

# SPORTS

## First half cost Lady Riders in LPC tourney

By Mike Monahan

TOLEDO –Dreams of making it to the semifinals of the fourth Lincoln Prairie Conference Tournament were dashed Monday at Waldrip Gymnasium by the host school, Cumberland, 33-30 over Arcola.

Arcola struggled in the first half against Cumberland making just 2-of-17 shots from the field and had 12 turnovers, including nine in the opening quarter.

Arcola had its five-game winning streak snapped and the 30 points was the second fewest scoring in a game this season behind 28 against Tuscola.

The two teams play again Feb. 2 at Cumberland in a LPC game.

Arcola, 15-6, played Argenta-Oreana Wednesday in the LPC consolation semifinals. If the Lady Riders won they will play Saturday at 2:30 p.m. at Cumberland for the consolation championship.

### Cumberland 33, Arcola 30

Arcola trailed just 18-8 at the half in a match up of the fourth seed (Arcola) and fifth seed (Cumberland).

The Lady Riders were hurt by the fact Kacie Sisk had two fouls early in the game and only played a few minutes in the opening half as a result.

“That was part of the game plan,” said Cumberland coach Sammi James, a 2012 graduate of Neoga, who played under her father Seth James. “Kacie Sisk is a phenomenal player. I have seen her play outside of here, but we were prepared. We worked several days on getting ready for her and that is a compliment to her.”

Without Sisk, Arcola was 1-of-16 in the last 14:33 of the half. Free throws kept them close as they were 4-of-5.

Cumberland scored the final eight points of the half, including two 3-pointers by Abbie Becker, who is a 5-7 senior that is going to play at Division III Aurora University next year.

“Becker is the leader,” said James. “She has played a lot of ball and is kind of the glue that holds us together. She is a great kid on top of being a great athlete and a great ball player. She certainly helped us stick together.”

Becker finished with 16 points, including four three-pointers, while Katelyn Shoemaker had 13 points.

Arcola scored the last seven points of the third quarter and Eva Hopkins tied the game at 24 with a three-point play to start the scoring in the final eight minutes. Becker hit a big 3-pointer for a 27-24 Bronco lead, but Arcola answered as Kessler scored four straight points and AHS took its first lead since the opening bucket when Kessler sank two free throws with 2:26 left. Freshman Jade Carr made two free throws for Cumberland, who was 21-10 last year, and Baker finished the scoring off with two free throws with 12.4 remaining.

“It (the fact Cumberland didn’t let Arcola take the lead by more than one) was huge,” said James. “It says a lot about their ability to work. They don’t get rattled. They were willing to guard hard and not let it go any further than it did. It was a big win for us. Arcola is a great team. They are fun to watch and do things the right way. They are well coached.”

Sisk led Arcola with nine points.

### Arcola 36, CG/Bement 33

Arcola was seeded one spot behind Cerro Gordo/Bement and the Lady Riders wanted to prove they should have been seeded third.

AHS didn’t trail for the first 28:07 and led by 10 on two occasions, including 28-18 after three quarters.

“The game completely changed after the start of the fourth quarter,” said Arcola coach Corey Roberts. “The way it was going before is kind of how I expected it to go.”

Things appeared to be going Arcola’s way as Sisk hit



ARCOLA HIGH SCHOOL senior Makenzie Thomas (20) works around a defender in the varsity game with Okaw Valley played Monday, Jan. 9 in Arcola. Arcola’s varsity won 55-35. There was no junior varsity game played. Photo by Nancy Rairden.

two free throws for a 28-18 advantage after three quarters.

However, the Broncos went on a 11-0 run in the first 4:07 of the fourth, taking their first lead of the game on a Haylei Simpson. Haley Garrett, who was just returning from an injured ankle scored six of the points during the run.

CGB took a 33-30 lead on a bucket by Haylie Simpson with 2:22 left.

Arcola scored the final six points for the victory. Reyli Vega cut the lead to one with a bucket and the Lady Riders took the lead for good on a putback by Sisk with 48 seconds left. Sisk also made two free throws with 24.4 remaining to account for the final points.

“The key was staying

together,” said Roberts. “When we were up 10 going into the fourth and they came out and took the lead, going up three on us. Last year we probably lose this game by eight plus points. They were still engaged. I challenged them and told them we had to make our free throws at the end. We made 2-of-3 in the final 29.4 seconds all by Sisk. That was the difference in the game. We took care of the ball (14 turnovers) and played good defense (Broncos were 15-of-54 from the field). It was a loud gym and all of the momentum had changed and we stuck together.”

The Broncos 1-2-2 caused Arcola problems.

We need to attack that (their 1-2-2) instead of throwing over that much,” said

Roberts. “I kept telling them to go to the middle and attack it, attack it and there were times when we did we had Makenzie (Thomas) for layups.”

Sisk led Arcola with 18 points, while the Broncos were led by Garrett.

It was a very physical game, probably one of the most physical games I have been in in a pretty long time,” said Jacey Kessler of Arcola. “I think we answered to their physicality.”

The Broncos fell to 14-6 overall and 2-2 in the LPC.

