

Cowgirls pull off overtime win against Lady Blue Jays

By Tom Betz

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She had not hit a field goal all night, but with the clock running out in overtime and the Cowgirls down by a point, Anny McCoy took a shot from about 10 feet. Nothing but net.

The basket gave the Cowgirls a 49-48 win over the Norton Lady Blue Jays Wednesday at Max Jones Fieldhouse in the sub-state quarterfinals.

The win propels the Cowgirls into the semi-final round tonight, when they will face the Colby Lady Eagles at 5 p.m. at Pratt Community College.

This will be the third meeting between the two rival teams this year. The Lady Eagles have won both previous battles.

The Lady Eagles are the No. 1 seed in the sub-state tournament, and it will be a tough assignment for the Cowgirls. At least there will not be any home court advantage. Pratt High School is hosting the sub-state tournament this year.

"I think we're a better team to represent our district," said Cowgirl Coach Connie Livengood after the win over Norton. "The girls have not risen to the occasion against Colby. We have been very tense in the previous games."

"In the past several games, everyone has shown up, and I believe in my team," she said. "When we play like we did tonight, we can make a difference."

The Cowgirls headed for Pratt at 10:40 a.m., and will play in the first of two semi-final games at 5 p.m. Mountain Time. The game will be broadcast on KLOE radio. The other semi-final pits Scott City against Larned.

Coach Livengood said the neutral site should make it better for the Cowgirls, who only two road losses including the one to the Lady Eagles.

Should the Cowgirls win, they will advance to the sub-state championship Saturday. Wednesday night, the girls were just glad to come out with a win.

"We know you like them close," Cowgirl Jayci Stone said to several members of the audience after the game.

Coach Livengood said when the girls got the ball in the last 10 seconds, they had called a play called "Cowgirl," and she had put McCoy and Erica Mann back in the lineup for their offensive strength.

A charging foul on Brenner had given the ball back to Norton with 10 seconds left. After a Goodland time out, Norton inbounced the ball and the officials called another foul on Brenner. It was her fifth, and she went to the bench with 8.2 seconds left.

Norton's Kristen Maddy stepped up to the free throw line with a chance to salt the game away. Both teams were in the bonus, but Maddy missed the front end of the one-and-one.

The rebound went to the Cowgirls, who passed it down court to McCoy for her winning shot.

The Lady Blue Jays called time out with two seconds remaining, but were unable to get a clean shot away before the buzzer.

"We never lost faith," Livengood said. "We played with patience both inside and outside tonight. Everybody played well."

"We expected more pressure, but instead Norton decided to make us win from outside, and we did well. Then when they came out to challenge our outside people we hit from inside."

The first period was close, with several ties and lead changes. With 3:21 remaining, Jessica Osborn lit up the crowd with her first 3-point basket to give the Cowgirls a 9-6 lead. However, the Lady Blue Jays responded with a



Anny McCoy got a hug from Jessica Osborn after McCoy made the winning shot in overtime (left). Lacey Brenner looked for an open player (above) against Norton on Wednesday at Max Jones Fieldhouse.
Photos by Skilar Boland/The Goodland Daily News

six point run to lead 12-9 at the end of the quarter.

Norton extended their lead to 14-9 before the Cowgirls went on their own scoring run of 10 points to turn it around and lead 19-14. The run started with two free throws by McCoy, two more 3-point baskets by Osborn and a basket by Stone.

With 2:05 left in the half, the Cowgirl led 23-16. A free throw and a 3-point basket by Norton's Abbey Keiswetter cut it to 23-20 at the break.

The Cowboy wrestling team, State Class 4A Runner-Up, was honored at halftime, with Coach Randy Bahe thanking everyone for their support during the season. School board member Ron Schilling introduced the state qualifiers, and Wilmer Bahe have a quick review of the Cowboy's season.

The ceremony delayed the start of the second half for a few minutes, and a few of the Norton fans objected.

The third quarter has not been kind to the Cowgirls most of the season, and this appeared to be another of those. They could not buy a basket for the first four minutes. They were playing well on defense, and allowed the Lady Blue Jays only one basket and three free throws to fall behind 25-23 with 4:25 remaining.

Osborn broke the scoring drought with her fourth 3-point basket at the 3:54 mark. It was immediately matched by a 3-pointer by Norton's Megan Walter.

Cowgirl Hayley Jarmin entered the game and with 2:59 left hit one of two free throws to cut the margin to 28-27. She then hit two tough inside shots to give the Cowgirls a 31-28 lead with 1:25 remaining.

Not to be outdone, Norton's Walter hit another 3-point basket to tie the game with 28 second left in the third.

The Cowgirls were playing for the last shot and with time running out, Erica Mann took a shot from the top of

the key that bounced high above the basket and fell through as the buzzer sounded to give the Cowgirls a 33-31 lead.

