

Lady Bulldogs Win League Championship By Amanda Cheney

The GPHS Lady Bulldogs competed in the WKLL tournament starting Monday, January 28. The girls defeated Weskan in the quarterfinals round in Grinnell, went on to win against Triplains/Brewster in the semifinals in Colby on Tuesday, and finished the week with a win over Northern Valley in the championship game on Saturday at Colby. "I'm so proud of our team," said senior Kaylie Schaben. "We really pulled together in the championship game and played the best we had all tournament."

The Lady Bulldogs started the week with the quarterfinal game against Weskan. The Bulldogs had played a close game with Weskan in the regular season and were looking forward to another good game. The girls came out in the first quarter and outscored the Lady Coyotes 17-11. The teams stayed even in the second quarter, with both scoring 10 points, making the halftime score 27-21. Both sides struggled on the offensive end during the third quarter, making the score 31-25. The Lady Bulldogs stayed strong and finished the game with a 47-32 win.

"We had trouble hitting our easy shots in the third quarter," said Noel Ritter. "Our defense kept us in the game until our shots started to fall in the fourth." KayCee Miller would lead the team with 11 points, followed by Noel Ritter-10, Maggi Nieman-8, Ashley Stoll-6, Brooke Stoll-6, Kaylie Schaben-4, and Mabel Lugo-2. Rebounds came from Lugo-11, Schaben, Miller, Ritter, and Ashley Stoll all had 7 total rebounds, and Nieman brought down 2.

The Bulldogs moved onto the semi-finals and faced Triplains/Brewster on Tuesday, January 31. The girls played the Lady Titans right before the tournament and were determined to win again. The Lady Bulldogs were successful at the basket to start the game, ending the first 10-3. The girls continued with excellent defense, holding the Titans to 2 points in the second quarter. The teams would head into halftime with a score of 20-5.

Coming out of the locker room, the Lady Bulldogs went scoreless most of the third quarter, making the score 22-12. They continued to play strong on the defensive end, again only allowing T/B to score 2 points in the final quarter. The Lady Bulldogs would end the game with a 35-14 win. Top scorer for the Bulldogs was KayCee Miller with 16 points, followed by Maggi Nieman-8, Mabel Lugo-4, Ashley Stoll-3, Noel Ritter-2, and Brooke Stoll-2. The girls would go on to play Northern Valley in the championship game on Saturday, February 3.

The Bulldogs hadn't played the Lady Huskies yet this season and were excited for the challenge. The girls led the Huskies in the first quarter, leading the game 9-7. The Dogs continued to play tough defense on the Huskies, only allowing them to score 7 points in the second quarter. GP would lead Northern Valley heading into halftime 15-14.

The Lady Bulldogs rallied in the second half and got two quick baskets at the start of the third quarter, forcing an early Northern Valley timeout with the score being 19-14. The girls doubled the 8 points the Huskies scored in the third quarter, ending the quarter 31-22. The Bulldogs were able to put 15 points on the board and again hold the Huskies to 8 points in the final quarter of the game. The Lady Bulldogs continued to stay focused to end the game with a win 46-30.

KayCee Miller contributed 12 points for the Lady Bulldogs in the championship game, followed by Maggi Nieman-9, Kaylie Schaben-8, Noel Ritter-8, Mabel Lugo-6, and Ashley Stoll-3. Ritter lead the girls with 9 rebounds, along with Lugo-6, Miller-5, Schaben-4, Stoll-4, and Nieman-1. The Lady Bulldogs also had a combined 12 assists and 18 steals contributing to their championship win.

“I thought we played really well throughout the tournament,” said junior KayCee Miller. “It was great to be able to represent our school in the championship game. We had so much support from our community, which helped us a lot. I’m very proud of how our team was able to work together all week and pull together for the championship.”

“I think things went really well even though we were battling sickness,” added senior Maggi Nieman. “It was awesome to win league for Kaylie, Jen, and I’s senior year. We know the competition is going to be tough from here out, but we look forward to finishing our season strong.” The girls will continue their season at home on February 9 as they host Cheylin.