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By EARL WATT

- Leader & Times

Liberal has had trouble scoring 19 points in a half this season. Friday, they scored 19 in the first quarter.



The Lady Redskins started hot for the first time all season and put together their best quarter of the year that led to a 53-39 win over Perryton Friday in The Big House.

After pushing the ball inside to freshman Jada Mickens for the first basket of the game, Liberal was able to find open shots around the perimeter, and they made all four three-point attempts in the first quarter.

Perryton struggled to establish its offense, and the Lady Redskins turned on the transition game, throwing long passes and running past the Rangerettes.

Perryton did not score for the first 6:40 of the game, and by the time Tiffeny Merckel hit a three for the Rangerettes, the Lady Redskins had a 19-0 lead.

Jai Chapman hit two threes in the first quarter and Megan Besecker add two of her own for a four-for-four performance in the first quarter.

But the Lady Redskin did not abandon the perimeter game in the second quarter, either.

Chapman hit two more bombs and Besecker added another for seven Liberal threes in the first half.

Perryton regrouped after the hot Liberal start, but Liberal continued to add to the lead in the second quarter and took a 31-10 lead at half.

Liberal's biggest lead of the night came in the first minute and a half of the second half when Chapman cut through the lane for a basket and was fouled. She hit the free throw, and the Lady Redskins had a 24-point lead, 34-10.

Perryton's defense started to clamp down, and the Rangerettes went to a full-court press that resulted in some Lady Redskin turnovers and easy points for Perryton.

By the end of the third, Perryton had cut the lead to 17.

Perryton continued a 9-0 run into the fourth quarter, and Liberal's lead was cut to 12 after Addyson Mosely made a basket and was fouled. She made the free throw, and Liberal's lead was down to 42-30.

Liberal pushed back into the paint to extend the lead with a 5-0 run that included a basket from Chapman, a free throw from Kambrie Long and a basket from Mickens.

Perryton could not cut the deficit any more the rest of the way, and the Lady Redskins cruised to the 53-39 win.

Chapman led all scorers with 28 points. Besecker added 12.

“Any time you start out shooting the ball that good you have to be happy for the girls,” Liberal coach Bill Baird said. “All week long we’ve been shooting a lot of threes, everyone has. You shoot a bunch of them, you get some confidence.”

The tempo of practices ahs picked up as well.

“We’ve been scrimmaging with the coaches,” Baird said. “Just making it competitive. They’ve been lighting us up. Eventually you make enough shots you build confidence. Tonight that was the case. I wish we didn’t turn it over as much (28 times). But it gives them some confidence going in to the break.

Baird also saw the benefits of the fast-break drill.

“We have a drill called scramble,” he said. “It makes us catch the ball and look ahead. It is three on three. We have to move, pass and catch, and that drill has helped us see the floor a little better. At times we were very good tonight.”

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