



By SHAWN YORKS
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MERRITT, Okla. — The Hooker Lady Bulldogs captured the Area 1 2A District 5 championship on Saturday with a 42-34 win over the Merritt Oilerettes. But according to head coach Ray Kennedy, the Lady Bulldogs are in survival mode.

“I’m real proud of the girls,” Kennedy said. “We didn’t play our best game, but at this point it’s survive and advance. It doesn’t matter if we win by 1 or we win by 20.”

Senior Mariana Cervantes and junior Kyra Cathcart scored 39 of Hooker’s 42 points — 20 by Cervantes — which was impressive considering her condition 24 hours earlier.

“Mariana was sick-sick (Friday),” Kennedy said. “She did a great job of sticking it out. She played like a warrior.”

Merritt does not have any seniors on its team this year, but the Oilerettes hung with the state’s No. 11 ranked Lady Dogs.

Hooker (20-2) led 10-3 early in the first quarter and 16-7 after the first eight minutes. After Cathcart put Hooker up 22-12 midway through the second, Merritt ended the period on a 10-2 run to cut it to 24-22 at halftime.

Hooker pulled it out to a 6-point advantage in the third, but Merritt surged back to within two at 30-28 to end the third.

Hooker pulled out to a 9-point lead, but again the Oilerettes wouldn’t go away, cutting it back to a 6-point game at 37-31.

Hooker held its biggest lead of the game at 42-31 in the final two minutes and held on to win it 42-34.

Cervantes led with 20 points, Cathcart 19, and the only other Lady Dog to score was Naomi Rodriguez, who hit a 3-pointer in the second half.

Next up for the Lady Bulldogs is a date with the District 8 champion at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Burns Flat-Dill City. A win Thursday propels the Lady Dogs into the regional championship game at 6:30 p.m. Saturday at Burns Flat-Dill City.