

Sports

Lions break into State's top ten with 11-3 start

JENNIFER SITTON

Staff Reporter

After battling illness, snow and two of the top four teams in the state, the Girls' Varsity Basketball Team finished its preseason games with a 6-2 record. Their efforts led the Lions to a sixth place state ranking according to the 6A Girl's Basketball Coach's Poll and a second place ranking in the Three Rivers League behind the number one team in the state, Oregon City.

After losing to the Pioneers and beating Milwaukie by about the same margin of points, the team played Lakeridge on Jan. 13 battling through illness to win, 53-46. West Linn was ahead at one point by as much as 12 points. The following Friday,

the team beat Lake Oswego, 49-39. The Lions are currently 8-2 in league play.

On Jan. 2, the Lions faced the Clackamas Cavaliers, a team that has given the

them considerable trouble in past years and matches up very well with the Lions,

said.

Luckily, the snow melted in time for the team's Canby Holiday Tournament on Dec. 29. They claimed an eight point win over Lincoln, which moved them into position to play Canby. After being down by as many as 15 points, twice throughout the game, the Lions battled back to win 68-66 in the final 30 seconds.

Winning these two games set them up to meet the Clackamas Cavaliers in the championship game, but because they were going to play them in the league opener the following Saturday, both coaches elected to not play the game. Instead, the Lions played the Sheldon Irish, another close game that the Lions won 49-45.

"It was pretty tough not playing for a week straight, but most of the teams in the Portland area were facing the same problems, so we were really excited that we were able to recover quickly and beat a team like Sheldon who were fresh and didn't have to deal with snow," Sachie Hopkins, senior guard, said.

Even with the lack of practices, the team came out strong and played well in the tournament.

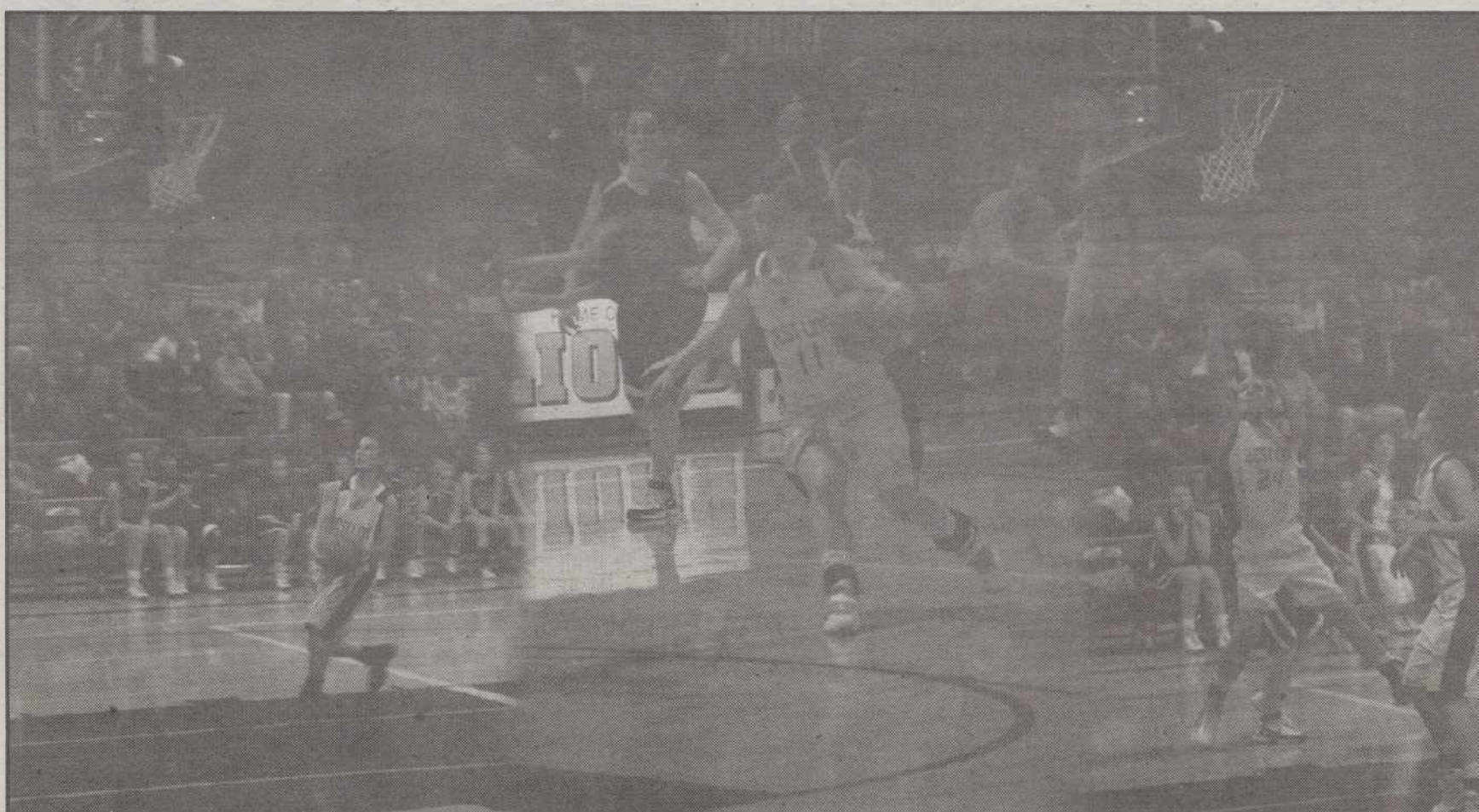
"I thought the Lions played some of their best basketball to date during the Canby tournament. After missing a number of practices due to the weather, they did a nice job of coming together and securing three wins against three very good teams, all of which will be playoff teams in their leagues," Lee said. "They showed grit, determination and focus in this tough tournament which found the Lions playing three games in 48 hours; two of which were on the same day."

