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FEBRUARY 15TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

For the second time in the 2011-2012 campaign, the Dexter Lady Bearcats and Poplar Bluff Lady Mules faced off in a SEMO Conference showdown. LBB picked up its second win of the season against the Mules with a 70-59 decision at the Bearcat Event Center on Tuesday night.

The Mules gave the 'Cats a scare a few times in the second half, and pulled within four points in the fourth quarter, but coach Chad Allen's squad fought back to their 10 point lead each time.

"This was definitely a game of runs; we would make a big run, and then they'd make a run right back," Allen said. "Poplar Bluff is definitely a good basketball team, and they've been playing really well here of late. Coach Chronister always does a tremendous job with those girls, and I'm glad our girls kept fighting hard until the end."

The Lady 'Cats utilized a strong full-court press and quick transition offense throughout the contest to seal the win. Allen noted his team's recent struggles with 'easy' shots, but was proud of his team's grit late in the game.

"We wanted to make it a transition game; I feel like [Poplar Bluff is] more of a half-court offensive team this year. We wanted to try to play our game and get up and down the

floor, and they did a good job of that tonight," he said. "We missed a lot of 'bunnies' under the basket, but we'll have games like that occasionally. If we hit those shots, it makes us better offensively, but it also helps us to be able to get back in our defense. I don't know what we shot from the field; I'm just glad they kept battling throughout the game."

The Lady Bearcats have played much improved defense of late, and did a good job of shutting down Danielle Farmer - who burned the 'Cats from the perimeter in their earlier meeting - and Marissa Webb, Bluff's leading scorer and inside threat.

"I thought we did a really good job of containing Webb. She's always going to score her points, but we did a good job of trying to clog up that middle making her drive," Allen said. "We also did a good job on Farmer; last time we played them, she hit four or five threes against us. We played pretty good defensively tonight."

The Lady 'Cats rode a 16-8 lead into the second quarter, when Mollie Whitehead knocked down back-to-back threes to give them a 30-15 lead. The Mules rattled off five unanswered points to close out the first half and trail 30-20 at halftime.

Erika
Cobb

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pulled down several key defensive rebounds in the third to stall Poplar Bluff runs; Paige Patterson's three point play at the 2:00 mark gave the 'Cats a 45-31 lead. Farmer completed a three point play and hit a three for the Mules in the last minute of the frame to cut LBB's lead to 49-39 heading into the fourth quarter.

A jumper from Webb at the 4:30 mark pulled the Mules within six points in the fourth quarter, but steals from Whitehead and Katelynn Frazier let to points for the Lady 'Cats. Dexter built back to a 10 point lead thanks to great assists by Hannah Noe (11 total assists in the game) to Whitehead and Harris. Whitehead was called for a charge and fouled out at the 2:50 mark; the Lady 'Cats continued to battle and rattled off four unanswered points in the last 45 seconds of the game to edge their margin of victory to 11 points.

Allen noted the importance of the SEMO Conference win, as well as the difficulty of the conference this season.

"Our conference is really tough; we have some of the toughest teams in Southeast Missouri," he said. "I'm proud of the girls for battling back after losing two games in the conference and winning this game tonight. Bluff was first in conference coming into this game; now they are tied with Jackson for first, and we are tied with Notre Dame for

second."

The Lady 'Cats will be back in action on Thursday (Feb. 17) night, when they close out the regular season at Twin Rivers. The contest is set to get underway at 6:00 p.m.

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