Daily Leader photo/Earl Watt
Tameka Sanchez dribbles around a Garden City defender Tuesday at the Big House. Liberal's speed allowed the shorter Lady Redskins to force Garden City into a transition game, a pace that clearly favored Liberal in a 52-34 win.

By EARL WATT
• Daily Leader
When the Lady Redskins looked at the taller Lady Buffaloes, they did not see a size mismatch.
They saw an opportunity to take advantage of team speed.
The energetic Lady Redskins forced the Lady Buffaloes into a transition game, and the height advantage was nullified as the Lady Redskins moved to 7-0 on the season with a 52-34 Western Athletic Conference win.
Hannah Rotolo sparked the transition-minded Lady Redskins by pressuring Garden City's point guards and forcing turnovers that led to Liberal baskets.
"We knew we had to come out with intensity," Rotolo said. "We had to come out and and play our game at our speed."
The Lady Redskins jumped out to a 17-8 lead after the first quarter with five different Lady Redskins scoring.
Rotolo's defense coupled with Kiara Cohens offensive rebounds kept the Lady Buffaloes out of sync on a night when scouts from Seward and Barton County were in attendance to watch players from both teams.
The Lady Redskins continued to push the ball up the floor against the taller Lady Buffs.
Garden City narrowed the game to eight in the second half, but three successive turnovers allowed Liberal to stretch the lead back to a comfortable margin.
Cohens led Liberal with 18 points, Rotolo added 13, and MaKayla McPhail scored nine. LaTonya Gooden had eight points, and Kayla Payton and Tameka Sanchez each added two.
"Garden City is a real nice team, probably the best team we've seen all year," Liberal coach Shane Stout said. "But it was also the best we've played all year. Our intensity was very high. I couldn't be more pleased. I was very happy the way they played this evening."
Liberal's quickness overcame the much-taller Buffaloes on both ends of the floor. Despite being outsized, Cohens seemed to be in the right place at the right time to grab defensive rebounds over the taller Lady Buffs. Those rebounds turned into offensive breaks, and

the Lady Buffs were simply left behind while Liberal took advantage of two-on-one and three-on-two situations.

“The pace of the game was so quick,” Stout said. “The pace was at our pace. We didn’t want to play a half court game with them. We came out, got to our style, and their big girls were a non-factor.”

The hustle never left the Lady Redskins throughout the game. Even with a big lead, Liberal’s players were still scrambling for loose balls.

“With about two minutes left, Makayla and Hannah were diving into the bench,” Stout said. “You have to love that. If we don’t play hard, we will be average, but if we play with intensity and desire, we’re a pretty good team.”

No. 5 Liberal sits at the top of the WAC at 2-0 alongside the Great Bend Lady Panthers who knocked off Hays Tuesday. Dodge City and Hays are 0-2, and Garden City is 1-2.

“Great Bend has owned WAC nine years in a row,” Stout said. “We need to get back in that hunt. This group of girls will not settle for anything less.”

The Lady Redskins will not play Friday but will return to action Jan. 22 in the annual Orange and Black Classic in Colby.