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By EARL WATT

Daily Leader

With six lead changes in the fourth quarter, the game between Liberal and Garden City seemed to come down to whoever would have the ball last.

It didn't.

Garden City missed two last-second shots, and the Redskins were able to hold on for a 55-54 win.

"Both teams left it for the other to take," Liberal coach Drew Gruver said. "We were lucky to hold on for the win."

Victory appeared hard to come by when Garden City hit their first three shots of the game — and they were all three pointers.

The Redskins had to dig out of a 9-2 hole in the first three minutes of the game.

A pair of baskets by Bryan Morris, a bucket by Tyson Deaton, and an old-fashioned three-point play from Bryce Johnson narrowed the Garden City advantage to 15-10 at the end of the first quarter.

Liberla started to get the offense clicking in the second, starting with a no-look pass from Jade

Cathey to Johnson that went right through Garden City's Quentin Taylor's hands that Johnson laid in to cut the Buffalo lead to one.

Jade Cathey tied the game with a lay-up, and after a Garden City turnover, Justin Andrade put the Redskins ahead with a three-pointer, 24-21.

The Redskisn built a five point lead by half and had as high as a nine-point lead early in the third quarter, 36-27.

But the Buffaloes went on an 8-0 run before Deaton charged the baseline and hit a left-handed shot under the basket to stop the Garden City rally. Deaton grabbed a rebound on the next possession, and Andrade made two free throws to put Liberal up by five.

Another Buffalo run, however, erased the Redskin lead, and after a Michael Guerrero three and a Cody Berbeck basket, Garden City ended the quarter with a 44-43 lead.

Kedrick Eyle opened the fourth with an old-fashioned three point play to regain the lead, but another Guerrero three gave the Buffs a 47-46 lead.

Cathey put Liberal back on top with a jumper, but Garden City hit another three and a jumper for a 52-48 lead.

Cathey hit back-to-back buckets to tie the game, and Garden City's Patrick Garcia penetrated the lane for a scoop shot and a 54-52 Buffalo lead.

Andrade cut the lead to one by hitting one of two free throws, and after a Garden City turnover, Cathey hit a put-back shot for a 55-54 Redskin lead.

Garden City used the final 42 seconds and two time outs to try and get a quality shot against Liberal's defense, but the Redskins pressed the ball above the three-point line and forced the Buffaloes to take an off-balance shot near the paint. The shot missed, but the Buffaloes rebounded and had the opportunity for a put-back. But the Redskin defense held again, and the final shot rolled off the rim as time expired and Liberal escaped with a 55-54 win.

"I felt like we did a lot better moving the ball around," Andrade said. The Redskins point guard was able to find open Redskins with no-look passes most of the game.

"Me and Jade have played together since we were 8," Andrade said. "We have a connection. Everyone is figuring out that if I'm driving, there's a possibility they will get it."

Liberal will be trying to earn a second seed in the Sub-State parings but will need a win at Dodge City Friday.

"Seedings are huge for us," Gruver said. "They are all big games form here on out. If you are not ready to play by now, there's something wrong."

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