

Lady Bulldogs Win Fifth Straight WKLL Tournament

By Breanna Rath

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs won their fifth straight Western Kansas Liberty League Championship on February 5 in Colby with a 57-49 win over Wheatland/Grinnell. The Bulldogs defeated Triplains/Brewster 64-21 in the quarterfinals and Logan/Palco 53-19 in the semi-finals to qualify for the Championship game. "It was a great accomplishment for the season," said senior Kassie Miller. "I am proud of my team for playing together to take home the Championship."

The first game of the tournament was against the Triplains/Brewster Titans held at the Colby Event Center on February 1. The Lady Bulldogs had no trouble and took the win to advance to the semi-finals. Leading 38-8 coming out of half-time, the Bulldogs quickly put up 20 more points in the 3rd quarter and played tough defense only allowing the Titans to score 6. The Bulldogs finished strong claiming the 64-21 victory. Adding to their list of accomplishments for the night, Senior Kassie Miller went over 1,000 career points! Miller had a total of 26 followed by Breanna Rath 14, Sidney Taylor 7, Rayna Taylor 7, Hayden Wark 4, Morgan Wark 4, and Lauren Patmon 2. Leading in steals was Rath 10, Miller and R. Taylor 3, Nieman 2, and 1 a piece from M. Wark, Patmon, and S. Taylor. Assists came from Miller, Patmon, and Nieman each with 2, and 1 a piece from R. Taylor, S. Taylor, and Rath. Rebounding for the Bulldogs was M. Wark 10, Hernandez 8, Miller 7, Nieman 6, 3 each for S. Taylor and R. Taylor, and 2 each for Rath, Patmon, and H. Wark. The Bulldogs advanced to the Semi-finals to play Logan/Palco in Colby on February 4.

The Lady Bulldogs took home another win against the Logan/Palco Trojans on February 4 in the semi-finals. Coming out on fire, the Lady Bulldogs quickly put up 15 points in the first quarter and held the Trojans at 4. At the end of the 2nd quarter, 19 more points were scored for the Bulldogs sending them into half-time with a 34-6 lead. The Bulldogs and Trojans competed closely in the 3rd, with Trojan defense holding the Bulldogs to 12 points while scoring 10 of their own. The Lady Bulldogs still had a nice 46-16 lead. Finishing the game with tough defense, the Bulldogs claimed the 53-19 win to advance to the Championship game on February 5.

Scoring for the Bulldogs were Miller 20, Rayna Taylor 14, Sidney Taylor 11, Anette Hernandez 4, Hayden Wark 2, and Rath 2. Leading in steals was Miller 6, Rath 5, S. Taylor 4, Hernandez 2, and 1 a piece for Nieman, Lauren Patmon, and Amie Cheney. Rebounding for the Bulldogs include Nieman 5, 3 each for S. Taylor, M. Wark, and Miller, 2 for Hernandez and Patmon, and R. Taylor 1. Leading in assists was Miller 5, Rath 4, Patmon and R. Taylor 2, and Nieman and Cheney 1. "It was exciting to be able to win this game and advance to the Championship game," said Rayna Taylor. "I was very proud of the team for playing at our own pace."

The Lady Bulldogs took on the Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks on February 5 in Colby for the Championship game. This was the first time these two teams competed against each other this season. The Bulldogs continued their undefeated streak to win the Championship 57-49.

The Hawks and the Bulldogs fought viciously, as players were constantly on the floor. The Bulldogs took the 18-11 lead at the end of the first quarter after a 3 point buzzer-beater by Rayna Taylor was shot just a second too late. Coming into the second

quarter the Dogs and Hawks were neck and neck. This was a nail biting quarter as both teams were scoring the ball equally. The Bulldogs kept their lead and went into half-time 33-25.

Both teams had great energy to start the 3rd quarter. Points were scored back and forth even through tough defense. The Hawks never let up and stayed right with the Bulldogs until two 3-point baskets were made by Senior Rayna Taylor and Junior Breanna Rath. With the score being 47-37 going into the 4th quarter, the Bulldogs knew they would have to continue fighting to keep the lead.

The final quarter of the Championship game had the crowd sitting on the edge of their seats. With the Hawks coming within four points, the Bulldogs had to step up on the defensive end. Doing just that, the Bulldogs held the Hawks at 49 while managing to put up points of their own. The Bulldogs defeated the Thunderhawks 57-49 and claimed their 5th consecutive WKLL Championship. "It was nice to win the league tournament all 4 years of High School," said Morgan Wark. "We worked hard all week to prepare for this. Beating Wheatland is always exciting."

Scoring for the Bulldogs were Miller 18, S. Taylor 12, M. Wark 8, Rath 8, R. Taylor 7, and Nieman 4. Steals were made by Rath 4, M. Wark 2, S. Taylor 2, and Miller and Nieman each 1. M. Wark finished the game with 16 rebounds followed by 7 each from R. Taylor, S. Taylor, and Miller, and 1 from Nieman. Miller led the team in assists with 8, followed by R. Taylor 3, and Rath 2.

"I enjoy every minute out on the court," said Sidney Taylor. "I am so excited to see us back in the Championship game next season!" "I really think our younger girls stepped up," added Rath. "We will miss our seniors, but have a lot of confidence that we will be right back here next season."