

# Colby girls finish season in semifinal game

By Kayla Cornett

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The Colby High varsity girls basketball team lost an overtime heartbreaker to Hugoton on Friday after coming from behind to tie the game in the fourth quarter, but getting outscored 10-1 in overtime.

The Lady Eagles (16-6 overall, 7-2 Great West Activities Conference) finished their season in the substate semifinal game in Pratt. The loss snapped a six-game win streak with a final score of 61-52.

The Colby and Hugoton girls were in a tight battle in the first quarter, trading baskets throughout the first eight minutes. Junior Haileigh Shull grabbed the first points with a basket with 6:11 left, but Hugoton put in a three-point shot to take the lead about a minute later.

Shull was fouled on Colby's next possession and made 1 of 2 free throws to tie the game at 3. Hugoton came right back with another basket, but Shull grabbed an offensive rebound and made a two-pointer to tie the game back up at 5. A foul on freshman Brenly Terrell put Hugoton at the line, where the player made 1 of 2 free throws.

Senior Kenzie Curry landed 2 points for Colby's first lead, 7-6, with about three minutes remaining, but Hugoton converted a Colby turnover into a basket and retook the lead 8-7. Hugoton made 1 of 2 free throws and a three-pointer to end the first with a 12-7 lead.

After a couple of traded possessions at the beginning of the second quarter, Shull banked a shot off the backboard and drew a foul for a three-point play. She made her free shot to put Colby within 2, 12-10. However, Hugoton answered back about 20 seconds later with three-point shot to go up 15-10.

Senior Karly Kriss made a jumper a minute later, but again Hugoton took the ball down the court for 2 points. Kriss was fouled when Colby got the ball



MAURA HANSEN/Colby High School

Kenzie Curry looked to start the offense after bringing the ball up the court Friday during the overtime period of the Colby High varsity girls basketball substate semifinal game in Pratt. The Lady Eagles implemented a new zone offense they had been working on since their last meeting with Hugoton. They were hoping to neutralize the tall post player with the new offense.

back, but she missed both free throws. With under four minutes on the clock, Hugoton sank a three to lead 20-12.

Hugoton forced two Colby turnovers and then a foul on Shull and 2 successful free throws put Hugoton up by 10. Colby came

roaring back, with freshman Lara Stephens putting in 2 free throws and senior Lauren Bell completing a three-point play for a score

of 22-17.

Hugoton landed a three-point basket, but Bell answered with her own three with under two minutes to play. A Hugoton foul sent Shull to the line, where she made 1 of 2 to cut the lead to 25-21. Hugoton drove to the basket for 2 points, but Curry put in a three to put Colby within 3. A final basket by Hugoton put the score at 29-24 at halftime.

Colby came out of the locker room ready to play on both sides of the ball. About two minutes in, Curry dropped a long three to close the gap to 29-27. Shull followed with a steal and a layup to tie the game at 29.

Colby held Hugoton scoreless until the last two minutes of the third quarter, when Hugoton scored a two. A couple of misses and turnovers later, Hugoton made another basket for a 33-29 lead. Colby was in the bonus after an offensive foul and Hugoton made a one-and-one to go up 35-29 with 30 seconds on the board. Bell closed out the third with two-point shot to set the score at 35-31.

In the first minute of the fourth, Curry stole the ball and was fouled behind the three-point line. She sank all 3 free throws to put Colby within 1. Kriss fouled out for Colby on the next play and Hugoton made its 2 free throws for a 37-34 score. Senior McKenna Ortner was fouled when Colby got the ball back, but she missed both free throws.

Colby had been without Shull for part of the second half after she collided with a Hugoton player in the third. She returned to the court with her elbow wrapped, but it didn't stop her play-making ability. After a successful one-and-one from Hugoton, Shull landed a jumper and 2 free throws to get Colby back into the game, 39-38.

Hugoton went back to the free-throw line after a foul by Shull, but left the door open for Colby with 2 misses. Colby took advantage with a steal followed by a three-pointer by Curry with about five minutes to play for its first lead since early in the first quarter,

41-39.

A foul on Bell put Hugoton at the line again and 2 successful free throws tied the game at 41. With 4:35 on the clock, Curry sank yet another three, but Hugoton scored a bucket to trim the Colby lead to 44-43. Curry was then fouled, but 2 missed free throws gave Hugoton another chance for the lead.

Hugoton took this chance, making 2 free throws off a foul by Bell, and led 45-44. Ortner was then sent to the line for one-and-one, but she missed the first free throw and Hugoton got the rebound. A backboard shot put Hugoton up 47-44.

A Colby turnover led to another Hugoton basket with 2:15 remaining, but Ortner began a Colby rally with a three-pointer, setting the score at 49-47. A foul on Terrell gave Hugoton more free throws and the player made 1 of 2, but Curry committed a line violation and gave the player another free throw, which went in.

