

Softball Team overcomes slow start to advance to playoffs

■ TY CLARKE

Staff Reporter

Although the Softball Team started off on a cold streak, dropping four out of its first five league games, the Lions managed to rebound and won seven out of their final eleven games.

"We need to be better than three opponents in our league when the season is over," Jamie LeVeque, head coach, said. "I think we are, but we need to win on the field to claim this."

In the end, the Lions were better than not three, but four teams. They ended 8-8 in the Three Rivers League. Oregon City took the league, with a 15-3 record. Lakeridge ended up in second, at 13-5, including a 20-0 beat down of Lake Oswego.

Starting off league play on April 1, the Lions defeated Cavaliers of Clackamas 8-5. The team then dropped the

next four games. To the Lake Oswego, 6-3; to Rex Putnam, 12-2; shut out by Oregon City, losing by seven; and then lost a close one to 9-8 to Lakeridge. After a day of rest, the Lions righted the ship defeating Milwaukie, 5-1.

Even though the Lions had some tough losses early, Leveque maintained a positive attitude.

"Winning and losing softball games does not define the kind of people we are working with. They will win and lose with grace and respect for each other and opponents," he said. "In fact, their true character has been revealed in the wake of losing games. And it has not wavered from the first day. They still come to work each day and compete to win."

In a rematch against Clackamas on April 17, the Cavaliers avenged their early

season defeat, shutting out the Lions 3-0. The team did not stay down for long, though. Three days later, the Lions

were the ones who avenged a loss.

They beat the LO Lakers in a thrilling game that went into 11 innings, 4-3.

West Linn faced



Lauren Pyrch, sophomore, readies herself for a pitch in a softball game against Lakeridge on April 29. The Lions bounced back from a slow early season start, winning six out of the last ten games.

Photo by Zack Mueller

Putnam in a league battle on April 22 with a very strong showing all around, shutting them out 7-0. The team then lost in a close 4-3 defeat to the

OC Pioneers. Facing league powerhouse Lakeridge, who was 10-1 going into the game, West Linn pulled off a 3-2 upset.

Fresh on that win, the Lions looked to achieve a .500 record if they won against bottom dweller Milwaukie. Despite their 1-10 league record at the time, the Mustangs gave the Lions all they could handle. The Lions beat the Mustangs in eight innings, 8-4 and catapulted into the tie for third place.

Unfortunately, the Lions wouldn't stay at .500 for long. On May 4, the Lions faced off against Clackamas in a battle for complete ownership of third place in league. In a wet and rainy game, the Lions fell to the Cavaliers, 4-7.

The Lions then had consecutive games against the first and second team in league. The team came out

victorious in a low scoring affair against Oregon City on May 11, 1-0. It was a great win for the Lions against a state title contender. Unfortunately, West Linn could not topple both teams in less than a week. Lakeridge defeated the Lions, 8-5.

The Lions had their final game on April 18 with playoff chances in the balance. A win guaranteed a spot in the playoffs while a loss left the Lions on the outside looking in. Although the team was facing the last place Milwaukie, the Lions did not take them lightly. The Lions took home a victory, 3-1, and more importantly, a playoff spot.

The first playoff game for the Lions was on May 21 against Barlow High School, the Lions were not able to top Barlow, losing by a score of 6-3.

Seniors dominate Tennis Districts, advance to semifinals at State

■ ETA SANTORO

Staff Reporter

The Boys' Varsity Team began the season with high expectations after returning 10 starting players, including eight seniors. The team lived up to those expectations going undefeated in league to claim their second consecutive Three Rivers League title and sending two doubles teams to State.

"This team is the most united team I have ever coached. It is senior-dominated, but we've got freshmen and sophomore talent," Ward Lewis, Boys' Varsity coach, said. Lewis has been the boys' tennis coach for 26 years.

At the TRL District tournament, Grant Beehler, Mark Chipperfield, Ryan Nesbit and Blake Beehler, seniors, finished

an extremely successful season, winning multiple matches before falling just short of qualifying for State. Christopher Erbin and Miles Rifkin, seniors, cruised to their fourth consecutive District title only dropping nine games in five matches.

The team's biggest challenge came in the semifinals when they knocked off teammates Samuel Tingey and Brett Wright, seniors. Tingey and Wright took home fourth place after winning a three set thriller over Lake Oswego 4-6, 6-3, 6-1. With the win, the team qualified for the State Tournament on May 21 at West Hills Tennis Club.

"We had to work hard all season," Wright said. "We had to overcome a lot of things but it was worth it in

the end."

During the State Tournament, Erbin and Rifkin received the number two seed, giving them a bye in the first round and some favorable matchups. Erbin and Rifkin cruised into the semifinals before losing to Jesuit (5)6-7, 6-4, 7-5.

The Girls' Varsity Team also performed well during the season, finishing with a 12-3 record good enough for second place in the TRL. This season they were directed by a new coach, Ke Ounaphom, originally a coach from Clackamas.

At the District Tournament, the team sent five players to State. Danika Tanning, senior, took second place in singles falling in a marathon three setter to Lakeridge 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

"I was pretty

disappointed with losing, but I played really well and it was a long match," Tanning said.

In doubles, Kellie Kawasaki, senior, and Natalie Smith, sophomore, cruised through to the championship match where they almost pulled off the upset of the tournament before losing to Lake Oswego 6-1, 3-6, 6-1. Although they came up short, Kawasaki and Smith advanced to State feeling confident, as Lake Oswego is ranked third in state.

The biggest surprise of the tournament came when the second doubles team of Catherine Broadhurst and Taylor Coronel, seniors, unexpectedly qualified for State after upsetting Lakeridge in the quarterfinals, winning 6-1,

6-3. Their tournament ended when they were knocked out by teammates Kawasaki and Smith in the semifinals.

"I think our season went really well! We had our new coach and an awesome team. We also did very well at Districts," Coronel said. "This season was my best season, I had so much fun."

The girls began their State tournament on May 21 at Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation Center. Tanning received the number six seed in the tournament and advanced all the way to the semifinals before falling to the eventual State Champion. Kawasaki and Smith lost in the second round to number two seeded Lincoln, while Broadhurst and Coronel failed to make it out of the first round, falling to West Salem.



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