

# Sixteen players turn out for girls basketball Veterans anchor basketball squad

By Rongi Yost  
Correspondent

The Lady Outlaws return 10 experienced players to the program, and will add depth with six new additions.

Seniors Alexa Stewart, Sophia Bianchi, Isabelle Spittler, and Sydney Head all return to the guard position, and senior Meaghan Greaney will play down low at post.

Juniors Kaylee Huber and Olivia Hougham will see time as guards, and Rheanna Salisbury, Josie Aylor, and Gracen Sundstrom, also juniors, will play at the post position.

Brittaney Niebergall, the Outlaws' new head coach, is in the process of evaluating her players and their strengths.

Niebergall said, "I am expecting our seniors to step forward and provide the proper leadership for the young, inexperienced team. The girls are working hard, and I get the feeling they really want to improve their individual skills, and also have an impact in the games this year."

Newcomers include Faith

Godfrey, Hallie Schwartz, and Riley Reece Morgan, all junior forwards. Three freshmen, Anya Shockley and Emma Lutz (forwards), and Payden Pederson (guard) are also new additions. As the newbies develop their skills, they will add depth to the squad.

**“I get the feeling they really want to improve their individual skills – Brittaney Niebergall**

Niebergall said, "We are really focusing on trying to improve as a team and as a program. We'd really like to be competitive in each game. We will use our pre-season to evaluate our players and see who is really going to step forward for us, leadership-wise and playing-wise."

The girls basketball program will have both a varsity and a JV squad this year, but all the players will be involved with the varsity team, and be on the bench for varsity games.

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The boys basketball squad is excited about the upcoming season, returning five strong seniors to the hardwood: Brad Eagan, Jack Berg, Ryan Waddell, Jude Carhart and Zach Anderson. All are expected to be big contributors this year.

Eagan played key minutes at the point guard position last year, and has worked hard in the off-season to improve his strength and quickness. Berg is a three-year starter, is a steady player, and can really score points for the team. Coach Rand Runco has hopes that Jack will really step into a leadership role this year.

Runco noted that Waddell is a hard worker, and is expected to be a key player on the boards. Carhart is very quick, and an intense competitor, and coaches are excited to see how he will impact the team.

Anderson returns as a key scorer, and also a big rebounder. Runco stated that Zach has an infectious energy and makes the Outlaws explosive.

Runco said, "We do not have much depth at this

time, but our next players are working hard to create roles for themselves."

Isaiah Chapen, Sam Nickalous, Nate Weber, Brogan Peterson, Connor Linn and Joe Scholl are swing players that are practicing with the varsity, and all are working hard to find roles in the varsity games.

"Each one of these guys has good things to offer and are trying to pick up part of their game," said Runco. "The biggest thing is that they step up their defensive intensity. When that happens I expect our depth will improve."

Runco is excited to be back as varsity coach this season, and told *The Nugget* he is working closely with Coach David Godfrey, who stepped in last year as the varsity coach in Runco's absence.

"David did an outstanding job last year, and we are working together this season," said Runco. "This is going to be an exciting year. We are in a new league (Oregon West Conference), which will be one of the premier basketball leagues in the state. Many of these teams were in our old Capital

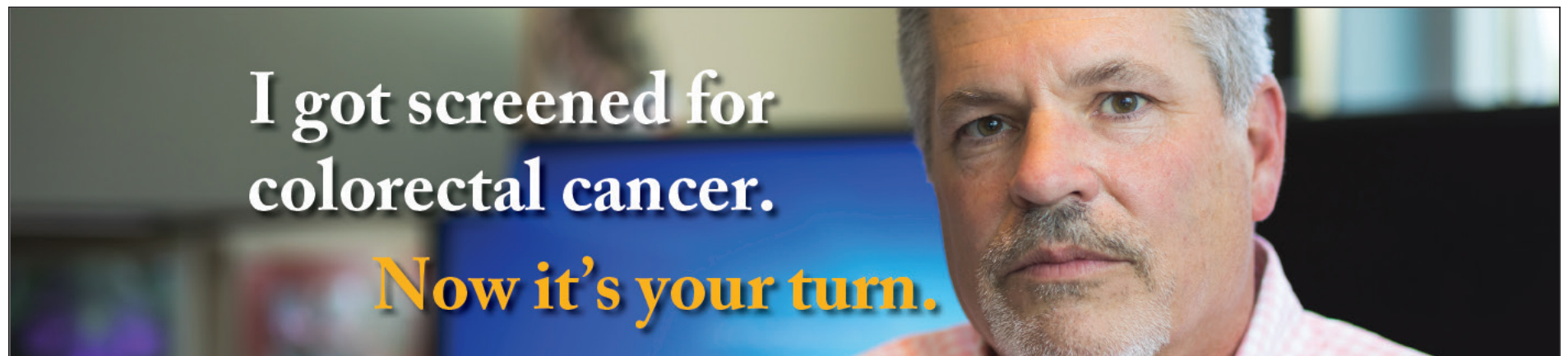
Conference in the past. We will not have a night off this season, and staying healthy and improving will be key. I expect us to be battling for one of the top spots."

The basketball program had a good turnout and will be able to field three teams this year. The Outlaws have a new JV 2 coach, Mike Green, who hails from Lake Tahoe, and Breck Boyd, the new JV 1 coach. Past Outlaws star Josh Reznick will also be joining the staff.

In the Oregon West Conference, Stayton is one of the pre-season favorites, and returns the most players, which include two 6-foot-7-inch posts. Philomath, Woodburn, and Newport will also be tough competition, and Sweet Home and Cascade should also be solid.



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