

By EARL WATT

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A 17-0 run by the Garden City Lady Buffaloes midway through the first half was too much for the Lady Redskins to overcome in a 52-44 loss Tuesday at the Big House.

"You can't get down 18 to a good team like Garden City," Liberal coach Shane Stout said. "We played well after that, but the mountain was too high to climb."

The Lady Redskins did battle back.

After trailing 27-9, the Lady Redskins narrowed the gap to 29-16 by half.

Justice Norah opened the second half with two baskets, and Kayla Varnes and Megan Campbell each hit a three to get the game back to 10, 36-26.

But the Lady Buffaloes continued to ride Carly Schmale in the pain to push the lead back to 48-37 with two minutes to play.

The defensive pressure of the Lady Redskins started to take its toll, and Liberal narrowed the gap to 49-44 with a minute to play.

But it was too little, too late. The Lady Buffaloes were able to hit free throws down the stretch for the 52-44 win.

Schmale led the Lady Buffaloes and all scorers with 15 points.

Norah scored 14 points for the Lady Redskins. Kayla Payton had eight including two threes. Malysa Williams also scored eight.

The loss was the last regular season home game for Kayla Varnes, Payton, Sharika Sanchez and Nohemi Hernandez.

"We will lose half of our eight-man rotation," Stout said. "We also lose our second, third and fourth leading scorers."

But the season still has one regular season game, Friday at Dodge City, and then a home playoff game is all but secured against Winfield next week.

Right now, Stout is focused on Dodge City. The Lady Red Demons are undefeated and have already won the WAC.

"They want to be undefeated in the WAC," Stout said. "We would love to spoil it."