

Lady Redskins finish strong in 37-30 win

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Machia Mullens drives against a Classen Lady Rocket Jordyn Turner in Oklahoma City. Mullens and the Lady Redskins were able to come away with a 37-30 win. L&T photo/Earl Watt

By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

OKLAHOMA CITY — Less than 24 hours after knocking off Dodge City in The Big House Friday night, the Lady Redskins made the long bus ride to Oklahoma City to face the Classen Lady Comets Saturday afternoon, and despite facing a full court press throughout the game, the Lady Redskins were able to come away with a 37-30 win.

Classen came out and scored early, taking a 5-0 lead, but the Lady Redskins battled back by using a tough defense that forced the Lady Comets to slow down their attack and burn the clock looking for opportunities inside.

But Machia Mullens and Aubrey Warden kept the lane covered, and that forced Classen to short longer shots.

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The Lady Redskins held their own on the defensive glass, and they turned rebounds into scoring opportunities.

But the Lady Rockets also used defensive pressure to make the offense harder on the Lady Redskins, and while Liberal handled the pressure for most of the game, there were possessions that ended in turnovers.

Despite starting in a 5-0 hole, the Lady Redskins fought back to take a 18-13 lead before Classen had a strong start to the third quarter to cut into the Lady Redskin lead.

Early in the fourth quarter, Classen took a one-point lead, 28-27, but Ali Lucero penetrated the lane and put up a shot to give the Lady Redskins a 29-28 lead.

The teams traded free throws, and with less than three minutes to play, the game was tied, 30-30.

Machia Mullens took a mid-range jumper that gave the Lady Redskins a 32-30 lead, and defensive pressure forced Classen to turn the ball over.

After pressing the entire game, Classen started to look fatigued in the final two minutes, and they started to foul the Lady Redskins.

Liberal scored the next three points at the free throw line to take a 35-30 lead, and another Classen turnover put the ball in the hands of Warden who was fouled. She made both free throws, and a missed basket by Classen was rebounded by the Lady Redskins to end the game with the 37-30 win.

Liberal moved to 8-1 with Classen falling to 13-2.

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“Classen was one heck of a team,” Liberal coach Carter Kruger said. “Our kids competed and fought hard. We did a good job handling adversity. We gutted it out.”

Kruger also thought the Lady Redskins set the tone.

“We controlled the tempo of the game on both ends,” he said. “Ali Lucero stepped up and made some big shots.”

Lucero scored 11, Mullens had 12, and Katie Horyna scored six.

The schedule will help prepare the Lady Redskins for the upcoming Salina tournament.

“Very rarely do you have a four hour bus ride and suiting it up 20 hours after you play,” Kruger said. “We will play five games in eight days after heading to Salina. We have to get off our feet and take it easy at practice. It is a big stretch for us.”