

# TD ends season with road loss at Hood River

## Coach Cummings has plans in place for productive offseason

■ Ray Rodriguez  
The Dalles Chronicle

The Dalles' first-year coach Greg Cummings said that his first year as varsity head coach of a 5A program was definitely a learning year for him.

Just like an athlete, though, he plans to put in the extra work to grow and develop, so he can be even better for the 2020-2021 season and beyond.

"It takes so much effort, time, dedication, love, compassion, and empathy," Cummings said of his initial campaign. "And also learning about your players. How to get them to buy in to the process of improving, both on the court and off. Winning is hard, like really hard. Even when you have a more talented team."

The Riverhawks finished the season at 8-17 overall and 2-8 in league, which was one win shy of 2018-2019 and tied for the same amount of league victories.

Last year, TD scored 1,174 points and allowed 1,328 in 21 contests, and the group, which had three seniors in Jacob Hernandez, Dalles Seufalemua and Aidan Telles, totaled 1,359 points and gave up 1,571 in 25 tilts.

Cummings said that people ask him if he thinks this season was successful - he has a hard time answering that question because the competitive spirit inside of him, that cares about wins and losses, thinks the team

could have and should have done better.

There is a side that looks at the big picture, however.

"Did the guys learn, did they grow, did they become better people off the floor, did I do everything I knew how in order to win?" Cummings said. "I think the answer is yes; we did have a successful season. I think to measure success based simply on wins and losses is very short-sighted and shallow. Yes, I want to win more than anyone, but there's also lessons to be learned in losing."

Added to his top trio of seniors, Cummings fielded a younger, inexperienced core of two freshmen, three sophomores and three juniors.

For most of them, this was their first taste of extended varsity minutes in the 5A classification.

Cummings also surrounded himself with astute basketball minds in assistants Jim Taylor, Dan Telles and Jordan Rowland.

"I was blessed with really good kids this year, and as a coach, that makes things so much easier," Cummings said. "I was also blessed with a great coaching staff. All three of those guys are more than qualified to be a head coach, and I learned a ton from each of them."

Looking ahead, there are reinforcements coming through the ranks, with an eighth-grade group that has opened eyes in traveling circles, and the freshman team posted a 20-4 record and went 10-0 in league action.

It was the most successful freshman program The Dalles has ever had in the last 10 years.

"Coach Rowland did an outstanding job with our freshman team. They were dynamic and fun to watch



Greg Cummings, middle, goes over strategy during a timeout this season. In his first year as head coach at The Dalles, Cummings finished 8-17 overall, capped by Tuesday's 64-55 loss at Hood River. Ray Rodriguez photo

and very talented. They brought the energy every game," Cummings said. "Our incoming eighth grade class is the same way. They are a fun group to watch as well. They have high energy, and they want and desire to be the best."

The season ended Tuesday in Hood River with a 64-55 loss, as the Eagles erased a 43-41 deficit entering the final quarter with a 10-0 spurt in less than a minute and rode that surge to a nine-point win.

The Dalles made 15 field goals, seven 3-pointers, and hit 16 of 22 free throws.

Spencer Taylor totaled 16 points, Styles DeLeon tacked on 13, Hernandez ended the night with 10 in his last high school game, and Seufalemua had five points.

Noah Webster led all scorers with 24 points, Emanuel Romero tallied 12 and Ian Searey dropped 10 points for Hood River, which rattled off 22 field goals, four 3-pointers, and made good on 16 of 28 from the line.

Cummings has already been making moves to ensure that basketball stays in the minds of his players.

His goal is to compete in 30-plus summer league games and have basketball workouts going all spring and summer, and there will be a fall basketball team put together.

In the summer, Cummings hopes to take the varsity players to a team camp at Gonzaga University in Spokane.

"The key to a successful season is preparation," Cummings said. "The average fan doesn't know that in order to see success during the basketball season, you must commit to a very robust offseason schedule. Last year, with me being hired in October, we didn't have time to put together an offseason program. This year will be different."

If anyone would like to donate to the Riverhawks' summer basketball fund, email gcumings11@gmail.com.

## TD HOOPS Team is focused on the postseason

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advantage, and then flipped the switch in the second half with runs of 20-6 and 15-6 to notch their 56-25 win.

Coddling (10 points), Belanger (eight), Miller (five), Hoylman (four) and both Guzman and I'aulualo tacked on two points apiece to lead the second-half surge.

All told, TD drained 21 field goals, four 3-pointers, and made good on 10 of 22 from the free throw line.

Coddling and Hoylman

each posted a team-high 12 points, Belanger finished with 11, Miller added nine, I'aulualo and Guzman scored two points each.

Sophomore guard Gus Decker dropped five points on her two field goals.

Grace Meyers notched nine points and Kaitlyn McNerney chipped in eight points to lead the Eagles,

who ended up hitting 10 field goals, two from long range, and made 3 of 11 free throws.

By Sunday, Stevens and his players will know where their next game is going to be played.

With his veteran group and their determination to get back to winning playoff games, there is more of a sense of urgency to keep

the train moving as far as it can; hopefully, it ends on the campus of Oregon State University.

"That's the goal right now, is getting this next game and getting to Corvallis. If we can get this next game and get to Corvallis, then anything is possible," Stevens said. "They are really hoping for a Silverton matchup and

however we can get that, will be fine. La Salle Prep is going to be tough for anyone to beat, 5A or 6A, and they are the favorites to win the championship and they should be. Silverton is ranked No. 1 right now, so we have played them once and we some familiarity with them and we feel confident if we get that draw again."

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