

Lady Broncos punch ticket to state, beat Brady 59-48

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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The Lady Broncos move to trap the Brady post on the baseline. Pictured for W-P are Brooklyn Nordhausen (left), Abbie Fanning (14), Cassidy Rathe (20) and Emma Skelton (11).

By Diane Stamm

The Wauneta Breeze

The Wauneta-Palisade Lady Broncos picked up its eighth straight win Friday in Wallace and earned a trip to the state tournament with a 59-48 defeat of Brady.

After two slow starts in subdistricts, the Lady Broncos came out strong against Brady, a team it had lost to twice.

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After Brady scored on its first possession, W-P went on a 12-1 run. Brooklyn Nordhausen and Tailor Lee each scored two baskets early for the Lady Broncos and Emma Skelton nailed a three-pointer in the game's first four minutes. Although the Brady press gave the Lady Broncos fits at times throughout the game, Brady's offense struggled early until making a basket with 2:30 left in the first quarter. From there the Lady Eagles outscored W-P 9-4 to finish out the first quarter. The Lady Broncos got two free throws from Lee and, with Abbie Fanning pushing the ball up court, a bucket by Brianna Einspahr. The teams headed into the second quarter with the score 16-12.

With only a Fanning free throw over the first minute and a half of the quarter, the Lady Eagles narrowed the lead to 17-15. From there the Lady Broncos got rolling, getting another three-pointer from Skelton, a basket in the post from Lee on an assist from Fanning, a layup from Sydnee Harchelroad, two free throws from Cassidy Rathe and another Fanning to Lee connection for a basket. Brady, meanwhile, could only manage three free throws and one basket and W-P held a 28-22 lead at the half.

Coming out from the locker rooms, W-P got a scare from the Lady Eagles. W-P went scoreless for the first five minutes of the quarter and watched Brady take a 31-28 lead. Skelton got the Lady Broncos back on track, hitting a three-pointer then, after a Brady basket, making two-of-three free throws after being fouled on a three-point field goal attempt.

Tied at 33, a Brady basket gave it the lead one last time. Nordhausen's basket, with an assist from Harchelroad, tied the game at 35 and Lee's steal and layup on Brady's ensuing possession gave the Lady Broncos a lead it wouldn't relinquish. The W-P press turned up the heat, creating turnovers and sending W-P to the charity stripe.

"We did a very nice job of stepping up and hitting free throws down the stretch," Coach Betsy Johanson said. "Coach Frecks told the girls before the game that free throws would be key, and they definitely were."

Over the final minute of the quarter Lee added two free throws, Harchelroad one, Nordhausen two and Fanning two free throws to give W-P a 44-37.

"Our pressure did cause some very key turnovers in this game," said Coach Johanson. "The

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girls did a wonderful job of bothering their guards and capitalizing on those extra possessions we gained.”

Brady tried to make a charge in the fourth quarter, but starters Valerie Most and Madison Elliot fouled out in the first two minutes of the quarter. For the Broncos, Lee picked up her third and fourth fouls early in the quarter, but never picked up her fifth. Nordhausen picked up her fourth foul with 4:40 left and fouled out a minute later.

Each team made five free throws in the fourth quarter, but W-P added baskets by Fanning, Lee and Rathe, plus two by Einspahr, and never let Brady get closer than four. Outscoring Brady 14-7 down the stretch, W-P pulled away for a 59-48 win.

Both teams made 15 two point field goals in the game, but Skelton made three three-pointers and Brady only made one three-pointer. The Lady Broncos also made more free throws, making 20-30, while Brady was 15-27 from the charity stripe.

Lee led W-P with 18 points, including 6-6 free throws, and Skelton finished with 11. Nordhausen scored eight points, Fanning seven, Einspahr six, Rathe five and Harchelroad four.

In its first trip to Lincoln since 2009, the Lady Broncos will literally face a tall order in the first round.

Seeded number seven, W-P will square off against two seed Lindsay Holy Family (24-1) which features 6-foot-3 junior Kaylee Jensen.

Johanson said that though Jensen is strong in the post, the Lady Bulldogs’ guards do a great job around her.

Lindsay Holy Family has been to the state tournament the past three seasons. The Bulldogs won the D-2 title in 2010 and reached the semifinals the past two years. Holy Family has

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reloaded this year after graduating four of its five top scorers from 2011-12.

The teams will play Thursday evening (tonight) at Lincoln East with tip off scheduled for 6:00 p.m. MT/7:00 CT.

“These girls have absolutely earned their trip to Lincoln. I’m so proud of what they’ve accomplished; how far they’ve come this season,” added Johanson.