

Pretty Prairie girls topple Centralia for first state title

Class 1A-I ends with dramatic 37-35 triumph for Bulldogs

DODGE CITY – A little more than four months earlier, the Pretty Prairie Bulldogs had watched a state volleyball championship slip away against Spearville at United Wireless Arena.

On Saturday night, many of those same volleyball players made amends in a big way, holding off previously unbeaten Centralia, 37-35, to capture the Class 1A-I girls state basketball title and in the process securing the school's first girls' crown in the sport.

It was, in the words of senior post McKenna Vogl, one of those Bulldogs who had the heartbreak in late October, nothing but a surreal feeling to come away with the championship in such dramatic fashion.

"It's about like a dream come true," said Vogl, who finished with a team-high 10 points to go with 10 rebounds for a career-ending double-double. She will head to Barton Community College next fall to keep her basketball days alive. "We wanted to get the ball inside but then we got into foul trouble so we had to go to our outside players and they came through. Just amazing. Just amazing."

Centralia freshman sensation Oen Deters, who finished with 16 points, had the game's final shot just before the buzzer on a desperation 3-pointer from the right wing that bounced off the rim as time expired that would have been the game-winner.

"She's probably the best freshman in the state of Kansas," said winning Bulldog coach Scott Goering, capping off his fourth season at the helm. "We told the girls we had to dog them on defense for 32 minutes and it took every minute and second to accomplish that."

While the younger Deters did a credible job off 5-of-11 shooting (2-of-6 from 3-point range), it was the difficulty in finding shots either from behind the arc or from her patented drive to the basket.

“We were trying to our best to lock down their best players,” said senior guard Abigail White. “There was no help for me on (No.) 15, so I just had to keep myself in front of her. It feels great to accomplish this. This was the big one we’ve been shooting for all season.”

White, in fact, was not on that volleyball team in late October. She, instead, was running cross country.

But she will forever be remembered as the Bulldog who scored her team’s final five points, knocking down a 2-pointer with 3:01 left to give her team a 34-32 lead. That quickly disappeared in less than a minute, trailing 35-34 at the 2:53 mark on a driving layup by the younger Deters.

White then canned what would become the game-winner, draining a deep trey from the top of the key at 1:20 on the clock. It would prove to be just enough.

The Bulldogs overcame two turnovers in the final 30 seconds to survive. Jorah Harbaugh missed the front end of a 1-and-1 with 0:04 seconds showing and the Panthers had the final possession to either tie or win the game.

The older Deters sister, Avery, grabbed game-high honors with 17 points, hitting 3-of-6 treys. But the rest of the Panthers accounted for only two points as they struggled against the Bulldogs’ tenacious defense. They managed only 11 of 45 from the field for 24.4 percent, including a bone-chilling 4-of-24 in the final 16 minutes.

“We scored 37 and average 60, and they’re about the same,” Goering said. “It was a real battle out there. Very physical and somehow we managed to make enough plays. It’s an amazing feeling.”

The early portion of the game was like a see-saw chess match.

Pretty Prairie went to its 6-0 senior post Vogl as she got three early close-in baskets before leaving near the end of the first saddled with her second foul.

The first quarter ended with Centralia up by the thread of one point, 13-12.

Pretty Prairie claimed the biggest first-half advantage of four points twice, 19-15 and 22-18 before a late 3-pointer by the Panthers’ Avery Deters that sliced the deficit to the three-point halftime score of 24-21, Bulldogs. The elder Deter drained a trio of treys in the opening half and led the Panthers with 13 points.

Both teams ended the season at 25-1. Centralia had been pursuing the school's sixth state title and first since 2016. In 2020, the Panthers had won their quarterfinal opener when 1A was still just one division and were slated to face Olpe. But COVID ended that match-up and they had to wait two years for another shot. And they were just that close.

PRETTY PRAIRIE 37, CENTRALIA 35

Centralia 13 8 7 7 -- 35

Pretty Prairie 12 12 5 8 -- 37

Centralia (25-1) – Haverkamp 1-12 0-0 2, Wells 0-5 0-0 0, A. Deters 5-15 4-4 17, O. Deters 5-11 4-6 16, Flentie 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 11-45 8-10 35.

Pretty Prairie (25-1) – White 3-6 0-0 8, A. Young 2-7 3-3 9, Hendrickson 1-1 0-0 2, Webster 1-2 0-0 2, Jorah Harbaugh 1-7 0-1 2, Young 1-4 0-0 2, Vogl 4-8 2-4 10, Kruse 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 14-36 5-8 37.

3-point goals—Centralia 5-18 (Haverkamp 0-3, Wells 0-3, A. Deters 3-6, O. Deters 2-6), Pretty Prairie 4-12 (White 2-4, Young 2-5, Jorah Harbaugh 0-3). Rebounds—Centralia 26 (Haverkamp 7), Pretty Prairie 34 (Vogl 10). Assists—Centralia 5 (O. Deters, Flentie 2), Pretty Prairie 9 (Jorah Harbaugh 3). Fouls—Centralia 10, Pretty Prairie 14. Fouled out—None.