

Lady Bulldogs Win Regional Championship

By Mabel Lugo

The undefeated Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs won the Quinter Regional on February 29 to advance to Sub-State in Wakeeney. This was the second year the girls had to play in a regional tournament winning the championship to advance to sub-state play.

The Dogs were seeded #1 in the tournament so received a bye for the quarterfinal round. They played the Decatur County Red Devils from Oberlin for the semi-finals on Friday, February 28. They had not yet played the Lady Red Devils this year. They knew they would have to play their best ball to defeat them to advance to the final round.

The girls stepped on the court with determination and put up a 10-0 lead before the Red Devils could score. A final basket from junior Ashley Stoll gave the Dogs a 12-1 lead at the end of the first. The Dogs let the Red Devils add 9 straight points in the second quarter before the Dogs could get on the boards. Kassie Miller added five and Brooke Stoll hit a three-pointer put the Dogs up 20-12. Zoey Hillis added two free throws and a basket again from Miller made the half time score 24-12 in favor of the Bulldogs.

The Bulldogs came out of the half ready to put the game away. They couldn't hold their defensive line, however, letting the Red Devils score 14 points during the third quarter, and only scoring 5 for themselves. The girls finished the game with an additional 12 points in the fourth as their aggressive defense held the Red Devils to 8, finishing with a 41-34 win. This victory earned them a spot in the championship game against Wheatland/Grinnell and a guaranteed spot in sub-state.

Bulldog points came from Ashley Stoll 17, Kassie Miller 12, Brooke Stoll 7, and Zoey Hillis 5. "We started the game very well," said junior Brooke Stoll. "We continued to work hard even when we struggled to score in the second half but pulled through for a win." "We were nervous," added Carli Nieman. "We pulled ahead for a win and got us ready for the championships!"

The Championship game was played on February 29, in Quinter High School, against the Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks to determine which team would claim the regional championships. This was their third time playing against the Thunderhawks this season, but they knew the Thunderhawks would be ready to fight for the regional title.

This aggressive game stayed with the Thunderhawk lead throughout the first ending 6-11. The Lady Bulldogs kept battling through the second quarter adding 9 points, allowing the Thunderhawks to score only 6 ending the quarter trailing the Hawks 15-17. Miller hit a free throw midway through the third bringing the game within one. The Hawks answered with a three along with additional points to extend to a 7 point lead. With a three from Miller, the Dogs trailed 19-23 at the end of the third.

Starting the final quarter of the game Kassie Miller made two free throws narrowing it to a 2 point lead. Both teams play with intensity as the Dogs kept fighting in this aggressive battle. Two free shots from Brook Stoll tied the game up at 26 with a lot of time still on the clock. The Hawks regained the lead only to have a three from Brooke Stoll put the Dogs their first lead of the game with less than six minutes to play.

The Hawks regained the lead with some free shots only to have the Dogs answer back. The game was far from over as the Hawks continued to hold a slight lead. As the Thunderhawks fouled out three starters, they still held a 39-36 lead with less than thirty seconds left on the clock.

The Thunderhawks, with a turnover, gave the ball back to the Dogs with 5.5 seconds on the clock. Kassie Miller hit a 3 tying up the game 39-39. Just as it looked like the game would head into overtime, the Hawks fouled Ashley Stoll sending her to the free-throw line. She made both shots ending the game 41-39 for the win and the Regional Championship.

Kassie Miller led the Bulldogs with 18 points. Brooke Stoll added 16, and Ashley Stoll with 7. "It was a very exciting game," said Ashley Stoll. "We made a comeback, and fought hard. We never gave up and came away with a win." "We really worked hard on the defensive side to give ourselves the championship," added Kassie Miller. "It felt good to defeat the Thunderhawks for the third time."

"We continued to play as a team and kept pushing ahead to get the win," added senior Zoey Hillis. The Lady Bulldogs advance to the Wakeeney where they will play the Weskan Lady Coyotes at 6:00 pm on Friday, March 6.