

## Lady Bulldogs Win Sub-State Championship!

By Judy Rogers

**Third Time's The Charm!** has been the Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs motto all season. That motto became reality as the girls won their Sub-State Championship on Saturday, March 6, with wins over Cheylin in the semifinals and St. Francis in the finals to qualify for the state tournament. "It was a great feeling to make it to state on my home floor for my last year playing basketball," said senior Ashley Stoll. "I'm excited for the challenges state will bring!"

This is the third straight season for the Bulldogs to play in the Sub-State Championship game. They placed runner-up the past two seasons as their only loss of the year both times. This year, the girls were determined and remain undefeated as they head to the state tournament. This year, the first round of the state playoffs will be held at the home site and the girls will get one more game on their home floor in Rexford on Monday, March 8.

The girls, with their undefeated record, received a bye for the quarterfinals of the sub-state tournament. They entered the bracket in the semi-final round against Cheylin on March 4. The game got off to a defensive start with junior Kassie Miller putting in the first six. With 18.6 seconds left in the first, the teams were tied up at six. Senior Ashley Stoll hit a three at the buzzer to give the Bulldogs the lead.

Both teams remained competitive in a slow-paced game. Miller and Stoll continued to lead the Bulldog offense along with junior Morgan Wark as the Bulldogs worked their way to a 22-16 half time lead.

The girls stayed on pace in the second half as the Cougars worked to catch up. However, the Bulldogs stayed strong as senior Brooke Stoll pumped in 8 points along with 4 more from Ashley Stoll. The Cougars managed six as the Dogs pulled ahead for a 34-22 lead. Miller and Brooke Stoll each hit additional threes in the fourth and freshman Emma Weiner added two to the Bulldogs 43-26 win.

Miller finished the game with 16 points for the Bulldogs. Brooke Stoll and Ashley Stoll each added 11, Morgan Wark 3, and Emma Weiner 2.

The Lady Bulldogs faced off with the St. Francis Lady Indians for the Championship game on Saturday, March 6. This was the first time the girls had been able to play in a sub-state championship game on their home floor. The girls came out ready to play and ready to win as they quickly gained an 11-0 lead before the Lady Indians could score. They stayed on track for a 15-5 first quarter lead.

The girls moved the ball around the floor as they added 11 in the second, holding the Indians to 2 to lead the game 26-7 at the half. The Lady Indians were not about to give up as they came out in the third for 13 more points. The Bulldogs only managed six with a couple of threes from Brooke Stoll and junior Rayna Taylor. As the Bulldogs lead narrowed to 32-20 going into the fourth and senior Ashley Stoll on the bench with four fouls, the Bulldogs knew they had to dig deep into their training and experience to maintain the lead. Although they only made one basket by Ashley Stoll once she returned to the floor, they girls hit 8 free throws out of 12 attempts to capture the win 42-30.

"It felt really great to accomplish something we've all been working towards the past three years," said Junior Carli Nieman. "Having the support of the community there

made it even more special. I know this is something my teammates and I will never forget.”

The Lady Dogs head to the state tournament for the first time since 2017. They enter the quarterfinals with a 23-0 record for this season and a 69-2 record for the past three seasons. They will get one more game on their home floor as they play Dighton in the first round of the state tournament on March 8 in Rexford.

“It feels so great that our hard work finally paid off and shows that dedication and perseverance will get you a long way!” said Brooke Stoll. “I am so pumped to be able to play my final game on my home court and get a chance to advance to the state semi finals!”

“I am so grateful to get to experience the felling of making it to state,” said sophomore Breanna Rath. “We need to play our game and give it all we’ve got. Thank you all so much for the support! Let’s take care of business!”

“At this point in the season, we know we have to take it one step at a time and leave everything on the court each time,” added junior Kassie Miller. “We are thankful for our supportive community, but we are not done yet!”