

## A-Team Girls Named League Runner Up By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Middle School A-team girls were named the Western Kansas Liberty League Runner-Up on February 14 following wins over Palco-49-20 and Wheatland-29-12 to get in the championship game. They fought hard in the championship game against Northern Valley but ended the game as runner-up 40-44.

The girls had no trouble with Palco in the first game on Thursday. The Lady 'Dogs surged to a 19-2 lead by the end of the first quarter. The Lady Roosters came back in the second to score 9 points the Lady 'Dogs 10 but the GP girls held a 29-11 lead at the half.

The Lady Bulldogs regained control in the third posting up 14 points to the Lady Roosters 5. The final quarter was close but the Lady Bulldogs claimed the win 49-20. KayCee Miller scored 15 points for the Bulldogs along with 12 from Noel Ritter. Mabel Lugo put up 10, Karri Schaben-8, Taryn Fleckenstein-2, and Amanda Cheney-2.

For the semi-final game on Saturday, the Lady 'Dogs faced the Grinnell/Wheatland Lady Thunderhawks. They had defeated them by a large margin in the preseason tournament, but only by six in the regular season but knew they had to work hard to get another win. The girls came on strong in the first and pulled ahead 12-2. Both teams put in six in the second quarter, but the Lady 'Dogs added 7 in the third and 4 in the fourth. Defense is always a key component, and the Lady 'Dogs held the Lady 'Hawks to 4 in the second half. Points were scored by Miller-13, Ritter-11, Lugo-2, Schaben-2, and Cheney-1. This 29-12 win allowed the Lady 'Dogs to advance to the championship game.

The championship game was against Northern Valley. The Lady Bulldogs had lost to the Lady Huskies by four points earlier in the season. The girls knew this would be another challenging contest as the Lady Huskies pulled ahead 13-9 by the end of the first.

Another close quarter in the second gave the Huskies a 25-19 lead at the half. The Lady Bulldogs struggled to score in the third with only 2 points falling to give the Lady Huskies an 11 point lead.

The Lady 'Dogs were not about to give up in the last minutes of their season as they worked to outscore the Lady Huskies 19-12 in the fourth—with 17 points coming from 8<sup>th</sup> grader KayCee Miller. It wasn't quite enough to make up for their earlier deficit as the Lady Huskies won the Championship, again by 4 points 44-40.

Miller finished her middle school career with 27 points for the Bulldogs—a personal best for her during middle school—along with 8 points from Mabel Lugo, 3 from Amanda Cheney, and 2 from Noel Ritter. Team members helping the A-team were Jaiden Koerperich, Taryn Fleckenstein, Karri Schaben, and Sable Finlay.

"Although we played well throughout the tournament, we could have played better in our last game," said Noel Ritter. "We needed to cover the shooters better," added Amanda Cheney. "Everyone did a good job getting the ball to the basket," said KayCee Miller.

"I am very proud of the season the girls had this year," said Coach Travis Smith. "They worked hard every single day and were a very coachable. Groups like this make coaching very enjoyable."

As league runner-ups, the Lady Bulldogs A-team finishes their season with a record of 12-2. Both losses went to Northern Valley, both games by a mere 4 points. The 8th grade girls are looking forward to playing in high school next year because they are excited to play more games during the season.

“These young ladies have had a very successful run while in middle school. They placed all three years either on the B-team or A-team,” added Smith. “I want to wish my three eighth grade girls the best of luck as they move into high school.”