

## Lady Bulldogs Win Fourth Straight WKLL Tournament

By Brooke Stoll

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs won their fourth straight Western Kansas Liberty League Championship on February 6 in Colby with a 57-31 win over Weskan. The Bulldogs defeated Northern Valley 79-31 in the quarterfinals and Wheatland/Grinnell 56-30 in the semi-finals to qualify for the championship game. The Bulldogs also won the championship in 2018, 2019, and 2020.

"We played well throughout the league tournament," said senior Ashley Stoll, "It feels great to win league basketball every year I was in high school! I hope we can continue our success to finish the season on a high note!"

The first game of the tournament was against the Northern Valley Huskies in the quarterfinals held in Grinnell on February 2. The Dogs had no trouble and defeated the Huskies 79-31. The Bulldogs jumped out to a 25-2 lead at the end of the first quarter. GPHS continued to play hard in the second quarter to add in 26 of their own, but allowed the Huskies 16. The Dogs went into halftime with a 51-18 lead.

The Lady Dogs continued to dominate throughout the third quarter. The Bulldogs outscored the Huskies 18-8. The Dogs led 69-26 going into the final quarter of play. Both teams competed closely in the final quarter with the Bulldogs adding 10 and the Huskies adding 6. The Dogs defeated the Huskies 79-31 to advance to the semi-finals on February 4 against Wheatland/Grinnell. "We shot the ball extremely well and ran the floor hard," said Kassie Miller. "We need to work on improving our intense defense as we go forward."

Scoring for the Bulldogs were Brooke Stoll 19, Ashley Stoll 14, Breanna Rath 12, Kassie Miller 12, Sidney Taylor 6, Emma Weiner 5, Rayna Taylor 5, Amie Cheney 4, and Carli Nieman 2.

The Bulldogs defeated the Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks 56-30 on February 4 to advance to the championship game on February 6. The Bulldogs and Thunderhawks competed closely throughout the first. The Lady Dogs trailed the Hawks 8-9 at the end of the quarter. The Bulldogs continued to fight to take the lead during the 2nd quarter as they outscored the Hawks 18-4 to lead 26-13 going into halftime.

Golden Plains came out of halftime ready to play. They added in 11 of their own during the 3rd quarter holding the Hawks to 9 leading the Hawks 37-22 going into the final quarter of play. The Lady Dogs were determined as they stayed strong on defense and outscored the Thunderhawks 19-8 in the fourth quarter to give the Dogs a 56-30 win.

Leading the Bulldogs were Brooke Stoll with 21, Ashley Stoll 13, Kassie Miller 9, Carli Nieman and Breanna Rath 6, and Morgan Wark 1. Kassie Miller led the team with 7 assists followed by Rayna Taylor 3, Rath 2, and A. Stoll and B. Stoll 1. Many girls contributed to the rebounding stats to out rebound the Hawks 29-27. "We did very well on defense," stated Carli Nieman, "I think we need to work on valuing the basketball more and our confidence."

With this win the Bulldogs advanced to the championship game on Saturday against the Weskan Coyotes for a rematch from the first game of the season.

The Lady Bulldogs took on the Weskan Coyotes on February 6 for the WKLL Championship game. This was the second time these two teams met this season. The Bulldogs continued their dominating fashion to win the championship 57-31.

The Bulldogs started the game with strong defense and took the fast lead. With 6 points in a row from Carli Nieman, the Dogs led the Coyotes 16-8 at the end of the first quarter. GPHS continued to fight and led Weskan 28-15 at halftime with a boost of three three-pointers in a row from Rayna Taylor.

The Dogs came out of halftime firing to outscore Weskan 18-9 in the third quarter for a 46-24 lead. GPHS never let up and went on to capture the championship for the fourth year in a row 57-31.

Scoring in the championship game were Rayna Taylor 12, Kassie Miller, Brooke Stoll and Morgan Wark 10, Carli Nieman 8, Ashley Stoll 5, and Breanna Rath 2. Assists came from A. Stoll 6, Miller and Rath 2, and B. Stoll and R. Taylor 1. Wark and A. Stoll each led with 9 rebounds apiece.

The Bulldogs won the WKLL tournament for the 4th consecutive year advancing to 14-0 on the season. Golden Plains continued their season on February 9, hosting the Hill City Ringnecks in Rexford.