

Lady Bulldogs Win Back-to-Back League Championship

By Amanda Cheney

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs competed in the WKLL tournament beginning Monday, January 28, in Grainfield. The Dogs started their week with a win over Western Plains-Healy on Monday, defeated Wheatland/Grinnell on Tuesday, and beat Weskan in Grainfield on Saturday to win the tournament for the second year in a row. "It was incredible to win the tournament for two years straight," said senior KayCee Miller. "We're working to keep building on the success we've had so far."

The Bulldogs kicked off their tournament on Monday with Western Plains-Healy. The teams had faced each other once before in the regular season. GP won the tip and raced to an early 2-0 lead. The girls played very aggressively in the first quarter, ending it with a solid 26-2 lead. WPH would outscore the Bulldogs 11-8 in the second, but the teams went to halftime with a 34-13 GP lead. The Dogs didn't allow WPH to score in the third quarter, extending their lead 53-13. The girls would go on to win 62-15.

"This game set the tone for how we would play during this tournament," said sophomore Ashley Stoll. "It was a great confidence boost for everyone." Ashley led the team with 12 points, her sister Brooke Stoll followed behind with 10, KayCee Miller, Mabel Lugo, and Zoey Hillis all had 9, Kassie Miller 5, Noel Ritter 4, and both Amanda Cheney and Taryn Fleckenstein had 2. Zoey Hillis pulled down 6 rebounds for the Dogs, Ashley Stoll and Mabel Lugo 5, Noel Ritter 4, Morgan Wark 3, KayCee Miller 2, Amanda Cheney 2, Brooke Stoll 2, Candace Taylor 1, Kassie Miller 1.

GP moved into the semi-finals and faced Wheatland/Grinnell on Tuesday, January 29. The Dogs competed well on offense and played very aggressive defense, ending the first quarter ahead 15-4. They kept up the intensity in the second, not allowing Wheatland a basket. GP headed into the locker room with a halftime lead 23-4.

Following the break, the girls continued to fight for a win, outscoring the Thunderhawks 9-6. They would end the third quarter 32-10. The girls competed well on the offensive end in the final quarter of the game. A basket from Noel Ritter would put the game on a running clock, and the Dogs would go on to win 44-14. Kassie Miller led the Bulldogs in points with 13, Mabel Lugo 8, Noel Ritter and Ashley Stoll had 7, Brooke Stoll 6, KayCee Miller 3.

The #1 seed Lady Bulldogs went on to play #2 seed Weskan in the championship game on Saturday, February 2. The Dogs started the game very aggressive, holding the Coyotes to six points in the first quarter. A buzzer beater three from KayCee Miller at the end of the first quarter would put the girls ahead of the Coyotes 13-6. They added another 13 points to their score in the second, going into halftime with a 26-17 lead.

The Dogs competed well on the offensive end, adding another 20 points to their side of the scoreboard to maintain a lead over Weskan. Another buzzer beater, this time from Amanda Cheney, would end the third quarter with GP leading 46-28. The girls held the Coyotes to 6 points in the fourth quarter while adding another 12 of their own. The Lady Bulldogs went on to win the championship game 58-34. "I thought we played well against Weskan," continued KayCee Miller. "This was the second time we've played Weskan this year, and I thought we handled them pretty well this time around."

Ashley Stoll and Kassie Miller both contributed 12 points in the championship game along with KayCee Miller 10, Mabel Lugo 9, Noel Ritter 5, Brooke Stoll 4, Amanda Cheney 2, Zoey Hillis 2, and Taryn Fleckenstein 2.

The Lady Bulldogs outscored their opponents 164-63 throughout the three game tournament. "This has been the most successful and most fun season of my high school career!" added Miller. "We go to practice every day and work to get better so we can step on the court and get the job done. I'm so excited to see what the rest of this season has in store for us." The Lady Bulldogs continue their season on February 5 against Hill City in their last home game of the regular season.