Colby finally got some free throws to fall when Shull made 2 with about one minute on the board to make the score 51-49. After a backcourt violation by Hugoton, Shull scored a bucket with 43 seconds left to tie the game. Neither team could get shots to fall in the remaining seconds, sending the game to overtime.

In the four-minute overtime, Colby didn't make one basket. The girls missed nine field goals and Shull made 1 of 2 free throws for Colby's only point. Meanwhile, Hugoton went to the free-throw line five times and made 6 of 10. Ortner fouled out for Colby with under a minute left. Hugoton added two baskets in overtime and claimed the win, 61-52.

Shull finished with 20 points, Curry had 16, Bell 9, Ortner 3 and Kriss and Stephens 2 apiece.

The Colby girls were 13 of 28 on free throws, shot 16 of 57 from the field (42 percent) and had 18 turnovers. Hugoton hit 42 percent of their field goals and had 15 turnovers. Colby out-rebounded Hugoton 42-37.

## B-team girls league runner-up

By Judy Rogers

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The B-team girls from Golden Plains Middle School finished their season as runner-up of the Western Kansas Liberty League basketball tournament.

They entered the tournament ranked No. 2 behind the Grinnell-Wheatland Lady Thunderhawks, the only team the B-team girls lost to this season.

The Lady Bulldogs had a bye for the first round. Then they traveled to Brewster on Feb. 9 for an early-morning game against the Weskan Lady Coyotes.

The Lady 'Dogs had no trouble handling the Lady Coyotes, as they put in 7 points in the first, 6 in the second and 4 in the third quarter and kept the Lady Coyotes scoreless throughout the first three quarters.

The Lady Coyotes found the basket in the fourth, putting in all their 10 points. The Lady Bulldogs added another 6 to win 23-10.

Kaylie Schaben led the scoring for the Lady Bulldogs with 7 points, while Sierra Finlay,

Amanda Cheney and Maggi Nieman had 4 each and Paris Bailey and Beth Luna 2 each. This win sent the girls to the championship game to face Grinnell-Wheatland.

The Lady Bulldogs entered the game with determination and enthusiasm, but the Lady Thunderhawks held them to 2 points in the first quarter while jumping to a 10-2 lead. The pacing slowed in the second as the Lady 'Hawks added 4 to their halftime lead of 14-2.

The Golden Plains girls managed 4 in the third, but only 2 in the fourth. The Grinnell-Wheatland girls put in 9 in each quarter to capture the championship 32-8 with the Lady Bulldogs as runner up.

Scoring for the Lady 'Dogs

were Kaylie Schaben and Nieman with 4 points each.

The B-team girls finished their season with a record of 9-2, with their only losses going to Grinnell-Wheatland.

"I think that the sixth grader's first basketball season went pretty good," said Cheney, a sixth grader.

"We worked very well as a team and it showed in our ending record," added Schaben, a seventh grader.

The girls all agreed that they improved on their skills throughout the season.

Nieman felt they improved on ball handling, layups and working together.

"It was great that the girls were able to get to the finals," Coach Travis Smith said. "The outcome wasn't what we wanted, but the season on the whole was great.

It's always awesome to see these young girls improve from day one until the end of the season. They are a great group of girls to work with."

The girls all had high praise for the support they received from their coaches, Smith and Parker Christensen.

"Mr. Smith is a good coach, especially when he told us he was proud of us," Luna said. "He told us, 'When the going gets tough, the tough keep going.'"

"When I made my first 4 points, I looked over at Mr. Smith and he had his hands up screaming," Cheney recalled. "Everybody was cheering really loud."

Luna said she enjoyed going to all the other schools to play and Tayler Lobato said she liked going to the games with friends.

## Bulldogs fall short in fourth quarter

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The Golden Plains Bulldogs got off to a great start against the Wheatland-Grinnell Thunderhawks in Grainfield on Feb. 15, but fell short in the fourth quarter to allow the 'Hawks to slip past them 45-42.

The varsity boys jumped to a 19-9 lead in the first quarter but struggled to sink a basket in the second, only making 5 points. The 'Hawks put in 8 and the Bulldogs led 24-17 at the half.

In the third quarter, the Bulldogs still couldn't find the bucket, making only 4 points — a free throw and a three from

junior Tristan Schwarz, as the 'Hawks pushed through for 17 and a 34-28 lead going into the fourth. The Bulldogs rallied in the fourth for 14 points, but it wasn't quite enough. The 'Hawks added 11 to claim their 45-42 win.

Junior Spresser led the team with 13 points, with 11 from classmate Schwarz. Seniors Andrew Luna and Camron Spresser scored 6 each, with 3 from Jose Bermudez. Also scoring for the Bulldogs were sophomore Joseph Koerperich with 2 and junior Shane Ryburn with 1.

The Bulldogs went into the substate tournament last week with a 5-15 record.

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