

Cowboys advance to substate with win

After trailing most of the game, the Goodland High Cowboys took control in the final four minutes, hitting 11 free throws to defeat the Ulysses Tigers 37-27 in the first round of the Class 4A substate playoffs Tuesday at Max Jones Fieldhouse.

Instead of packing their gear for the season, the Cowboys (10-11) advance to the semifinals at 5 p.m. tonight in Russell, where they face Nickerson High (11-10).

If the Cowboys win, it could set up a rematch with the Colby Eagles in the substate title game at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday.

The Eagles had trouble with Pratt in the first round, and were behind by eight points going into the fourth quarter. Colby (16-5) came back to win 41-36, and will face Russell (7-14) at 6:30 p.m. tonight.

If you went by the score at the end of the first quarter Tuesday — 6-5 — you might have thought the Tigers and Cowboys were playing baseball. The Cowboys got into some early foul trouble, and the Tigers were in the bonus through the second quarter. Ulysses led 19-14 at the half.

“We came out a little nervous,” said Cowboys coach Brad Bergsma. “Our defensive intensity was not as good as we had been hoping.”

“Ulysses is a decent defensive team, but we had 10 unforced turnovers in the first half. We talked about that a half, and did better in the second half and in the fourth quarter.”

In the third quarter, the teams traded shots and at the end, Ulysses led 26-20. This time it was the Tigers who had foul trouble, and the Cowboys were in the bonus in the first two minutes of the fourth quarter and in the double bonus for the final four minutes.

In the first four minutes of the period, the Cowboys cut the Ulysses lead to one point, 26-25, on two free throws by senior Tanner Smith, playing in his first game since being injured at Oberlin on Jan. 25.

The Cowboys look the lead on a basket by junior Greg Farris, 27-26, with 4:28 left.

Cowboys junior Brandon Rome was called for a technical foul for rebounding the ball and re-shooting after Farris’ shot had gone through.

Ulysses’ senior Jared Irvin made one of his two free to tie the score at 27. The Tigers took a timeout to set their strategy.

In the next three minutes, the Cowboys took advantage of fouls by the Tigers to make six straight free throws and lead 33-27. Cowboys senior Preston Dautel, junior Travis Angelos and Farris each made two foul shots.

The Tigers took another timeout with 1:11 left. The Cowboys continued to score from the charity stripe as senior Grant Wilkens hit a free throw and Farris added two more with 44 seconds left to lead 36-27.

Dautel hit the final free throw with 21 seconds remaining for a 37-27 win.

“The technical foul made me a little worried,” Bergsma said. “We talked to the boys about keeping their focus.”

“Our intensity was better in the third and fourth quarters. We mixed up our defensive sets, and that seemed to help.”

Bergsma said the Cowboys did take over in the fourth quarter, forcing about five turnovers and doing a good job of rebounding.

“Ulysses had some foul trouble and we were able to exploit that,” he said. “We spread the shooting around, and most everyone helped in the fourth quarter.”

“Brandon did a good job, and Tanner was able to give us some good minutes.”

