

By JASON EPP

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They say it is tough to beat a team three times, and the Southwestern Heights Mustangs found that out in the second round of the Hi Plains League Tournament. Hugoton came in as the ninth seed and a 2-6 league record but almost pulled off the big upset over the top seeded Mustangs falling 40-39.



It did not look like it would be tough for the Mustangs in the first quarter, as they jumped out to a 10-4 lead. Hugoton tightened the game up in the second period outscoring the Mustangs 11-7 to make it a two point advantage for Heights at the break.

The teams were virtually even in shooting percentage, rebounding, and turnovers, but Hugoton got a big boost from their bench outscoring the Mustangs bench 23-8.

In the third quarter Hugoton outscored Heights 15-14 to make it a one point game heading into the fourth quarter. But the Mustangs found away to hold on and escape with a one-point victory.

Mustangs coach Chad Novack knows his team can play better.

“We played not to lose. I guess maybe it was some first round jitters. We lacked intensity, but it is tough to beat a team three times. They countered what we had done in our previous matchups, but Oscar (Sigala) took care of the ball and we only committed eight turnovers.

Mustangs hang on to beat Hugoton by one, 40-39

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Sigala did not score, but played an important role with seven assist and three steals. Jacob Flores led the Mustangs in scoring with 12 and grabbed five boards, and Cory Ryan had nine points and nine rebounds, and three blocks.

Tate Reed who scored 15, and grabbed nine boards led Hugoton, and Keithan Martin added 8 points.

The Mustangs advance to the semi-finals, and will play Sublette, who defeated Stanton County 54-50 in overtime, Friday at 8 p.m. at Garden City Community College.