

By EARL WATT and RICK YEARICK

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The game had the feel of an upset in the making.

The Cimarron Lady Blue Jays put together the best game plan of any Lady Mustang opponent this season.

Cimarron attempted to keep the Lady Mustangs out of the paint by keeping four Blue Jays in the lane most of the night.

That forced the Lady Mustangs to knock down perimeter shots, and a key basket by Brianna Eaton from three-point range with 2:22 to play in the third quarter sparked the Lady Mustangs to a 50-44 win to end the regular season undefeated.

The No. 1 Lady Mustangs will be the top seed in Sub-State and will host Lakin at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Corral.

But the final game of the regular season wasn't easy.

The Lady Blue Jays hovered in the lane on defense and was able to get an early 8-7 lead.

Southwestern Heights coach Barry Mellen took a time out with 4:34 to play in the first, and the

Lady Mustangs were able to take a 19-15 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The Lady Mustangs were able to stretch out to a 21-17 lead midway through the second quarter, and the Blue Jays took a time out to regroup. Cimarron rallied to tie the game at 26-26 with 26 seconds to play in the half, but Heidi Brown hit the last shot to give the Lady Mustangs a 28-26 halftime advantage.

Both teams came out slow in the second half. Defensive pressure forced turnovers on both sides, and with 4:25 to play in the quarter the Blue Jays tied the game at 29-29.

Deni Jacobs was whistled for her third foul late in the third and had to head to the bench.

The Lady Mustangs were struggling to get an outside shot with the packed-in Lady Blue Jay defense, but Eaton came off the bench and landed a three-pointer that gave the Lady Mustangs a five point lead.

With 28 seconds remaining in the quarter, Heights had a six point lead, but the Lady Blue Jays dropped in a long two-point jumper to cut the lead to four, 37-33.

The Lady Mustangs (20-0) forced five turnovers in the fourth and knocked down seven of nine free throws down the stretch to preserve the 50-44 win.

Jacobs led the Lady Mustangs with 15, Brown had 10, Lindsay Garinger scored nine and Kathy Eakes had eight.

“Hitting the free throws at the end was important,” Mellen said. “We have to get better at shooting from outside and running our offense more efficiently.”

