

Lady Bulldogs Win Sub-State Championship

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs won their second consecutive trip the Class 1A Division II state tournament with their sub-state championship win over the Weskan Coyotes on March 4 in Tribune.

“We as coaches are just tremendously proud of these girls,” said head coach Parker Christensen. “They have worked so hard to meet their goal of PROVE EM WRONG! Pew was our rallying cry for the season. I knew losing three senior starters from last year’s team that most of our opponents this season would think that we would be way down but boy, did we prove them wrong.”

The Bulldogs were the number one seed with a 17-3 record in the sub-state tournament, but knew they would have to work hard throughout all the games to earn the return trip to state.

Following a bye in the quarterfinals of this 5 team tournament, the Bulldogs faced the Cheylin Cougars for the semi-finals on Thursday, March 2. The girls got off to a good start with a 13-5 lead in the first quarter, but the Cougars fought back to bring the game to within three with the ‘Dogs holding a 15-12 lead at the half.

A couple of Bulldog fouls early in the third allowed the Cougars to tie the game up at 15. They girls kept it tied at 17 before the ‘Dogs went on a ten point run to extend their lead to 27-17 with two minutes remaining in the third. The Cougars answered, but the Bulldogs maintained a 29-23 lead going into the fourth.

The Bulldogs’ aggressiveness continued to serve them well as they maintained their 10-point lead throughout much of the fourth. With just over a minute to play, the Cougars repeatedly sent the ‘Dogs to the free throw line where they were able to claim the 44-34 win.

Points in the semi-final game came from KayCee Miller 22, Gabrielle Schiltz 7, Maggi Nieman 6, Morgan Ritter 6, and Kaylie Schaben 3.

With the semi-final win, the girls advanced to face Weskan in the championship game. They knew they could beat Weskan because they did earlier in the season, but the Coyotes knocked off the Bulldogs in the first round of the WKLL tournament in February. Both teams were prepared and ready to win their trip to Dodge.

The Bulldogs opened up the game with an 11 point lead in the first before the Coyotes could get on the boards. The Coyotes were able to close the spread to 13-7 by the end of the quarter. The Coyotes managed to tie the game up at 14 midway through the second, but the Bulldogs responded to advance to a 23-14 lead by half time.

The Coyotes were determined in the third as they outscored the Bulldogs 15-11. The Bulldogs finished the game with dedication and commitment as they pushed forward for 15 in the fourth, holding the Cougars to 6 for the 49-35 win and the trip to state. Scoring for the Bulldogs came from Gabrielle Schiltz 21, KayCee Miller 17, Kaylie Schaben 7, and Morgan Ritter 4.

“We have had great leadership from KayCee and Gabrielle,” continued Christensen. “Morgan, Kaylie, Maggi, and Mabel (Lugo) have really come along and provided the team with rebounding and scoring and tough defense when we have

needed it! Carmen Sepulveda, Amanda Cheney, Jennifer Esparza, Karri Schaben, Candace Taylor, Emily Stoltz, and Taryn Fleckenstein all pushed us to be a better team. Our fan support is always great and they sure did provide us with energy during the championship game Saturday night.”

This is the Lady Bulldogs ninth trip to the state tournament, their sixth under Coach Christensen. The girls have competed in state four of the past five years. They also played in the state tournament in 2006 and 2007 under Christensen as well as in 1974, 1981, and 1993. The Lady Bulldogs have a #3 seed in the state tournament that begins Wednesday, March 8. The girls will play Hutchinson Central Christian at 8:15 pm at the United Wireless Arena in Dodge City.