

By Pastor Vince Carrig

Sports Writer

Kendall Glidden skied and contorted to the rim for almost half of Dundy County-Stratton's points as his Tigers made the Plainsmen's stay in the playoffs a short one with a 40-28 win Tuesday night (February 23) in McCook.

Somehow held scoreless in the game's third quarter, Glidden (19 points) came from hibernation to pump in a flying one-hander from six feet away and twisted to get the "and one" with a loose ball under the rim in the telling fourth quarter.

In perhaps their poorest shooting performance of the season, Perkins County never led and worked feverishly to grab onto a 28-28, fourth

quarter tie.

The Plainsmen nailed just three of their first 12 shots in the first quarter, but trailed only 10-6 thanks to good defense.

"The Dundy County game was not our best. Sometimes the ball goes through and sometimes it doesn't," Plainsmen Head Coach Shawn Cole said after the game. "I felt we played very good defense the entire game. To hold a team to 28 points halfway through the fourth quarter—that is playing good defense."

That defense, in the form of four Michael York steals and blocked shots from Kye Kurkowski, Josh Sexson and Nick Turner stifled the Tigers' production to just three points in the entire third quarter.

Glidden broke Dundy County-Stratton loose from that 28-28 tie, however, with a two-pivot move under the basket that ended with a scoop layup with under 3:00 left.

Attracting attention under the offensive basket on the Tigers' next trip down the floor, Glidden no-look backhanded a pass across the lane to a sprinting Joe Rettele for a 32-28 lead around the 2:00 mark.

A dry trip down the floor for Perkins County forced it into "the fouling game," which swing forward Jordan Faimon and power forward Willie Matthews happily played, canning five balls in six shots in the final 1.25.

Both teams guarded one another closely, a fact reflected in the low point total.

Each forced the other to probe for an appealing shot by passing the all around the perimeter of the offensive zone.

Michael York suctioned two Tigers guards' dribbles into his own hands and laid them into the hoop as part of the 11 points he scored to lead the Plainsmen.

York indeed tied the score at 28-28 with a step-back jumper 16 feet away from net.

Kye Kurkowski pulled Perkins County to within one point of the lead (26-25) after taking an inbounds pass and flashing a left-to-right move.

The Tigers wagered that committing help to defending Kurkowski would pay off for them. With the ball in the post, the 6-foot-10 senior center often fought off three defenders coming at him, with a guard and a forward crunching down toward him.

Kurkowski led the best of the rest with six points, tied with Faimon, who bagged a three pointer and that trio of fourth quarter free throws.

In a game filled with turnovers on both sides, particularly travelingcalls, secondary scoring came at a high price. Nine players scored four points or less (both teams combined).

Foul calls—ones made and not made—played a role in the game. Plainsmen Josh Sexson and Max Jones had to behave as they picked up a couple of quick ones, as did Dundy County-Stratton's Rettele. Those three kept a low profile through the game, but trouble loomed for York and Tigers guard

Aaron Baney.

York fouled out in the last minute of play.

The Plainsmen concluded the 2009-10 campaign with a winning record of 12-9. "Overall we had a good season," said Coach Cole. "I am proud of each player. They all showed up every day and got better—you could see it in the way we were playing ball at the end of the season. This group of seniors is a special group. I will always remember them," Cole said.

If it soothes the Plainsmen to know that they lost to the eventual winner, then Dundy County-Stratton whipped up some balm for them by busting into the state tournament in Lincoln.

Glidden and Rettele tag-teamed North Platte St. Pat's last Thursday night with 21 and 17, respectively, to launch Dundy County-Stratton out of McCook with a 67-63 win. They met Bayard in Ogallala on Monday, where Glidden unloaded 35 points on the orange-and-black Tigers in a 57-44 victory in the District 6 title game.

Perkins Co. 6 9 8 5—28

D. C.-Stratton 10 13 3 14—40