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By JASON EPP

Daily Leader

The Forgan Bulldogs defended their Laverne Tournament crown and reversed last year's fate versus Turpin with a 52-43 win in the championship game.

In last year's two meetings Turpin was victorious in both.

"We are excited about playing well early in the season," said Bulldogs head coach Todd Kerr. "It shows we have a chance to be good, if we keep getting better."

Forgan rolled through the opening two rounds of the tournament, beating the Guymon JV 70-35, including a 27-0 first period, and beat tournament host Laverne 71-50, after leading 45-22 at the half.

Turpin also had to overcome a nemesis from last year in the semifinals. State runner-up and current No. 5 Texhoma beat the Cardinals both times they played last year, but Turpin was able to prevail in a defensive struggle 49-44.

Turpin only outscored Texhoma in one quarter, but in that second quarter they held the Red Devil scoreless, and after that never gave up the lead.

"Defensively, we played the best game of the season so far," said Cardinal coach Gary Wallace.

In the championship game, rebounding was the difference.

“Offensive rebounds killed us,” said Wallace. “We played hard and well, but free throws and rebounding hurt us.”

For Forgan, that means Tayler Eagan, Tanner Jones and Tyler McReynolds banging in the paint for rebounds and put-backs.

“Those guys do all the dirty work, and are so valuable to our team,” said Kerr. “They don’t get a lot of credit, but they are why we are who we are.”

Second chance points were at a premium with neither team shooting well, but two of the newest Bulldogs hit key shots at key times.

“Forgan’s two new players, (Jake) Regier and (Matt) Morris, I thought were the difference in the game,” said Wallace.

Each hit two three’s in the first half for 12 of Forgan’s 25 first half points.

“They both made big baskets to take the focus off of other players,” said Kerr.

For the Cardinals, Konner Hood took on the bulk of the scoring responsibility in the first half with center Braydon Robinson in early foul trouble. Hood scored nine of Turpin’s 20 in the first half, as Forgan took a five-point lead to the locker room.

The two evenly matched teams continued to battle, with Forgan holding on to a slim lead. Ryan

Forgan tops Turpin at Laverne tourney

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Radcliff made seven of eight from the charity stripe, all in the second half. At the same time, Turpin only made 9-of-16 from the free throw line.

In the end, Forgan was able to go on to win 52-43, and defend their Laverne Tournament championship.

Forgan's Coach Kerr knows its still early, and there is still a long road ahead.

"My focus is on trying to get better every time. We want consistency."

Five players from this game were named to the all-tournament team. From Forgan, Ryan Radcliff, Rhett Radcliff, and Jake Regier, and from Turpin, Konner Hood and Cale Longhofer.

Ryan Radcliff led the Bulldogs in scoring with 13, Jake Regier added 10, and Matt Morris hit three threes to finish with 9 points.

Konner Hood and Braydon Robinson led the Cardinals with 13 points each, and Cale Longhofer added 9.

Forgan is now 5-0 on the season and will travel tonight to 8-0 Fargo.

Turpin is now 5-1 and will host Hugoton tonight.

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