By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

For three quarters and a half, the Lady Redskins had No. 5 Great Bend on the ropes, but they could not deliver the knockout blow, and the Lady Panthers were abel to escape a strong challenge by Liberal, 46-42.

The Lady Redskins made the three-hour bus trip to Great Bend ready to challenge the Lady Panthers, and it the Lady Redskins stunned Great Bend early with a 14-7 first quarter start.

The Lady Panthers rallied in the second quarter and by half, Liberal trailed 20-19.

But the Lady Redskins jumped back ahead on the first two possessions of the second half, and the Lady Panthers continued to chase Liberal the rest of the quarter.

By the start of the fourth quarter, the Lady Redskins had a 29-27 lead.

But the fourth quarter proved to be Liberal's downfall.

Great Bend was able to take a lead with four minutes to play, and the Lady Redskins kept the game within a possession as the two teams traded the lead.

But with less than three minutes to play, Great Bend was able to build a two-possession lead and had their biggest lead of the game of six with less than two minutes to play.

Liberal was able to cut the lead to four, but couldn’t overcome the late deficit in the 46-42 loss.

Liberal had a chance to put the Lady Panthers away in the third quarter, but Liberal struggled at the line and had a stretch of only making four of 16 free throws.

Jai Chapman led the Lady Redskins with 15 points.

Megan Besecker contributed nine, and Kambrie Long had five.

Liberal will have a key game with Garden City Tuesday. The Lady Redskins are currently one game ahead of Maize South for the fourth and final host position.