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KISMET — A key stretch of the first quarter that rolled over into the second was the difference in the game as the Southwestern Heights Mustangs defeated the Syracuse Bulldogs, 56-43.

Leading 10-9 with just under five minutes left in the first quarter, The Southwestern Heights Mustangs went on a 15-3 run over then next eight minutes to go up 25-12.

It proved to be the only stretch of the game that Heights and Syracuse did not play evenly.

“Syracuse is a good team,” Mustangs coach Nefro Saucedo said. “There were times where we execute and times where we show our youth. Our guards have some quick hands and not afraid to throw it up to the next guy when they get it.”

Jorge Dela Torre led the Mustangs offense in the first half and during the key stretch, scoring 13 of his game-high 19.

Heights began to slow the game down after taking the big lead, and each team only scored

once more before half, giving Heights a 27-14 lead.

“We were trying to stall a little bit,” Saucedo said. “They were sitting back in a zone, and we were trying to make them come out and guard us. We want our guys to learn to be patient- to learn from what happened at Lakin when we had a big lead and let them come back.”

The two teams exchanged baskets throughout the second half. Only once did either team score three times unanswered by the other.

Heights still led by 13 after three 40-27, and led 44-32 with just over three minutes left when Syracuse began sending Heights to the line to try and lengthen the game.

Heights made 8-11 free throws down the stretch to keep their distance.

Dela Torre finished the game 8-16 from the field, and 2-3 at the line. Nathan Johnsrud added 13.

Heights ends the first semester 4-2, and will return after the Christmas Break, Jan.7 when they host Holcomb.