

## Out-sized Lady Bulldogs battle to win over Gruver

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HOOKER — The Gruver Lady Greyhounds were bigger, had excellent shooters and more court time so far this season, but that didn't seem to matter to the Hooker Lady Bulldogs on Tuesday night. Hooker improved to 2-0 on the season with a 55-46 win over the Texas visitors, who were playing their fifth game of the year.

“We were out-sized, but our girls play a lot bigger than they really are,” said Hooker head coach Ray Kennedy. “We had a hard time shooting over the top of them but we just kept battling. We miss a shot, we got the rebound, we kept battling.”

Kyra Cathcart was the leading scorer for Hooker with 20 points on the night.

Hooker battled back from several first-half deficits. Jessica Ugarte got things started with a basket for a 2-0 advantage, and a free throw to tie it at 3-all. Cathcart got the offensive rebound

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off a miss for a 5-3 lead, and the score would wobble back and forth. Gruver went up 6-5, Shania Miller gave Hooker the lead, Gruver went up 10-8 and two free throws by Naomi Rodriguez tied it.

Miller put the Lady Dogs up 13-10, but Gruver went on a quick run to take a 17-13 lead with less than a minute to go in the first.

Two Miller free throws cut it to 17-15 at the end of the first, and the senior started the second quarter with a basket to tie it.

Gruver pulled back out to a 3-point lead, but two free throws by Vanessa Wiebe and a hoop by Cathcart gave Hooker the lead again. A steal by Rodrigues led to another Cathcart basket for a 23-20 Bulldogs lead.

After Gruver cut it to one, Jessica Ugarte nailed a trey at the buzzer to put Hooker up 26-22 at halftime.

The Lady Bulldogs recorded five steals in the final 3:30 of the second quarter, with Rodriguez, Jessica Ugarte, Miller and Wiebe applying the defensive pressure.

Hooker carried that momentum into the third quarter, opening with five quick points to go ahead by nine as Rodriguez opened the second half with a 3-pointer and Cathcart hit a put-back.

Gruver did cut it to 36-34 at the end of the third quarter but couldn't keep up with Cathcart, who scored seven of Hooker's 10 points in the period.

The Lady Dogs pulled back out to a 9-point lead behind Cathcart, Rodriguez and Miller, who went a combined 7-for-8 from the charity stripe in the first three minutes of the final frame. Two more freebies by Cathcart put Hooker up 45-38 with 4:02 left, but the Lady 'Hounds had one last push, hitting two straight 3-pointers, but Hooker had an answer for each one, and Gruver

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was never closer than five points the rest of the night.

Mariana Cervantes made a late push for Hooker, scoring all seven of her points in the fourth quarter.

In addition to Cathcart's 20, Miller added 12, Rodriguez 8, Jessica Ugarte 6 and Wiebe 2.

After the Thanksgiving break, the Dogs and Lady Dogs return to action Dec. 3rd at Forgan.