

# Bulldogs reflect on 5-16 season

By Judy Rogers  
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The Golden Plains High School Bulldog basketball team finished its season with a final record of 5-16. The boys worked hard all season to improve on last year's record.

They gained wins from Wheatland-Grinnell, Brewster-Triplains, Logan and two wins from Healy. They showed improved individual growth and team development throughout the season and never failed to delight their fans with their effort.

The Bulldogs faced a number of challenges this season.

"The biggest challenge for this group of kids was learning a new system with a new coach," said first-year Coach Mike Doll. "It really took some time for the kids to pick up a lot of new information and a lot of different terminology from previous years. When we began to start feeling comfortable, the kids really settled down and played more under control and free."

As the season progressed, the strength of the team showed both

on and off the court.

"The strength of this team is heart and effort," said Doll. "I rarely had to get on this team for lack of effort in games or practice. They came ready to go and ready to improve day in and day out. Their heart was shown as they competed until the buzzer every single game and really made some nice comebacks that just fell short at the end of the game."

Doll said his favorite part of the season was "to be able to see the kids grow and improve not only as basketball players, but also as leaders for the community. I believe it really showed our fans and supporters that we are improving and putting forward the effort needed every day."

They will be graduating three senior team members: Andrew Luna, Jose Bermudez and Camron Spresser.

"I would like to thank the three seniors for the hard work and leadership they provided this year on the court," Doll added. "They never took a play off and because of that, they made some of the biggest improvements on the team."

"Andrew showed great leadership as a captain and guarded the



JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains High School

Senior Andrew Luna (No. 11) kept hold of the ball during the Golden Plains boys substate game against Weskan as Jose Bermudez (No. 21), Joseph Koerperich (No. 15), Tristan Schwarz (No. 22) and Grant Spresser (No. 20) rushed to his aid. Luna,

other teams' best player a number of times.

"Jose provided an incredible amount of energy and effort and never took a second off in practice or in games. He led the team and probably the league in hustle

along with seniors Camron Spresser and Jose Bermudez, will be missed on the Bulldog squad next season, but the juniors will be stepping up to their leadership roles.

The Bulldogs will return a number of experienced players as they look forward to next season.

"I believe the returnees can really make a run for next year," Doll continued. "They understand that good teams put the effort in

outside of basketball season. If we put in the work in the off season, I fully expect our boys to be competing at the top of the league."

# No. 1-seeded Kansas to face the Hilltoppers

By Dave Skretta  
AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The first step off the bus was familiar. So was going through security, navigating the maze of tunnels, walking into the locker room and getting cozy in one of the wooden stalls.

Yes, everything about the Sprint Center is familiar to top-seeded Kansas.

After all, the Jayhawks are 6-0 in the building this season.

The Jayhawks (29-5) earned the top seed in the South Region and the right to play a 30-minute drive from their Lawrence campus by winning the regular-season Big 12 title, and running roughshod through the conference tournament last weekend at Kansas City's downtown arena.

Along with those three wins, the Jayhawks have beaten Washington State, Saint Louis and Oregon State in the Sprint Center, giving it a distinctive home-away-from-home feeling.

They'll try to keep their success going against No. 16 seed Western Kentucky (20-15) when they meet tonight in one of the last games of the second round of the NCAA tournament.

"It feels like the Big 12 tournament, to be honest," Jayhawks center Jeff Withey said. "I think being so close to home will be a great advantage for us. We're far enough away that we don't have the distractions, but close enough that we'll still have the support of our fans."

Even the most pint-sized fans.

"There isn't a whole lot that can distract us," senior guard Travis Releford said, "other than little

kids running up to us, asking for autographs. And that I look like as fun, part of Kansas basketball and being part of this tournament."

As easily recognized as the Jayhawks are around town, the Hilltoppers are complete unknowns, so much so that Western Kentucky coach Ray Harper had a tough time getting through security.

He was held up for several minutes by overzealous Sprint Center staff. Officials from Western Kentucky eventually managed to convince the guards that, yes indeed, Harper was the coach.

"Hopefully they'll let me in tomorrow night," he said with a wry smile.

The Hilltoppers are no stranger to the NCAA tournament, of course, even if they are to Kansas City. They're participating for the fourth time in the last six seasons after winning four games in four days to capture the Sun Belt tournament title.

They've also won at least once in each of their last three NCAA tournament appearances, rallying from 16 points down with 4:51 left to beat Mississippi Valley State in a "First Four" game last year, and then hanging tough with eventual champion Kentucky in an 81-66 defeat.

"We were in that game for a little bit," recalled the Hilltoppers' T.J. Price. "I'm feeling like we come into this game knowing we can beat Kansas, not just compete with them, or be happy we're in the NCAA tournament."

Kansas is in the tournament for the 24th consecutive year, second only to North Carolina for the longest streak, and is a No. 1 seed for the fifth time in the past seven tournaments.

# Lady Trojans softball squad wins first conference games

By Kayla Cornett  
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The Colby Community College softball team got its first conference wins of the season Monday, defeating Barton Community College 2-0 and 8-2 in Great Bend.

The Lady Trojans are now 7-11 overall and 2-4 in the Jayhawk West conference.

In the first game, both teams struggled on offense, but Colby came away with the win, 2-0.

Taryn DiRito had 2 hits for Colby, Gabi Palacios and Kendra Trussel were each walked once and Michelle Starkey brought in

1 run. Natalie Elmgreen and Skyler Mengel both pitched for the Lady Trojans. Elmgreen threw 16 first-pitch strikes and 5 strikeouts and Mengel had 1 first-pitch strike and 1 strikeout.

Colby scored a run in the fourth and fifth innings, keeping Barton from bringing any runners home.

In the second game, the Lady Trojans picked up their offense and took down Barton again with a score of 8-2.

Palacios and DiRito each had 3 hits for Colby, Courtney Kinnett was walked twice and DiRito was walked once and Ashley Archer

knocked in 3 runs while Palacios brought in 1 run.

Mengel and Elmgreen were on the mound again for the Lady Trojans. Mengel had 18 first-pitch strikes and 2 strikeouts. Elmgreen had only 6 first-pitch strikes, but racked up 4 strikeouts.

The women scored 3 runs in the third inning, 2 in the fourth, 1 in the sixth and 2 in the seventh. Barton was held to just 2 runs in the sixth inning.

Colby will play its next games at home at 2 p.m. Tuesday. The women will face McCook (Neb.) Community College on Carl Adams Field on the college campus.

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