By JASON EPP

Leader & Times

The Southwestern Heights Lady Mustangs looked poised for an upset win over rival Meade heading into the game's final period. But Meade shutout the Lady Mustangs 13-0 in the final period to win 44-32, and advance to the finals of the Hi-Plains League Tournament.

"We played so hard the first three quarters, and were able to take them out of their game so well and play right with them," Lady Mustangs coach Barry Mellen said. "With the sickness we had five girls sick the day before. We just completely ran out of gas."

The Lady Buffaloes led 12-9 at the end of the first quarter, but a 12-7 advantage for Heights in the second gave the Lady Mustangs a 21-19 lead at halftime.

"Our pressure caused them to turn the ball over," Mellen said. "We also took much better care of the ball than the last time we played them. We gave up a lot of layups after turnovers when we played them earlier."

As a team, Heights had 11 steals, and forced 16 turnovers. Heights had 16 turnovers as well, about half of what they had in their first meeting with Meade.

Meade outscored Heights 12-11 in a tight third quarter, but Heights still led 32-31 heading into

the fourth.

That is when the wheels fell off for the Lady Mustangs. Heights had neutralized Meade's size advantage for three quarters, limiting Meade to just 5 of 8 shooting in the paint.

But in the fourth, Meade's size took over.

Meade also made 7 of 10 free throws in the fourth to keep Heights at bay. Heights was just 2 of 9 at the line for the entire game.

Kinzie Friesen led the Lady Buffaloes with 18 points, including eight in the first quarter. Tarah Weins added 11.

Nayelly LaPoint led the Lady Mustangs with 12 points on 4 of 6 shooting. LaPoint aslo led the Lady Mustangs with seven rebounds. Tiana Couch finished with four steals and was 2 of 4 from 3-point range.

Meade will face Cimarron, who defeated Elkhart 65-40 in the finals at 6 p.m. Saturday.

Heights (8-4) will take on Elkhart at 3 p.m. Saturday. Both games will be played in the west gym of Garden City Community College.