### Junior varsity

The junior varsity went 2-0 beating Cerro Gordo/Bement 31-26 on Jan. 13 and beat Academy High of Champaign 41-23 in a game played at the Savoy Recreation Center on Jan. 11.

Against the Broncos AHS led 16-6 at the half and 26-12 heading into the final quarter. Crystal Ramirez led the way with 13 points.

Against Academy High the Lady Riders led just 20-13 at the half and 23-15 after three quarters. Arcola outscored Academy 18-2 to win by 18.

Ava Simpson and Hayden Gauna led the way with 10 points each.

Arcola	4	4	13	9-30
Cumberland	6	12	6	9-33

ARCOLA: Eva Hopkins 2-3-7, Jacey Kessler 2-2-6, Kelsey Moore 2-1-5, Makenzie Thomas 0-0-0, Kacie Sisk 4-1-9, Reyli Vega 0-1-1, Crystal Ramirez 0-2-2, Vanessa Condarco 0-0-0, Totals 10-9-30

3-point goals: Arcola 1-9 .111 (Sisk 1-3, Moore 0-4, Kessler 0-2), Cumberland 5-10 .500 (Abbie Becker 4-7, Katelyn Shoemaker 1-2, Suzy Fritts 0-1). Rebounds: Arcola 30 (Hopkins 7), Cumberland 31 (Shoemaker 10). Bench points: Arcola 3, Cumberland 2. Free throw shooting: Arcola 9-16 (.563), Cumberland 8-12 .667. Turnovers: Arcola 20, Cumberland 23. Shooting percentages: Arcola 10-34 (.294), Cumberland 10-42 (.238).

Arcola	11	6	11	8-33
Cerro Gordo/Bement	3	6	9	15-33

ARCOLA: Hopkins 0-0-0, Kessler 3-0-7, Moore 1-1-3, Thomas 2-0-4, Sisk 7-4-18, Vega 2-0-4, Ramirez 0-0-0, Totals 15-5-36

3-point goals: Arcola 1-4 .250 (Kessler 1-1, Hopkins 0-1, Moore 0-1, Thomas 0-1), Cerro Gordo/Bement 1-5 .200 (Haylee Simpson 1-3, Caroline Hill 0-2). Free throw shooting: Arcola 5-12 .417, Cerro Gordo/Bement 2-4 .500. Rebounds: Arcola 33 (Sisk, Thomas 11), Cerro Gordo/Bement 34 (Haley Garrett 12). Bench points: Arcola 0, Cerro Gordo/Bement 16. Turnovers: Arcola 14, Cerro Gordo/Bement 10. Field

goal percentage: Arcola 15-37 .405, Cerro Gordo/Bement 15-54 .278

### Junior varsity

Arcola	10	6	10	5-31
Cerro Gordo/Bement	4	2	6	14-26

ARCOLA: Ramirez 5-3-13, Shelby Roberts-McGeehon 1-0-2, Hayden Gauna 3-0-6, Kiera Leal 1-0-3, Ava Simpson 2-0-5, Ema Simpson 1-0-2, Alessia Menoud 0-0-0, Totals 13-3-31

3-point goals: 2 (Leal 1, A. Simpson 1)

Arcola	12	8	3	18-41
Academy High	6	7	2	8-23

ARCOLA: Ramirez 2-1-5, E. Simpson 4-0-8, Gauna 4-2-10, Leal 2-0-4, Ava Simpson 4-0-10, Shelby Roberts-McGeehon 0-0-0, Kaydence Nichols 2-0-4, Totals 18-3-41

3-point goals: Arcola 2 (A. Simpson 2)

4th Lincoln Prairie Conference girls basketball tournament starts Saturday. Here is the schedule with seed, record if known in parentheses.

### Saturday 1/14/23

Game 1: Argenta-Oreana 41, at Blue Ridge (8, n/a) 25

### Monday 1/16/23 at Cumberland

Game 2: Tri-County 65, Argenta-Oreana 10

Game 3: Okaw Valley 38, Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 33, middle school

Game 4: Cumberland 33, Arcola 30

Game 5: Cerro Gordo/Bement 55, Decatur LSA 27, middle school

### Wednesday 1/18/23

Game 6: Argenta-Oreana (9, 2-13) vs. Arcola (4, 15-5)

Game 7: Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond (2, 13-6) vs. Decatur LSA (7, 5-14)

### Thursday 1/19/23

Game 8: Tri-County (1, 16-6) vs. Cumberland (5, 12-8), 6 p.m.

Game 9: Okaw Valley (7, 5-17) vs. Cerro Gordo/Bement (3, 15-6) 7:30 p.m.

### Saturday 1/21/23

Game 10: Loser of game 6 vs. Loser of game 7, 1 p.m., 7th place

Game 11: Winner of game 6 vs. Winner of game 7, 2:30 p.m., 5th place (consolation championship)

Game 12: Loser of game 8 vs. Loser of game 9, 4 p.m., 3rd place

Game 13: Winner of game 8 vs. Winner of game 9, 5:30 p.m., championship

Last year’s title game: Tri-County 48, Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 33



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