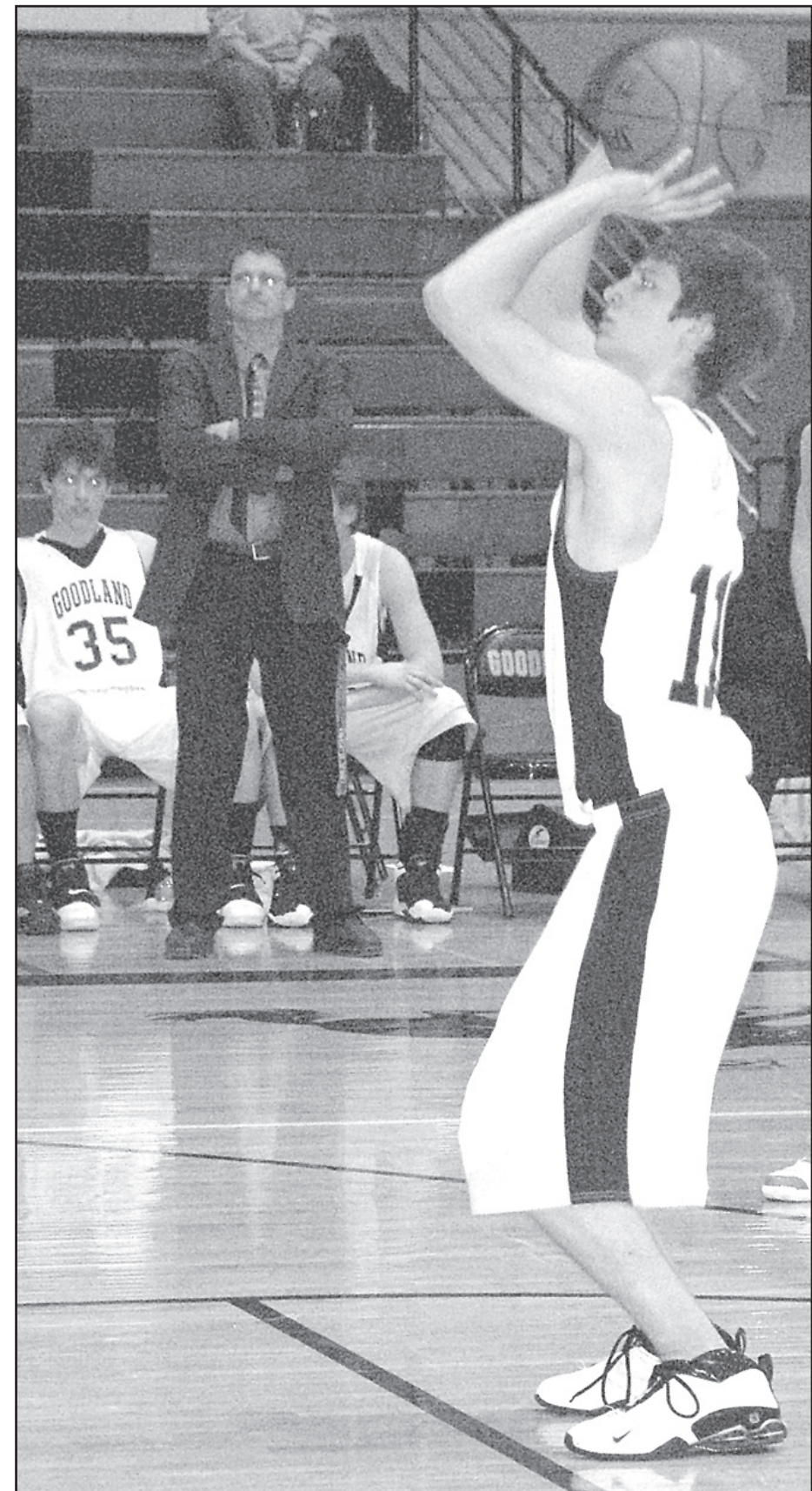
He said the Cowboys worked to hold down the Tigers’ center, senior Michael Morales, and that seemed to help get some turnovers.

Farris led the Cowboys with 11



Senior basketball player Preston Dautel (above) threw in a ball during the first half of the Class 4A substate playoffs on Tuesday night at Max Jones Fieldhouse. The Cowboys won 37-27 and will play Nickerson High at Russell tonight. Juniors Greg Farris (below) and Grant Wilkens (right) took one of their free throw shots in the final minutes of the game. Free throws clinched the game for the Cowboys.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News



points, Rome had 10, Angelos 5, Wilkens and Dautel had 3 each, and Smith and senior Josh Duke each had 2.

Morales led the Tigers with 12 points, Irvin had 9 and Jacob Stein, Bryce Moral and Tyler Fagala each had 2.

Looking ahead to tonight’s game against Nickerson, Bergsma said the Cowboys are just glad to be playing.

“This time of year, a win is a win,” he said. “We are excited to be going to Russell.”

He said Nickerson is part of the tough Mid-Central League. The Panthers have a good point guard, Mace Krol, a 6 foot senior, who is very athletic and was an all-league quarterback.

“They sort of go as he goes,” Bergsma said. “Scott Stroberg, a 6-2 senior, is a shooter, and they are a very aggressive man defensive team.”

“They are similar to us but try to force the tempo. They have been a streaky team, but that could be trouble if they get hot.”

Bergsma said it would be nice to get a third shot at Colby on Saturday, but said the Cowboys need to take care of Nickerson first. Lost to Colby in the Orange and Black Classicon Jan. 17, 64-45 and then again on Feb. 12, 65-48.

“We need to limit our mistakes,” he said. “We would like to meet them (Colby) again. The kids are working hard and are staying focused. The freshmen have not had any games, but we have a number of them who have been willing to come to practice and help our team.”

The game will be broadcast on KLOERadio 730AM and on the Internet at KLOE.com, with pregame commentary beginning 4:45 p.m.



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