

By EARL WATT

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Rather it was the Lady Redskins playing an incredible first half or Muskogee, Okla., struggling, most in attendance were in awe of Liberal's first half, including the coach.

"I looked at my assistants, and we were just amazed," Liberal coach Shane Stout said.

The Lady Redskins jumped out to a 25-0 lead midway through the second quarter and went on to a 67-32 win.

"Some games you come into expecting a blowout," Stout said. "This was not one of them."

From the beginning of the season, the Muskogee game has been highlighted as one of the early tests of the season.

After the Lady Redskins had to rally to beat Caprock a night earlier, the Muskogee match-up seemed even more of a challenge.

"The game against Caprock helped us focus," Stout said. "It was a wake-up call. We can't take anyone for granted. All 20 teams on our schedule are capable of beating us."

The Lady Redskins used a strong defense to spark the offense.

Liberal forced turnovers that resulted in transition points.

By the end of the first quarter, the Redskins had pitched an 18-0 shutout, a rarity against a talented group like the Lady Roughers.

Liberal continued to outrebound the bigger Lady Roughers. Liberal built a 25-0 lead midway through the second quarter, and the Rowdy Crowd let out a groan when Muskogee connected on a free throw with five minutes to play to give the Lady Roughers their first point of the game.

By half, the Lady Redskins had built a 37-6 lead. Muskogee had one basket and four free throws in an entire half of basketball.

Muskogee had a little more success in the second half while Stout worked at getting playing time for his entire bench. Eleven of the 12 Lady Redskins scored.

“Defensively we were excellent,” Stout said. “They came in the game with a size advantage. I feel we outrebounded and outbattled them,”

Even with a number of reserves getting a majority of the playing time, the Lady Redskins extended the lead in the second half.

“It’s good for those young girls to get in,” Stout said.

The Lady Roughers didn't let up in the second half. They continued to play tight defense and battle to score.

But the Lady Redskins kept the 30-point lead in the third quarter.

Liberal extended the lead in the fourth for the 67-32 final.

“With wins over teams like Muskogee maybe we can consider that we are getting to that next level,” Stout said. “Are we there yet? No, but we are getting there.”

Hannah Rotolo scored 13 points for the Lady Redskins. Kiara Cohens had 17 and MaKayla McPhail had eight.

The Lady Redskins will face Perryton Friday.