

Lady Bulldogs third at state tourney

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The Golden Plains High School Lady Bulldogs finished in third place at the Class 1A state basketball tournament in Hays.

The girls, who entered the tournament as a No. 3 seed, easily beat the Hope Lady Lions on March 6, but stumbled in the last quarter of the semifinal round against Norwich. After the loss, they played Wilson in the consolation match for third.

The Wilson Lady Dragons gave the Bulldogs a challenge, but the teamwork of the Golden Plains girls gave them the strength they needed to defeat the Dragons March 9 and take home the third-place trophy.

"I have never experienced anything like state basketball in my life," said junior Hailee Spresser.

"The energy and support we had throughout the whole time there was absolutely amazing," Angela Ritter added. "Not all people can say they got third at state and ended their season on a win with such an amazing group of girls, coaches and supportive community."

This was the Lady Bulldogs' third trip to state in the past eight years under coaches Parker Christensen and Steve Shaw. They placed fourth in 2006 and qualified in 2007. Golden Plains girls teams also qualified for state in 1993, placed third in 1981 and finished second in 1974.

"State wouldn't have been nearly as meaningful without the support of our fans," said junior Kylie Jones.

"I wouldn't trade it for the world," Ritter said. "It's safe to say I've definitely made some memories I'll never forget."

The Lady Bulldogs entered the tournament with a 20-2 record. Their first game March 6 was against Hope, who were 17-6. The Lady Lions were a senior-laden team whereas the Lady 'Dogs only had Ritter.

The Lady Bulldogs jumped out to a 16-10 lead in the first quarter and held the lead throughout the game. The Lady Lions gave them a challenge, as the Bulldogs only outscored the Lions by 1 in the second quarter (11-10) and 2 in the third (14-12), but the Lady Bulldogs persisted, putting up 17 in the fourth for the 58-43 win.

Spresser and Jones led the scoring for the Lady 'Dogs with 15 and 14 points. Jordan Christensen put in 11, Ritter 9, Kami Miller 4, Leea Juenemann and MiKayla Lobato 2 and Paulita Ramirez 1.

The Lady Bulldogs advanced to the semifinal round on March 8 to take on No. 2-ranked Norwich. The Lady Eagles were 23-1 going into this game, having knocked off the girls from Dighton on March 6. The Lady 'Dogs were confident and continued to work hard throughout this low-scoring game.

The first quarter found the girls testing one another's strengths on the floor, with the Lady Bulldogs putting in 4 points to the Lady Eagles' 3. The Lady 'Dogs picked up the pace in the second quarter, adding 15 points to their halftime lead of 19-11.

The Lady Eagles slowed the game down again in the third quarter, only allowing the Lady Bulldogs 4 points and chipping in 5 of their own. In the fourth, the Lady Eagles continued to eat away at the Lady Bulldogs' lead. Shots wouldn't fall for the Lady 'Dogs and calls were not going their way, but they still held a 1-point lead with 20 seconds left in the game. Norwich made 4 points to give them a 3-point lead.

Both sides were on their feet as Coach Parker Christensen called a time out to strategize and settle the girls. They received the ball on the opposite end of the floor and pushed it down as quickly as possible. However, the final buzzer sounded without a shot, and the Lady Bulldogs lost 32-29.

Ritter finished the semifinal game with 8 points, Spresser and Jones 6, Christensen 5 and Ramirez and Miller 2.

This was the least number of points scored in a game by the Lady Bulldogs all season.

The consolation game began at noon March 9 against Wilson. The Lady Dragons also entered the tournament with a 20-2 record. They had defeated Baileyville B & B in the first round, but lost to No. 1-ranked Ingalls in the semifinals. The Lady Bulldogs had won the coin toss with Wilson for the No. 3 seed and stepped on the floor determined to claim the win again. Wilson was known to play a very physical game, and this match-up was no exception.

The Lady Bulldogs pulled out all their reserves to gain an 18-12 lead by the end of the first quarter. They continued to hit their shots throughout the second, extending their score to 34-24 at the half.

This rough-and-tumble game persisted in the second half, but the Lady Bulldogs held tough and put in an additional 20 points in the third, again holding the Lady Dragons to 12. The game was far from over, as the Lady Dragons began to pound on the Lady Bulldogs and placed 31 points through the hoop. The Lady Bulldogs added 23 points to their side of the scoreboard, which allowed them to hang on for the 77-67 win and the third-place trophy.

Ingalls won the championship and Norwich took second.

This was the highest-scoring game for the Lady Bulldogs this season by 12 points and the highest-scoring game for any Golden Plains boys or girls basketball team in the last four years. The last time a girls team at Golden Plains scored 77 points was against Cheylin in the Western Kansas Liberty League tournament in 2006.



JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains High School

The Lady Bulldogs proudly held their third-place trophy high at the Kansas State High School Activities Association Class 1A Division II state tournament in Hays. The Golden Plains girls placed third for the first time since 1981. Team members include front: Leea Juenemann, Paulita Ramirez, Kami Miller, Angela

Ritter, MiKayla Lobato, Macayla Easton, Tayler Petersen; back: Hailee Spresser, Kylie Jones, Maddy Walz, Jordan Christensen, Kynndra Rush. The girls are coached by Parker Christensen and Steve Shaw.

Christensen scored a personal best 26 points for the Lady 'Dogs. Spresser, who improved her shooting throughout the substate and state tournaments, and Ritter, who finished her senior season with a win, each contributed 15 points to the final score. Jones added 9, Lobato matched her season best of 6, Macayla Easton and Ramirez had 2 apiece and Miller 2.

"I thought we really came together as a team," said Coach Christensen. "We played our best basketball the last two weeks. We made the state tournament and knocked hard on that championship door."

"Stepping up in the state tournament to play a tough game for third place after having a long week and a rough loss was a proud

moment for me and really showed what our team was made of," Ritter added.

The Lady Bulldogs will be graduating Ritter as their only senior. The rest of the team will be returning: six juniors, three sophomores and five freshmen. A talented group of girls will be coming up from the middle school as well, with high hopes of another

successful season. "It was a very memorable season that I will never forget," exclaimed freshman Miller. "All of us girls were so close, I think of them as sisters. We couldn't have asked for a better leader than Angela. We will miss Angela dearly, but we will be back next year for that state title!"



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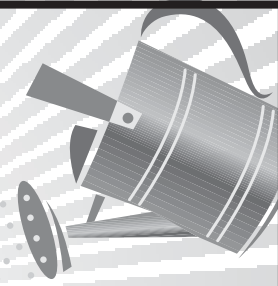
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