chance. Everything else we can work on."

Playing with more passion than precision, Tebow scrambled 6 yards for the winning score with 3 minutes left, recalling his college career where he was as much of a runner as a passer.

"He can keep plays going," receiver Eddie Royal said. "When things don't work (with the first option, the second option, his third

and fourth options are his feet."

Tebow's ability to take off and run not only galvanized his teammates but energized a crowd that was booing the conservative play calling of the first half, which ended with the Broncos trailing 17-0.

The restrictive game plan out the window in the second half, Tebow finished with 308 yards passing, the third-most by a rookie in team history. John Elway has the top mark when he threw for 345 yards during a win over Baltimore in 1983.

Bulldogs battle Wheatland to fourth-quarter victory

By Judy Rogers

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The Golden Plains boys basketball junior varsity posted an exciting 40-35 win over the Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks on Dec. 17.

Ethan Walter put in the first two points of the game, but the 'Hawks weren't going to let that stop them. With a 4-4 tie with just over two minutes remaining in the first quarter, a time out was called so the coaches could strategize. In the remaining time, the Bulldogs put in one more bucket, but the Thunderhawks put in 5 to pull ahead 9-6 at the end of the period.

In the second quarter, both teams continued to work hard and kept the game close. It was tied at 11 with three minutes on the clock. The teams traded buckets to keep it tied at 17 going into the break.

The Bulldogs took a 28-20 lead by the end of the third quarter, but the Thunderhawks were not giving up. Both teams continued to work hard for the win through the fourth.

With 1:47 remaining, the Thunderhawks gained a 33-32 lead before throwing the ball out

of bounds. With just over a minute to play, Trey Schwarz made a bucket to put the Bulldogs ahead by 1 at 34-33. After a missed shot, the Bulldogs turned the ball over to Wheatland/Grinnell, who passed the ball around for a while before Shane Ryburn put the 'Hawks back in the lead 35-34 Tyler Stevenson answered to put the Bulldogs back in the lead, 36-35.

With Wheatland back in control of the ball, Schwarz stole a pass to regain possession for the Bulldogs. Stevenson got fouled and Coach Terry Preston called a time out.

When the action started back up, Walter got fouled, putting the Bulldogs on the line. Walter made his first shot to extend the Bulldogs' lead 38-35, but leaving room for the 'Hawks to send the game into overtime. Walter was determined not to let that happen: he stole the ball from the 'Hawks again and pushed it down the court to make a final two and cinch the win at the buzzer, 40-35.

Walter ended the game with 11 points for the Bulldogs. Kalyn Weber had 8 points, Walter 6, Stevenson and Trey Schwarz 4 each, Chance Hoeting, Grant Spresser and Tristan Schwarz 2 each and Josh Barnhart 1.

Wildcat plays through pain for career-making performance

By Doug Tucker

AP Sports Writer

MANHATTAN (AP) — Rodney McGruder shot 300 3-pointers in practice and then kept them coming Thursday night.

Doing his best to ignore the discomfort from an emergency root canal, the 6-foot-5 sophomore hit seven 3-pointers and scored a career-high 24 points to help No. 11 Kansas State beat the University of Missouri Kansas City 80-64.

McGruder was 7 for 10 from beyond the arc for the short-handed Wildcats (10-3), who dominated the slower and shorter Kangaroos most of the game in spite of being without Jacob Pullen and Curtis Kelly, their only two seniors, who have been suspended for NCAA violations.

On Wednesday night, McGruder stayed late after practice to work on his shot.

"I was feeling it. I was in rhythm," said McGruder, his lip still swollen from the dental work after chipping a front tooth when he fell face-first onto the court during a game against the University of Nevada, Las Vegas two nights earlier.

"I'm not hurting, but my lip is still swollen," he said. "A little pain from having a root canal. I had it done today and yesterday. Finished it today."

In a scene that was played over and over on sports highlight shows, McGruder wobbled off the court as officials picked up the tooth.

"I had to have a cap put on my teeth because of how bad it was," McGruder said.

Kansas State coach Frank Martin opened his postgame news conference explaining that he'd meant no harm when he tore into reporters on Tuesday night after losing to UNLV. He became angry, he said, because he'd asked reporters not to ask about Pullen and Kelly, whose suspensions had been announced right before ti-

poff.

"I was wrong for the way I dealt with the press conference the other day," Martin said. "It's not your guys' fault that our players got in trouble. It's not your guys' fault that we lost. It's my fault."

"What I don't appreciate is when I ask you to respect something on my behalf, when I give you guys every media interview, you ask for, and I give you every answer you ever want, is for that, whatever I ask, to be disrespected."

Pullen, the Wildcats' captain and preseason All-American, was ordered by the NCAA to sit out three games for receiving impermissible benefits. Kelly was suspended for an undetermined time.

Jay Cousinard had 21 points for UMKC and was 11 for 11 from the free throw line matching Kansas State's team total from the line. The Wildcats, who have struggled at the charity stripe all season, were just 11 for 27.

Reggie Chamberlain had 11 points for the Kangaroos.

Without Pullen and Kelly, the Wildcats are clearly not the team that was picked as preseason favorite in the Big 12 and ranked as high as No. 3 in the nation. But they had plenty left to take care of the Kangaroos (7-5), who dropped to 1-15 all-time against Kansas State.

When Max Rockmann scored about 7 minutes into the second half to make it 56-38, it was just the fourth two-point field goal of the game for the Kangaroos.

But trailing by as many as 20 points early in the second half, the Kangaroos kept chipping away until Spencer Johnson's 3-pointer sliced the lead to 67-57 with 5:44 left.

Wally Judge then banked home a short shot and Johnson drew his fifth foul. With Will Spradling's driving runner and Judge's rebound and putback, the Wildcats were back on top 73-57.

McGruder drilled his seventh 3-pointer to make it 78-61. His seven 3s were one off the team record.

Judge, who was benched for three games this season for unspecified reasons, had his best game of the season with 14 points and 11 rebounds. Spradling, taking over at point guard for Pullen, had 15 points.

"It was a big game for Wally," McGruder said. "I believe now he has that swagger back about himself. He's a great player and he can be unstoppable in the post. That's all that was missing. He needed a game like this, to step up and get that double-double."

Just seconds before Spencer fouled out with 13 points and five rebounds, another UMKC starter, Trinity Hall, went to the bench with eight points and six rebounds. By the end of the first half, the outmanned Kangaroos trailed 44-29 and had three players with three fouls. After hitting just 6 of 20 from the field in the first half, UMKC wound up shooting 18 of 51 for the game. But Kansas State's 29 for 72 was not much better. The Wildcats held a 49-34 rebounding edge and had a whopping 26 offensive boards.

"They really struggled from the foul line, but we did not rebound, and that was the difference in the game," UMKC coach Matt Brown said. "We would have had ample opportunities to make it a single-digit game with about 6 minutes to go."

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