



Liberal's Katie Horyna puts up a shot despite intense defensive pressure Friday in the semi-finals of the State Tournament. Horyna scored 18 points, but the Lady Redskins fell 52-38 to Bishop Carroll. L&T photo/Earl Watt

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TOPEKA — After shooting 52 percent against St. James Academy, the Lady Redskins struggled to finish shots Friday against Bishop Carroll in the Final Four of the Class 5A State Tournament at the Expocentre in Topeka.

Liberal only landed 30 percent of its shots, and foul trouble for Machia Mullens allowed the Lady Eagles to build a lead that they never surrendered, and Liberal fell one game short of a shot for a state championship with a 52-38 loss.

The lady Redskins had a 7-6 lead after the first quarter, but with Mullens on the bench with two first-half fouls, Carroll went on a 10-0 run to start the second period to take a 16-7 lead.

Katie Horyna had to muscle up a shot with 3:03 to play in the first half to end the run, and the Lady Redskins trailed 20-12 when Carroll ended the half with a buzzer-beating three to send Liberal to the locker room down 11.

With Mullens back on the floor, the Lady Redskins quickly scored the first five points of the second half to cut the lead to six, but Carroll responded with a 5-0 run of its own, and the Lady Redskins continued to fight uphill.

Liberal again had the lead cut to six, 34-28, but another buzzer-beating shot allowed the Lady Eagles to take an eight-point lead to the fourth quarter.

The Lady Redskins had to start taking chances in the fourth quarter, shooting more outside shots, and that allowed Carroll to limit Liberal to one shot, and after the Lady Redskins cut the lead to 40-33 with 3:26 to play, Carroll started to play keep-away and forced the Redskins to foul.

Carroll made eight of nine free throws down the stretch, and the Lady Redskins couldn't reduce the lead, falling 52-38.

Horyna tried to carry the Lady Redskins, scoring 18 points in the loss. Mullens added eight.

"When we got down it was like we needed to play a perfect third quarter," Liberal coach Carter Kruger said. "We weren't quite sharp enough shooting the ball in that third quarter."

With the offense not clicking, Kruger said the pressure all fell on Horyna.

“We put a little too much on her shoulders,” Kruger said. “Our offense got a little out of sync. That’s on me, we have to get better on screening action. That’s the first time we had pressure like that for a while.”

With the aggressive Lady Eagles, and a different style of game calling than the night before, the Lady Redskins didn’t adjust.

“It was physical,” Kruger said. “We shot 30 free throws yesterday. They called the hand checking yesterday, but you have to play through it, We have to get a little stronger. They had juniors and seniors physically developed. We have to get to the weight room, get stronger, and we will be back.”

But Liberal still had one more game to play, the third place game with Maize, a team that Liberal face in Sub-State two years ago and the Lady Redskins had a six-point lead in the fourth quarter before losing.

The Lady Redskins will have to try to turn the table on a top-notch girls program.

“We weren’t ranked when the seasons started, so I think that would be quite an accomplishment for these girls to finish third,” Kruger said. “We will be ready to go and give it everything we’ve got. We are trying to develop into that type of program. We owe Maize a little payback. That still runs a little raw with me losing that one. Hopefully our kids will be ready to go.”