

Sports

Varsity Boys' Basketball Team plans to put pressure on opponents

JENNIFER SITTON & SEAN PEBLER

The Varsity Boys' Basketball Team plans to play a very fast paced game that will include full court pressing and making

opponents play its style. Coming off a 16-7 season in which they placed second in the Three Rivers League, the team hopes to improve

throughout the season as much as they did last year, if not more.

"We play really fast and shoot the ball well," Eric

Viuhkola, head coach, said. "We will press and run the majority of games."

A big difference between last year's team and this year's is the loss of Johnel Gray, 2009 Three Rivers League Player of the Year, but according to Viuhkola, other players have stepped up greatly to fill those shoes. Many players have been working hard in the off-season to prepare for this season, notably, senior Jeffrey Bush. According to Viuhkola, he has never had a player improve so much from one season to the next.

"I just hope to help my team win a lot of games this year and advance deep into the playoffs," Bush said. The lions also return senior Michael Underriner, the team's leading scorer and rebounder. Underriner was on the TRL second team all league last year.

Zachary Valentine, senior, has also shown great improvement and will be a great asset to the team this season. Freshman transfer, Michael Hauser, has also been a really nice addition, according to Viuhkola.

"(Football playoffs) always makes it kind of tough," Viuhkola said. The playoffs delayed the official determination of teams early in the season. A few spots were saved specifically for certain individuals, while others competed in a two day tryout for their spot on a team. In some cases, there were two spots saved for three football players and those who proved themselves during those tryout days were given the opportunity to play.

The team is loaded with seniors this year, but according to Viuhkola, that doesn't seem to have that great of an impact on the team. "We practice a lot harder and kids are a lot more in tune with what we want to do," Viuhkola said, but he couldn't say for sure if that was due to the maturity of numerous seniors or just the makeup of this year's team.

"We're playing perennially state tournament type teams," Viuhkola said of the team's preseason schedule, which includes Wilson, McKay, Grant and Barlow.

"We have the makings of a really good team. We want to make teams play our style."

I'd like to improve as much this year as we did last year," Viuhkola said. "I believe we're going to be good."

The Lions lost to Wilson 65-71 in season opener. Three days later, the Lions defeated McKay 78-57 with 25 points from Bush. On Dec. 8, the Lions gained their second win of the season by defeating Grant, 75-57 off of 22 points from Bush and 20 points from Underriner.

Krellwitz named TRL Offensive Player of the Year



Photo by Tracie Krellwitz, Stop Action Memories

Keaton Hedman, junior, runs the ball against Westview during the Lions' second round playoff win. They came back from a 28-9 deficit to score in the final minutes of the game, winning 46-34.

The Lions began their playoff run against Gresham winning 31-28. In their final game of the season against West Salem, enthusiasm was high as this was the first time WL had advanced to the quarterfinals since 1998. The Lions lost 20-41.

Three Rivers League Honors

Offensive Player of the Year: Logan Krellwitz

First Team Offense: Seniors Michael Fay (wide receiver), Brandon Thomas (tackle), Krellwitz (quarterback). Juniors Connor Kelley (wide receiver) and Eric Pitassi (guard)

Second Team Offense: Senior Michael MacClanathan (tight end) and junior Keaton Hedman (running back)

Honorable Mention Offense: Seniors Seth Wegener (tackle), Kyle Merriam (wide receiver), Alec Grimmer (kicker), Mason Haye (tight end); junior Jake Kelley (center); sophomore Mason Finnerty (running back); and freshman Wyatt Houston (running back)

First Team Defense: Seniors Seth Wegener (line), Mason Haye (inside linebacker), Michael MacClanathan (outside linebacker), Tony Engel (cornerback) and Ethan Bays (safety)

Second Team Defense: Seniors Logan Krellwitz (safety) and Michael MacClanathan (punter), and junior Kaden Staskiewicz (line)



Sitton's Sports Notes

DEAR WEST LINN: KEEP UP THE SPIRIT!

Bringing back the roar. As good as gold. Sink LO. We are West Linn. Beat OC.

Take a look around on any given Friday and you will find numerous spirit shirts adorning both students and staff. School spirit has been at an all-time high this fall. Whether that's due to Lou Bailey's enthusiasm or this year's ASB or our incredible fall sports teams, everyone seems to be involved and excited for every game this fall.

Maybe it's because I'm a junior and my classmates are very involved in athletics, but I can't help but notice students discussing in the hallways and in classes about upcoming games and opposing teams.

And it's not just football that's drawing all the attention

this year. Yes, attendance at football games has been high and most people don their spirit shirts on Fridays, but people seemed to follow every team into playoffs this year. The volleyball playoff game

was watched by an immense crowd of students as was the girls' soccer game two hours before that.

I recently attended the Varsity Girls' Soccer playoff game at Jesuit High School.



Photo by Mark Poppert

WLHS students cheer on the football team at one of their home games. Student spirit has been at an all time high this year for all sports, including football.

I was pleased to see that the WLHS student fans greatly outnumbered the Jesuit fans, at their home field! Granted, their volleyball team was playing in the State championship match later that night, but it was still quite exciting.

Football, volleyball, boys' soccer, girls' soccer, boys' and girls' cross country: all made it to playoffs and all enjoyed huge support from fans. But what happens when the crisp fall air dissipates and students are greeted with dark, bitter, cold evenings? Is watching a game in a gym less exciting than watching a game on a field?

As we make the transition from fall to winter sports, let's keep the spirit going. Our winter sports teams and athletes are just as good and

just as talented as the ones in the fall. They went to all the football games, all the soccer and volleyball games and cheered for their cross country runners.

Now it's time to see what WL students are really made of. Will we sit at home huddled in blankets, watching tv, or will we venture out to cheer on our winter athletes? Can we keep up the reputation we are slowly building? I challenge all WL students to keep the spirit alive through winter and even through spring. Can we have equal attendance at boys' basketball, boys' soccer, girls' basketball and girls' soccer? Yes, WL we can. We're as good as gold. We brought back the roar; don't let it fade into the chilly winter night.