







Ashley Antone scores 17 in District 1-5A win

Gallup junior forward Ashley Antone scored a game high 17 points and the Gallup Lady Bengals rolled over the Kirtland Central Broncos 53-41 Feb. 17 in a basketball game at Gallup High School.

The Lady Bengals improved to 17-9, 6-4 on the 2018 season and the Lady Broncos fell to 15-9, 5-5. The game was the last of the regular season for both teams.

“We just didn’t do in the second half the same things that we did in the first half,” Kirtland head coach John Zecca said. “The game was played evenly in the first and second quarters. It was the second half that made the difference.”

The first quarter ended 11-9 with Gallup on top. Gallup senior guard Lanae Notah hit the first points of the game for Gallup and that put the score at 2-0 in favor of the Lady Bengals. Kirtland came right back and scored from the inside on a shot by junior forward Avery Begay.

The lead changed four times in the first quarter and neither team looked as though they wanted to jump out to a big lead. Gallup senior forward Leona Smith was active on the offensive and defensive boards for the Lady Bengals and that enabled Gallup to get easy second chance shots.

The Second Quarter

Antone opened the second quarter with a foul shot and that started a 6-0 Gallup run in which junior guard Amanda Mitchel and Antone simply took charge of the game. Kirtland Central senior guard Haile Gleason kept Gallup honest on defense and was a threat each time she touched the ball.

Gallup led 17-12 with 5:13 left on the game clock in the second quarter and by that time one sensed that the tide was slowly turning in Gallup’s favor. The versatile Antone, a constant mover on offense and Gallup’s leading scorer on the season, was instrumental coming off picks and screens and getting open for passes from junior guards Hanna Toledo or Kamryn Yazzie.

The pick and rolls involving Antone grew to be very successful and Kirtland at one juncture allowed Antone to score three consecutive times on the play. Gallup led 21-12 with 4:09 remaining in the second quarter. Gallup won the second quarter 18-8.

The Third Quarter

The third quarter began with Gallup on top 29-17. Kirtland hinted at making runs, but Gallup senior forward Journey Gillson wasn't having any of it. Gillson rebounded well and grabbed key offensive rebounds to give Antone and Notah more chances at scoring. Antone recorded 8 points in the first half for Gallup and Smith had a quiet 6. Gleason scored 10 points in the first half for Kirtland Central, but was quiet from long distance throughout the remainder of the game, partly due to Gallup's defense.

Notah opened the third quarter with a long 3-pointer and that, essentially, set the tone for Gallup for the rest of the game, at least offensively. Gleason kept attempting 3's, but nothing was falling, although as a team Kirtland hit 6 3-pointers, with Gleason scoring on two of them. The best Kirtland could do in the third against the swarming Gallup defense was get dink shots from junior guard Tiajhae Nez and sophomore guards Talia Ockerman and Candace Patterson.

Ockerman proved difficult to guard for the Lady Bengals. Toledo and Yazzie played switch defense and that turned out to be productive for Gallup against Ockerman. The flip side of that was Kirtland hit six 3-pointers for the game, with Gleason nailing two of them.

The Fourth Quarter

Kirtland Central made a game of it throughout the end of the third and at the beginning of the fourth quarters. But Gillson and Smith made sure things didn't get too much out of hand.

With the Lady Bengals holding a 39-31 lead at the start of the fourth, things took a bit of an odd turn. Avery Begay hit a 3-point shot and Zecca called back-to-back time outs. Gallup went into a spread offense with 5:39 on the game clock in the fourth quarter.

Yet, each time Kirtland got some momentum going, the Gallup duo of Antone and Gillson surfaced to thwart runs. The Lady Broncos managed to get the score to 46-40, but no closer.

Yazzie made crucial offensive and defensive hustle plays down the stretch and Kirtland couldn't score, including missing three straight shots underneath Gallup's basket at one point.

Gleason finished with eleven points and Begay recorded 5. Gillson scored 7 points for the Lady Bengals. "Nice game, nice game," Gallup head coach Todd McBroom said to players after they finished. "Nice game."

By Bernie Dotson
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