Norton's Keiswetter hit a 3-point basket early in the fourth quarter to retake the lead, but it was short lived as Mann's basket 15 seconds later gave it back to the Cowgirls, 35-34.

Norton's Lindsay Hager returned the favor, but Mann again answered to give the Cowgirls the lead. A basket by Jarmin made it a three-point lead with four minutes left.

After Norton had taken a time out, Walter hit a 3-point basket to tie the game at 39 with 3:23 left in regulation.

There were three fouls called on the Lady Blue Jays on the next three possessions to make it six for the second half. However, the Cowgirls were unable to turn any of the possessions into points, and with 2:09 remaining, a foul on the Cowgirl's Stone sent Hager to the free throw line. She hit one of two shots to give Norton a 40-39 lead.

Moments later, a foul on Norton's Stef Sloan put the Cowgirl's Lacey Brenner at the line for a one-and-one.

Cowgirls took a time out with 9.1 seconds left to set up the final shot, but when Osborn threw up the shot, it sailed off and the buzzer sounded.

The Cowgirls controlled the tip in the overtime, and Mann's basket gave Goodland a two point lead, 45-43 with three minutes left.

Norton's Keiswetter turned it around with a 3-point basket to make it 46-45 in favor of the Lady Blue Jays at the 2:45 mark. Another basket by Maddy made it a three-point Norton lead, 48-45 with 1:30 remaining.

A foul on Norton's Hager put StevieLee Raymer at the line for two free throws with 1:19 left. She hit both to cut the lead to one point.

Norton went into a stall to try to protect their lead. The Cowgirls took a time out with 47 seconds to talk things over.

On the inbounds, the Cowgirls tied up the ball, but the jump arrow favored the Lady Blue Jays. Goodland's Danielle Hellerud was called for a foul with 34.2 seconds left. It was the seventh foul on the Cowgirls and put Norton's Keiswetter at the line for a

one-and-one. She missed the first shot and the rebound went to the Cowgirls.

It looked like the Cowgirls would get the last shot when Brenner was called for a charge with 10 seconds left. She left two seconds later after her fifth foul put Norton's Maddy at the free throw line.

When Maddy missed the free throw, the Cowgirls got the rebound, but there were less than eight seconds left. A couple of quick passes put the ball in the hands of McCoy, who put up a 10-foot jumper over pressure from a Norton player in front of her. The ball sailed straight through the net to put the Cowgirls in the drivers seat. Norton was unable to get a shot off in the final two seconds, sealing an exciting finish as the Cowgirls won 49-48.

It was the second night in a row for a Goodland team to win in overtime with the Cowboys winning Tuesday at Ulysses, 67-63 to advance to the semi-finals. The Cowboys play Scott City at 5 p.m. Mountain Time Friday at the Pratt Community College.

Osborn led the Cowgirl scoring with 12 points, all on 3-point baskets; Mann had 10; Stone 8; Jarmin 7; Raymer 6; McCoy 4, and Brenner 2.

Stone had six assists, one steal and three rebounds. Mann had two steals and five rebounds. Danielle Hellerud had three assists and one rebound. Raymer had 2 assists and two rebounds. Stone and Mann each had a blocked shot.

The Cowgirls shot 50 percent from the field; hit 33 percent of their 3-point shots and made 90 percent of their free throws. Stone, Brenner, McCoy and Raymer were 100 percent from the charity stripe for eight points. The Cowgirls attempted 10 free throws and made nine, with Jarmin missing one.

Teams head to sub-state

The Cowgirls left for Pratt this morning for the sub-state basketball semi-finals, and the Cowboys will leave Friday.

The Cowgirls will play the Colby Lady Eagles at 5 p.m. Mountain Time today at Pratt Community College. The Cowgirls finished their season with a 15-5 record and are the second-seeded team. The Lady Eagles' season record was 18-2 and they are seeded No. 1. The Cowgirls have played Colby twice this season, losing both games.

If they win, the Cowgirls will play either Scott City or Larned in the finals. The girls lost to Scott City last month, and have not faced Larned.

On Friday, the Cowboys will play the fourth seeded Scott City Beavers at 5 p.m. Mountain Time at the college. The Cowboys are seeded seventh with a record of 9-11. The Beavers finished their season 11-8. The two teams did not meet during the regular season.

If the Cowboys win, they will go on to play Pratt or Hugoton in the finals. Pratt upset No. 1 seeded Norton in the first round. The boys beat Hugoton last month, and have not played Pratt. Goodland beat Ulysses Tuesday.

It is about 250 miles from Goodland to Pratt. To get to there, go east on I-70 to Russell and take U.S. 281 south through Great Bend. At Pratt, go east through town and turn north at K-61. The college is about a mile and a half northeast of town and is clearly marked from the highway, a diagonal route leading to Hutchinson.

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