

Outlaws pack in three games on hardwood

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The boys basketball team packed in three games before taking a few days off for Christmas. Sisters started their week with a 56-32 win on the road against The Dalles on Wednesday, December 21.

The Outlaws drove to The Dalles and played well. Sisters won their games at all three levels. The Outlaws JV 2 posted their first win, the JV 1 team held The Dalles to under 20 points, and the varsity posted a 56-32 victory.

The Outlaws led from the start and extended their lead throughout the game. Coach Rand Runco commented that Keegan Greaney and Jake Larson did an outstanding job on Daytona Murr, who is a very good offensive player that averages over 20 points per game.

Ben Saba played well in his first game as point guard. Saba got the Outlaws into their offense and got the ball to the posts. Ty Horner led the offense with 18 points and Tyler Head added 11. Sisters posts pounded The Dalles on the glass and the Outlaws got a comfortable lead early in the contest. The Dalles made a comeback late in the game, but Sisters held them off and won by a nice margin.

The Outlaws drove home and left immediately the next day for the South Albany tournament. Sisters lost their first game 48-46 in a buzzer-beater against WF West, a team out of Washington.

WF West was a good team, and had a good player in Brandon White, a 6-foot-7-inch point guard. It was a tough loss for the Outlaws, as they led most of the way, and then fell at the very end.

Sisters started off with good looks, and Jack Berg hit some big shots. The Outlaws got the ball inside, forced the WF West defense to collapse, and Berg and Saba hit some tough three-pointers from the perimeter.

The Outlaws played better

on both ends of the court for most of the game, but then West hit a three-pointer and two free throws at the end of regulation to come within three. Sisters missed five free throws in the final quarter and left the window wide open.

Sisters was up by three with nine seconds left on the clock when West sprinted by the Outlaws and threw up a tough three-point shot that fell in.

"It was a crazy play that put us into overtime," said Runco.

Sisters played tough in overtime, and Greaney stole two balls and laid them in to give the Outlaws a lead. Sisters fouled again while driving the ball, and West converted two free throws, and then hit a tough two-point shot to tie it up.

The Outlaws missed a great look and then West came up-court for their final look at the basket. Dakato Hawkins drove to the right baseline, had a tough look, and was still able to hit the jump-shot.

Runco said, "This was a tough game. We played good, but didn't get it done at the end. We missed two wide-open threes, two lay-ups, and three free throws to win it. They just didn't fall. We usually are a very good free-throw-shooting team, but this game we were five-for-fourteen from the line. We feel we did not play with the urgency or energy we played with at The Dalles, and set a goal to improve this the next night."

Due to cancellations from other teams, Sisters was rescheduled and played the South Albany Rebels in their final game of the tourney. The Rebels were 6-1 heading into the game. They have a dynamic team with four very quick guards that shoot the three-point, and they have a small, but very active, post.

"They (South Albany) are a really good team, and we knew we had our hands full," said Runco.

Sisters lost the contest

59-50, but played better ball, exhibited good energy, and battled the entire way.

"It was really a great experience playing against a team with this kind of speed," said Runco. "Summit was the other game that had this type of talent. They started out intensely shooting loads of shots from the perimeter in their drive-and-kick offense. We worked hard to stop penetration and get to shooters. But, with the long boards they beat us to some offensive boards and then hit three-point shots."

Three of the five three-point shots that South Albany hit came in the first quarter off offensive boards. Sisters clamped down in the second quarter on the offensive boards and worked to climb back in. The match-ups were tough for the Outlaws, but they kept after it.

The Rebels continued to penetrate and kick out, and made 10 threes in the game. Sisters hurt them inside when they got the ball there, but they weren't consistent enough to make a dent in their lead until the fourth quarter, when they cut the lead to five points with less than four minutes left in the game.

Sisters stole the ball and had a chance to cut the lead to three, but missed a good look. The Rebels went on to win by nine.

"This was a really competitive game, and we hung in there," said Runco. "We just had too many errors to close the game."

Greaney had 23 points in the contest, and Horner finished with 10. Head and Berg added eight point each.

"I am really proud of the boys' improvement," said Runco. "Each player is improving and our chemistry is coming along. We faced some tough presses and improved so much from a week ago with our press offense. Each team tried, but we forced them to take it off. If we keep up the pace we will be a tough team by



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Tyler Head scores 11 points in the Outlaws' win against The Dalles.

league.

"We really improved with these games against tough opponents. Ty Horner, Tyler Head, Tanner Head and JW Bertagna are becoming a force inside, and we are learning to get the ball inside out. We have a lot of guys in new positions and are just starting to come together offensively. Defensively, we are solid, but still need to step up, and we really need to improve our rebounding to reach our potential."

Sisters had three games at the Seaside Tournament

cancelled and lost out on a home game with Lebanon that was also cancelled. Runco told *The Nugget* he was very proud of the boys and their parents for their flexibility and adjustment to the change in schedules. He also noted athletic director Tim Roth for his help in getting new games scheduled.

Sisters' next games will be at the Sisters Holiday Tournament Wednesday through Friday, December 28-30. The Outlaws open with a game against Baker on December 28 at 7 p.m.

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