

MS Boys Place Third at League By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Middle School boys placed third at the WKLL basketball tournament held in Colby and Brewster in mid-February. The boys only played in the A-team tournament, as Golden Plains did not have a B-team entered.

The Bulldogs defeated Grinnell/Wheatland 37-24 in the first round but lost to Northern Valley 31-42 in the semi-finals. They finished their season with a win over Logan 41-38 to place third in the tournament.

The first game against Grinnell/Wheatland was held at the Colby Event Center on February 10. The boys took a close 9-8 lead in the first quarter. The Bulldog defense shut down the Thunderhawks holding them to 2 in the second as their offense put in 10 for a 19-10 lead at the half.

The boys played close in the third as the 'Hawks outscored the 'Dogs 8-6, but the Dogs played hard and worked together to finish with 12 in the fourth holding the Hawks to 6 to advance with a 37-24 win. Dylan Wark scored 13 points for the Bulldogs along with 12 from Diego Perez. Ezekiel Weiner added 7 and Roberto Araux 5.

The semi-final game was held on Saturday in Brewster as the Bulldogs faced the Northern Valley Huskies. The Dogs worked hard but fell to the Huskies 31-42.

The Bulldogs edged past the Huskies 12-11 in the first quarter. The Huskies added 10 in the second while the Dogs added 6 giving the Huskies a 21-18 half time lead. The Huskies outscored the Dogs 11-7 in the third and 10-6 in the fourth to claim the 42-31 win over the Bulldogs. Dylan Wark put in 19 points for Golden Plains along with 8 from Diego Perez, and 2 each from Tanner Black and Roberto Araux.

The semi-final loss put the Bulldogs into the consolation game. They played a close four quarters against Logan/Palco as the Dogs earned the win and third place in the tournament 41-38.

The Bulldogs came out on fire and ready to play as they put in 17 first quarter points—fourteen of them coming from Dylan Wark. The defense held the Trojans to 9. The pace slowed in the second quarter as the Dogs only added 5—all from Wark, while the Trojans outscored them with 7. The Dogs still held the lead 22-16 at the half.

It was a fairly even third quarter with the Trojans edging out the Dogs 9-8. The Trojans were determined and again outscored the Dogs 13-11 in the fourth but the early lead gave Golden Plains the 41-38 win.

Wark finished the game with a career-high 29 points while Perez added 7, Araux 3, and Black 2. "It felt good to end the season with a win," said Dylan Wark. "Our teammates did a good job getting me the ball and the other team didn't stop me."

"The team improved on both offense and defense," added Ezekiel Weiner. "We got better at shot selection on offense. On defense, we improved on keeping our hands up and did better on rebounding. We came a long way this season, especially our sixth graders."

"It was good to win the last game of the season," continued Tanner Black. "We can always do better, but I'm glad we finished third. We did well working on layups, blocking shots, and communicating as a team on both offense and on defense. I enjoyed playing the game."

All four boys plan to continue to play in high school next year. "We will need to work on our fundamentals including shooting and dribbling," said Diego Perez. "I'm looking forward to working together in summer ball and playing in high school." "I have enjoyed being part of the team," continued Black. "As a freshman next year, I hope to be able to contribute to the team," added Wark.