

Early success for Boys' Basketball Team inspires players

SEAN PEBLER

Hard work in the off season has been a key to the success of the Varsity Boys' Basketball Team, according to head coach Eric Viuhkola. The Lions are off to a good start this season, winning 10 of their first 14 games.

"We played 30 games in the summer and we had workouts in the summer and fall. I feel like the kids have put a lot of work in," Viuhkola said.

A large part of their early success has come from strong leadership from seniors on the team.

"We have two team captains, Jeff Bush and Michael Underriner. They've done a really good job being vocal leaders as well as leaders by example," Viuhkola said. Bush and Underriner have been leading scorers on the team, and both were named to the 2009 Medford Basketball Classic All Tournament Team over winter break.

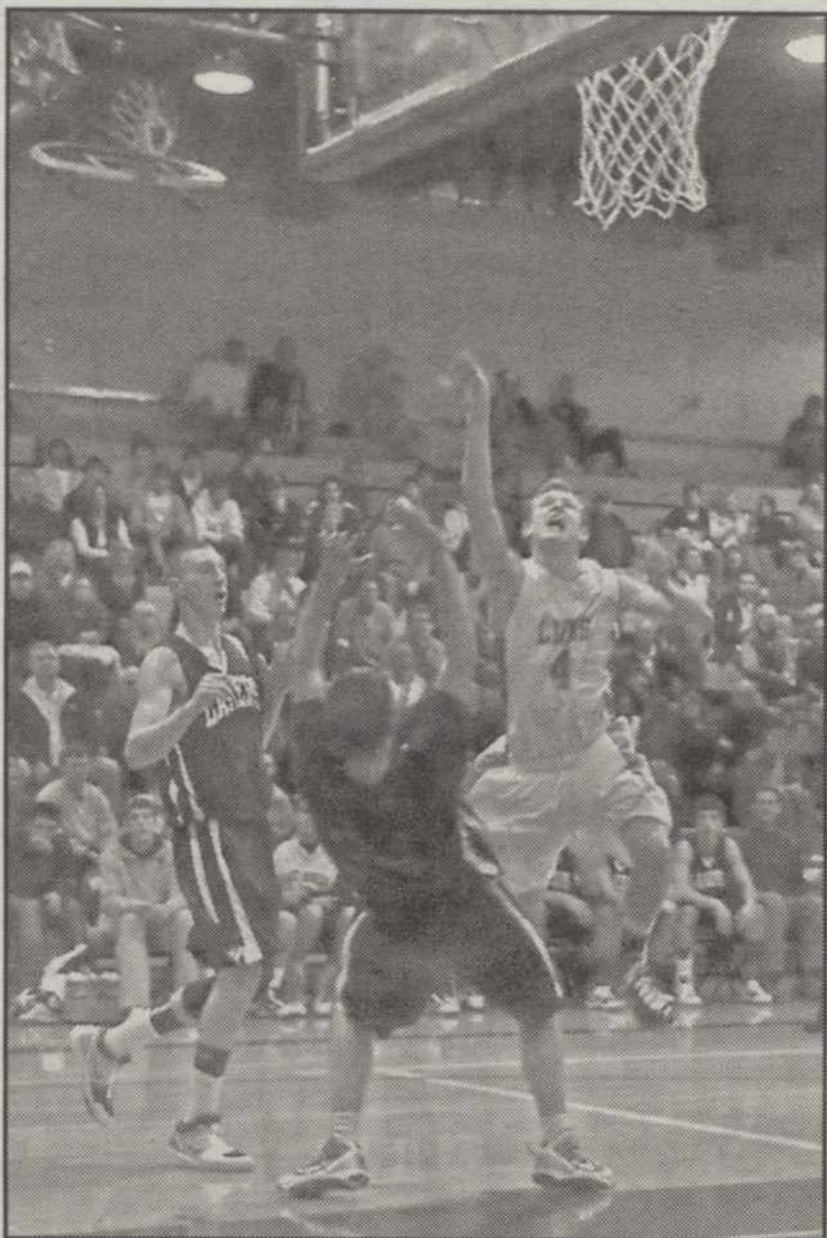


Photo by Mark Poppert
Michael Fay, senior, shoots the ball against Lake Oswego in a league game on Jan. 15. The game resulted in a loss for the Lions, 63-41, and moved them to 1-2 in league play.

Although losing their first game to Wilson, the Lions rebounded to win their next six. With a tough league-opening loss to Milwaukie, 63-45, their record moved to 9-2 in non-league play and 0-1 in league play.

"We started off pretty strong but we lost a tough one to Milwaukie. We need to recuperate against Lakeridge and get back on track," Riley Wilkerson, junior, said. "We don't have much size, but

we run a lot more than most teams we play."

After losing to Milwaukie the Lions improved their league record by beating the Lakeridge Pacers, 82-61.

A pleasant surprise for the Lions has been Michael Hauser, freshman, who has stepped up to play some Varsity minutes.

"At first I had butterflies but then I knew my teammates and coaches believed in me and I felt better," Hauser said.

