



VIRIDIANA BELTRAN

Senior Cole Christensen lines up for a free throw during the fourth quarter of the Golden Plains Bulldogs season opener against Triibune on Dec. 2. Christensen made both of his fourth quarter shots for a total of five in the game.

## Golden Plains boys face state champion

By Judy Rogers  
Golden Plains High School

The Golden Plains High School boys' basketball team faced the defending state champion Greeley County Jackrabbits on Dec. 2 on their home floor in Rexford for the first game of the season.

The boys got off to a rocky start in the first quarter as they managed to put in 7 points to the Jackrabbits' 16.

Finally getting their bearings in the second quarter, they played with the 'Rabbits a little closer in the second as they put in 10 to Greeley County's 11, with five of those 10 points coming from free throws. This left the Bulldogs trailing 17-27 at the half.

After a free throw and a bucket from senior Cole Christensen, the Bulldogs struggled with getting the ball down the floor as the 'Rabbits went on a run, putting in 14 points. The Bulldogs wouldn't get another basket until near the end of the quarter from sophomore Chance Hoeting. This extended the Jackrabbits' lead to 22-45 going into the fourth.

The Bulldogs settled down a bit in the fourth and held the 'Rabbits to only 7 more points as they made all four of their free throw attempts and added 12 points to

their final score. However, it was too little, too late as the 'Rabbits won the game 34-52.

Christensen led the Bulldogs with 15 points, 9 rebounds, 1 steal, and 2 blocks. Sophomore Tristan Schwarz put in 9 points and grabbed 2 rebounds. Adding 5 points, 2 rebounds, and 2 steals was senior Kalyn Weber. Senior Ethan Walter contributed 3 points,

while Hoeting rounded out the scoring with 2 points. Junior Andrew Luna helped out with 2 rebounds and senior Trey Schwarz had 2 assists.

The Bulldogs headed into the Castle Rock Tournament in Quinter this week where they took on the Hoxie Indians for the first round of action on Thursday.

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## Pro basketball teams not ready for season

By Brian Mahoney  
AP Basketball Writer

The lockout ended, and the NBA's woes were just beginning.

Dwight Howard asked to be traded. Chris Paul was dealt to the Lakers, it seemed, until the league decided he wasn't. So the Lakers made another trade, which Kobe Bryant hated.

"Nobody's happy," Spurs forward Tim Duncan said.

He was referring to feelings about terms of the new collective bargaining agreement, which in some ways are so similar to the old ones that it's fair to wonder exactly what was the point of the five-month lockout.

But he might as well have been talking about the superstars who want new homes, the critics blistering Commissioner David Stern for forcing one to stay put, or team officials charged with having clubs ready to play by Christmas under bizarre circumstances.

Former coach and ABC/ESPN analyst Jeff Van Gundy blames money, the natural place to start. Owners will save plenty by getting players to agree to a 12 percent reduction in salary costs in the new deal. But in doing so in time to salvage a substantial season, they conceded on many issues that were necessary to create the competitive balance they said they craved.

So Paul and Howard are trying to force their way from small markets to big, just as Carmelo Anthony did last year, and there's no guaranteed mechanism to stop them.

"Just like the regular fan out there, just like you guys, you do wonder why stuff happened. You look at it and say, 'Why did the lockout happen?'" Miami guard

Dwyane Wade said. "... The competitive balance thing was a pie-in-the-sky. We knew that was impossible, in a sense, especially when you've got players willing to take less money to be happy."

That's what Wade, LeBron James and Chris Bosh did so they could team up last summer. Owners could have attempted to block future superteam building with a hard salary cap or franchise tag designations that exist in the NFL, but the players fought those changes in an effort to keep a system that looked like the old one, giving teams the ability to exceed the cap by quite a bit if they were willing to pay a luxury tax.

The tentative deal on the main issues wasn't reached until Nov. 26, and Stern said the regular season would begin on Christmas if the deal was ratified in time. But it meant free agency opened the same day as training camps, forcing some teams to report with barely enough players for a starting five while their transactions awaited approval.

Still, fans would have forgot-

ten about it easier with a smoother start to the season. Instead, the news and fallout from the NBA office, as current owners of the Hornets, killing the Paul trade came the same night Stern announced the new collective bargaining agreement had been ratified. Then came word that Howard had asked the Orlando Magic to trade him, in part because the team hadn't acted on his personnel recommendations - though he said Monday he could be open to staying if the Magic made the right moves.

Was this really the best way for the NBA to come back?

Stern hasn't commented since a statement last Friday explaining his reasons for vetoing the trade, without influence from other owners. He'll be at the game in Dallas, as well as Oklahoma City's opener later that night.

Maybe by then things will feel back to normal.

They sure aren't now.

"This is about as bizarre to a start of a season that I've seen," new Rockets coach Kevin McHale said.

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