The Lions will look to finish in the top four positions in the Three Rivers League in order to secure a position in the playoffs.

"I believe that if we continue to stay focused and push ourselves to get better each day, we'll set ourselves up for postseason play," Lee said.

Playoffs loom in the future and the Lions hope to make it further this year than last, when they lost in the first round to Sheldon.

"Our team has really great chemistry this year, which will help us to hopefully go far in playoffs," Amy Christensen, sophomore point guard, said.



Elise Miller, sophomore, goes up for a lay-up, Brittany May, senior, dribbles past a Lake Oswego player and Morgan Joscelyn, junior, takes the ball to the basket during the team's Jan. 16 game against Lake Oswego. The Lions beat the Lakers 49-39 to secure their second place standing in the TRL.

Photos by Zack Mueller

Lions rebound strong from tough loss

MAX HAYS

Staff Reporter

The Boys' Varsity Basketball Team entered league play with a 4-3 record that included strong performances in wins against Tualatin and McMinnville. Entering Three Rivers League play against Oregon City, Eric Viuhkola, head coach, believed that Lake Oswego was the favorite to win league, but for the most part TRL was wide open and that the Lions would be fighting for a playoff spot.

The first game in league against Oregon City turned out to be a disappointment, with the Lions losing 48-77 in a weak effort against a very young Oregon City team. The Lions struggled on offense, scoring only 48 points, the least amount of points they have scored so far this season. Defense was also a challenge with the Lions surrendering 77 points and letting three opponents finish in double digit points.

"We need to find other ways to get the job done when shots aren't falling for us. We need to play smart and find different ways to score," Viuhkola said about the team's adversity.

The next game against Milwaukie went much better with the Lions winning in blowout fashion, 65-32 against a Mustang team that they were expected to beat. Michael Underriner, junior, lead the way with 16 points and was followed closely by Johnel Gray, senior, with 12 points. But defense was the story



Jeffrey Bush, junior, goes for a layup during the Lions close 49-52 loss to Lake Oswego. The Lions started the season well winning 4-3 non-league games and have gone 2-2 in league.

Photo by William Thompson

of this game, with the Lions giving up a season low 32 points.

One of the best efforts of the season thus far came against Lake Oswego when the game came down to the last second. The team made a valiant effort, but in the end came up short against one of the best teams in the TRL losing 49-52. Gray led the Lions with 20 points, and went five of six from beyond the three point arc, his only miss coming at the buzzer to tie the game.

"I was very proud of our effort against LO, we were competitive and played hard," Viuhkola said.

The team followed the

strong effort against Lake Oswego with four straight wins against Putnam, 81-78, Clackamas, 82-70, a non-league win against West Salem, 77-63, a huge blowout against Milwaukie, 70-39, and took revenge against Oregon City, winning 67-53. The Lions are currently third in the TRL with a 5-2 in league record.

According to Viuhkola, if the team continues to compete and play high percentage basketball while making the other team take low percentage shots, they will be able to succeed in league and accomplish their goal of making playoffs.

according to head coach Glen Lee. The Lions led the entire game, but let down a bit in the fourth quarter, which gave the Cavaliers a chance to come back. In the end, the Lions pulled off a win at Clackamas for the first time in three years.

"I thought the team did a nice job of following the game plan for Clackamas. We were focused and dialed in to what they were trying to accomplish and this helped us secure an important win on the road," Lee said.

The Lions beat Beaverton in their first official non-league game 56-49, and then took on the defending state champions, the Southridge Skyhawks. After coming out flat, the team came together and battled back to lose a close contest 48-57. The team was set to play Westview the following Tuesday, but a record-breaking amount of snow, ice and cold temperatures caused huge problems for all teams in the Portland-Metro area.

"We missed three games during the layoff and only practiced four times during the two weeks off. It was like starting the season over again in November. The team was pretty winded when we returned but seemed to bounce back pretty quickly," Lee said.

With a tournament just around the corner, the team had to work hard to get back into basketball shape and mindset.

"The snow was definitely a setback and we had some tough practices before the Canby tournament to get back in shape," Andrea Maleike, sophomore guard,