

By EARL WATT and RICK YEARICK

• Daily Leader

Cody Eakes scored 17 points, but it wasn't enough to stop a big fourth quarter rally for Syracuse who knocked off the Southwestern Heights Mustangs in a top five Class 3A clash, 55-49, Friday at Southwestern Heights.

"Syracuse seems to have our number," said Mustangs head coach Chad Novak. "We've lost, I don't know five or six in a row to them. We will face them again in the second semester, and maybe in the Hi-Plains League Tournament."

Syracuse did the little things right to win, like hitting their free throws (16-of-18). The Bulldogs also held an advantage on the boards.

The Mustangs entered the fourth quarter with a 35-34 lead, but the Mustangs couldn't stop the Bulldog's Andrew Brown who scored 12 points in the final period including two threes.

The Mustangs tried to catch the Bulldogs at the free throw line, but the Bulldogs connected on 11 of 12 opportunities in the fourth quarter to protect their lead.

On pivotal point in the game came with 2:23 on the clock. Heights, down by two, Cody Eakes relieved the inbounds pass under the basket and put up the game-tying shot, but it rimmed out. Syracuse got the rebound, quickly passed ahead to Brown who nailed a three from the top of the key to make it a five point game.

No. 3 SWHeights falls to No. 5 Syracuse

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Heights was unable to catch up after that.

Syracuse outshot the Mustangs 21-14 in the final quarter for the win.

The Mustangs committed 19 turnovers, some forced by the Bulldogs defense, but some were unforced errors.

In the first half, it was Heights making the comeback after falling behind 15-10 in the first quarter.

The Mustangs continued to trail at half, but a strong third quarter on offense coupled with a crippling defense allowed the Mustangs to take a one-point lead into the fourth before the Syracuse rally.

Eakes led the Mustangs with 17, Oscar Sigala had 13, and Cory Ryans scored 10. Wes Winfrey added five. Layton Chase and Jacob Flores each scored a bucket.

Southwestern Heights finishes the fall semester 5-1, and will resume their season January 8 at Hugoton.