

By Pastor Vince Carrig

Sports Writer

Hershey guards stole dribbles and traded them for points, plus swing forward Maegan Hiatt made jump shooting look easy as the Lady Panthers rolled Perkins County right out of the NSAA playoffs with a 54-29 rout at the McCook Community College Events Center last Tuesday (Feb. 12).

Senior guard Daynlee Miller stole two dribbles for breakaway layups and Hershey dominated the offensive glass with eight rebounds for a 15-2 blowout first quarter that basically determined the game's outcome.

"In the first quarter, we did not do a very good job 'boxing out' rebounders," said Lady Plainsmen Head Coach Deanne Bishop after the game. "We gave them too many second and third-chance opportunities to make shots, and Hershey capitalized on those opportunities."



The Lady Panthers found success with their pressing front-court defense, influencing nine first quarter Perkins County dribbling turnovers. Besides the ones that ended up in Perkins County's basket, the turnovers blunted the Lady Plainsmen's offense to just three field goal attempts in the first, with only Shania Metcalf scoring from eight feet away.

Perkins County turned over its first four possessions of the game.

Guard Brooke Frederick sent Perkins County into timeout by stripping yet another dribble and turning the score to 24-3 in Hershey's favor with 5:24 left in the second quarter.

Frederick complied with another breakaway heist and Hiatt swished a pair of jumpers as things got out of Perkins County's hands, trailing by 26 points at halftime.

Forward Tayler Baker's three pointer wrapped a bow on the Lady Panthers' domination of the second quarter.

A miniature Lady Plainsmen comeback of sorts had cut Hershey's lead to 20 points in the second quarter, with Jessi Hoffert left alone off an inbounds pass to strike for three points and Courtney Ostermiller's high 14-footer off the glass found netting to make the score 28-8.

Forward Courtney McClenahan hit two mid-range jump shots and two free throws to give Perkins County an 11-8 victory in the third quarter.

But Baker nailed two jumpers with no problem to inflate C2 sub-district 11 top-seed Hershey's lead to 46-19 in the third quarter.

Miller ruled the fourth quarter's early minutes. Smelling "garbage time," the adroit left-hander circled the arc by dribbling through her legs, slipped defenders, hung in the air, and passed around a final defender to give reserve guard Lenna Young her only points of the game. Miller

had already gotten a foul line jumper to roll down and succeeded on a pair of free throws in the fourth quarter.

Senior Lady Plainsmen guard Michi Prante drilled five free throws in six chances in her final high school game.

Center Maddie Seamann's four offensive rebounds in the first quarter generated a three-point play for her and other Lady Panthers in the first quarter.

Hershey advanced only to lose the sub-district title to North Platte St. Pat's, 49-43 on Friday.

Jessi Hoffert hit three triples in just four attempts and cleaned off five defensive rebounds for the 13-9 Lady Plainsmen.

"This squad has been battling injuries and illnesses all season," Coach Bishop said. "Tonight we were without a few key contributors [Matisyn Humphrey, Carlie Waitley, Brandie Ross], but I was proud that the girls who did play were always hustling and played with pride."

The 2013-14 Lady Plainsmen will lose starters Metcalf, Humphrey, Prante, and Jessi Hoffert to graduation in May.

The Lady Irish audition for another spot in the state tournament in Lincoln on Friday when they take on 10-12 Bridgeport at Creek Valley High School in Chappell.

PC 29, Hershey 54

Perkins Co. 3 5 11 10—29

Hershey 15 19 8 12—54

Scoring—Perkins County: 6/24FG (3/4[x3]) 8/11FT—29 (Hoffert, J. 0/4 (3/4)—9; McClenahan 3/5 2/2—8; Prante 0/9 5/6—5; Metcalf 1/2—2;) Hershey: 21/47FG (2/8[x3]) 6/9FT—54; (Hiatt 6/9 (1/1)—15; Fredrick 6/9 (0/2) 1/2—13; Miller 3/4 (0/4) 2/2—8; Seamann 2/4 1/3—5).

Rebounds—Perkins County 23 (5 offensive); Hershey 24 (10 offensive). Turnovers—Perkins County 25; Hershey 11. Steals—Perkins County 9, Hershey 17.