

Russellville falls to Cabot

Lady Panthers beat Lady Cyclones; RHS boys struggle against Panthers

By Kevin Hill

Assistant Sports Editor

It was an auspicious start for the Russellville Lady Cyclones when they faced the Cabot Lady Panthers on Tuesday night and never got things going as they fell 56-38 at Cyclone Gymnasium.

Russellville played well defensively for most of the game, but had all kinds of trouble with the Lady Panthers' interior defense and Cabot's guard pressure.

"They (Lady Panthers) got off to a good start," Lady Cyclones head coach Steve Wiedower said. "Give them credit; they came out ready to play. I felt like they guarded us really well and kept us from doing some things that we needed to do to get on a roll. We just have to learn how to come out with a little more intensity on defense and take some of that stuff away. That's our responsibility to make them come out and do something other than hit open shots."

Cabot wasted no time as Melissa, who finished with 13 points, opened the scoring with a pair of free throws, then stole a pass and fed Sydney under the basket for an easy layup to make it 4-0.

Tinisha answered with a pair of free throws of her own, then stole a pass and Kaylee, who finished with a team-high 10 points, pulled down a Jaimie miss for an 8-foot jumper to tie the score at 4-4.

"She did a good job tonight," Wiedower said. "She's a good shooter, but she's got to learn how to play with the ball, putting it on the floor. I think they all have to learn that when you're playing a zone like Cabot was showing, you've got to penetrate and kick, you've got to make shots for other people and make a play."

That's when things went downhill for the Lady Cyclones. Amber dropped a floater in off the glass to give Cabot a 2-point lead and Melissa followed that with a trey to make it 9-4.

Melissa added a layup off another Lady Cyclones turnover to push it to 11-4.

The Panthers extended their lead to 11 by the end of the period and never looked back.

Things got choppy in the paint in the fourth quarter. Russellville's Amy and Cabot 6-1 center Sarah had battled inside all night. With around three minutes left in the game it came to a head when a double-technical foul was called on the players after Amy pulled on Sarah's jersey and Sarah retaliated with an elbow to Amy's face, sending her to the bench in pain. Jaimie, the Lady Cyclones leading scorer, was harassed and corralled all night and finished with only three points. Prochazka scored six for Russellville and Natalie, Lindsey and Haley each added five.

Kaki led the Lady Panthers with 14 points and Melissa added 13.

Russellville will host undefeated North Little Rock on Colors Day in Cyclone Gym. Tip-off will be after the boys game.

Cyclones fall in heartbreaker; Cabot earns win with key free throws

The Cyclones have played all season without two of their top scorers, Branden and Grey. Branden was lost for the season with a collapsed lung, but Grey has recovered from an ACL injury and made his first start Tuesday night when Russellville hosted the Cabot Panthers in their 7A-Central Conference game.

But he wasn't enough as the Panthers walked out of Cyclone Gym with a 50-45 win. The loss was a gut-wrencher for the Cyclones, who held a 14-9 lead after four starters hit 3-pointers in the opening period. But Cabot (8-10, 2-5) wasn't fazed. Led by senior Alex's game high 25 points, the Panthers opened up a 10-point lead by the end of the third quarter before Russellville (3-15, 0-7), led by Grey's seven fourth-quarter points. Cabot held on with key free throws from Alex and Seth to keep the game just out of reach from the Cyclones.

It almost worked out differently, though. Grey opened the fourth period with free throws, and then beat his man off the dribble for a deep jumper to make it a 6-point game. On the next possession, he hit a floater and was fouled, though the officials said the foul was before the shot. He made 1-of-2 to cut Russellville's gap to 37-32. After Grey missed the second shot, Neal tipped the rebound to Webb who found Eric who was then fouled on a 3-point attempt and made all three shots at the line.

Despite the loss, the game was one of the most competitive 7A-Central contests the Cyclones have played all season. Head coach Joe Sitkowski was glad to see Grey on the floor, but was quick to point out the contributions of seniors DeMarius and Blake, Jaimie with Branden, Webb and Washington.

Russellville next faces North Little Rock at 6 p.m. Friday. The Cyclones will lead off the night's doubleheader for Colors Night.