

A-Team Girls Place Runner-up at League By Breanna Rath

The Golden Plains Middle School A-team girls basketball team placed runner-up at the WKLL league tournament on February 12th in Brewster. The girls finished their season with a 10-4 record.

The tournament began on Thursday, February 10th as the Lady Bulldogs took on Heartland Christian at the Colby Event Center. The Bulldogs had a slow first half as they went into half time with a slight lead 8-6. Picking up their energy after the half, the Dogs found their way to the basket, scoring 9 points right off the bat. They played tough defense, keeping the Crusaders scoreless. Going into the final quarter with a 17-6 lead, the Bulldogs finished the job scoring 10 more points while only allowing the Crusaders to add 4. The Bulldogs claimed the 27-10 win to advance to the semi-finals held in Brewster on Saturday, February 12. Points were scored by Braylee Knowles 12, Kadeline Unrein 6, Anais Cepeda 5, Kailee Wessel 2, and Brenlynn Rath 2.

To start the day on Saturday, the Lady Bulldogs took on the Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks in the semi-final round of the tournament. With a fierce rivalry between the two teams, the 21-20 victory came to the Bulldogs after a hard-fought battle. After a long first half, the Bulldogs kept the crowd on the edge of their seats with a 7-7 tied ballgame. The third quarter was a rough and flustering one. Players on both teams were thrown to the floor due to aggressiveness over the ball. The Thunderhawks outscored the Bulldogs by 5 points to leave the Dogs trailing 11-16 going into the 4th quarter.

Fueled with energy and determination to make it to the championship game, the Bulldogs took control of the 4th quarter. It all came down to the final second. Down by 1 with seconds left in the game, the Bulldogs needed a basket to win. As the time was running out, Wheatland got a technical foul for having six players on the court, sending Cepeda to the Bulldog free throw line. Swishing both free throws to take the lead by 1 point, the Bulldogs played the last couple seconds of the game with great defense. The final score was 21-20 sending the Lady Bulldogs to the championship game later that evening. Scoring for the Bulldogs was Cepeda 6, Knowles 4, Unrien 4, Rath 4, Laura Moore 2, and Wessel 1.

The Championship game was played in Brewster on Saturday, February 12. The Bulldogs would compete against the Cheylin Cougars, to whom they lost earlier in the season 7-34. The Bulldogs improved by 9 points but unfortunately fell short to the Cougars in the Championship game 16-31. The Bulldogs were still successful as they made it into the Championship game for the 8th year in a row.

Coming out with tough defense, the Bulldogs held the Cougars to 2 points in the 1st quarter to make the score 0-2 going into the second. Keeping up their defense, the girls only allowed Cheylin to put up 4 more points, while scoring 3 of their own. Trailing 3-6 to start the second half, both teams played with intensity and determination to take the title.

The Cougars held their lead and continued to put up points, though they had to work hard to do it. Playing their hearts out, the Bulldogs put up 13 of their own points in the second half leading to a final score of 16-31 to place as league runners-up. Points were scored by Cepeda 7, Rath 5, Moore 2, and Knowles 2.

“I am very proud of my team and what we accomplished this season,” said 8th grader Anais Cepeda. “I am excited to see how they will improve next year.” The team will graduate three 8th graders, two of whom plan to play in high school. “I really enjoyed our season and I can’t wait to play in high school next year,” said Braylee Knowles, 8th grade. “I have no doubt the younger girls will make us proud.”