If the Lions want to make it to the State tournament they will need to play strongly in the coming weeks against

league opponents. They are currently in fifth place in the Three Rivers League and are looking to improve their league record in order to make it to the State playoffs. Lake Oswego sits at second in the TRL after beating the Lions, 63-41, and has only been beaten by first place league opponent Clackamas.

"We're going to be really competitive in the TRL this year. I believe it's one of the best leagues in the state and wherever we end up I hope we put ourselves in a good spot to make the (State) tournament," Viuhkola said.

Snowboard Team finally ready to hit the slopes

MARSHALL MILLER

After having trouble starting out this season due to lack of snow, the Snowboard Team is eager to start shralping (to 'rip,' 'shred,' or 'tear' something up. Being very good at something). The first competition that was supposed to be a rail jam on Jan. 9 at Ski Bowl was canceled due to rain.

Rail jams involve riders using different variations and methods of sliding across rails and boxes. The term most snowboarders use to describe this is "jibbing." Mt. Hood's weather this season has been inconsistent. More snow is in the forecast.

A new factor for the team this year is that there are a lot of new riders who haven't been in a competitive environment before.

"With the talent we will have a great season and for sure will take the win in a lot of competitions," Rob Miller, assistant head coach, said. Miller expects the juniors to step up this season. Juniors to look for this season include Joshua Gertlar, Kyle Holmes, Trevor Harris and Jacob Bietschek.

"They have been through it a few times and know what's going on. Though there are a few freshmen who will give them a run for their money," Miller said.

Freshmen talent includes Kevin Holmes and Adam Kays. At tryouts, Holmes nearly landed a 900 which

calculates to two-and-a-half rotations in the air. For a freshman, this is a pretty big deal. Kays, in the past few years, has competed at a national level for snowboarding. Events in which the team will excel include slope style and pipe.

"For WL, we have a bunch of park rats. Kids that love hucking (attempting difficult tricks) themselves," Miller

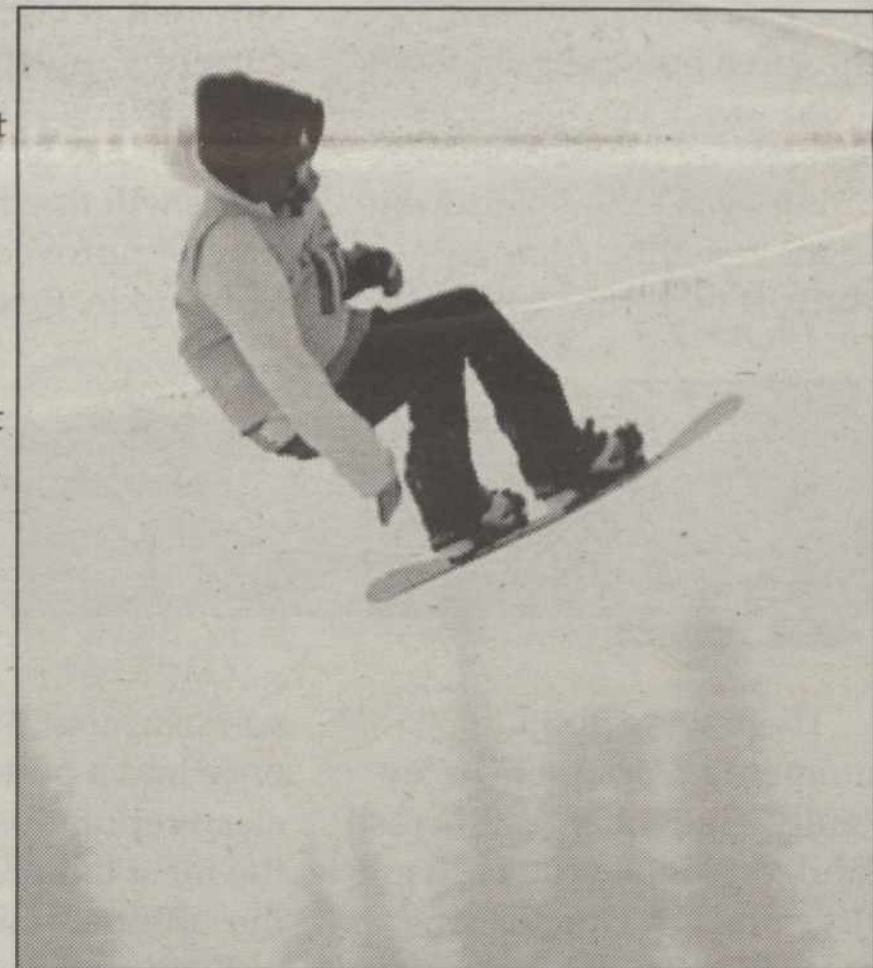


Photo by John Gertlar
Kevin Holmes, freshman, attempts a backside 1080 in a slope style competition at Mt. Hood Meadows on Jan. 16. Holmes placed first in the competition and is expected to be a top contender at State.

said. The team travels an hour and a half to Mt. Hood Meadows on Wednesday nights to train. The coaching staff also includes Graham Peterson, Dan Byer and Ryan Stephens.

The first competition took place at Mt. Hood Meadows on Jan. 16. It was a slope style event and Kevin Holmes took the win. He landed a 360 degree spin to the left with a tail grab, then he did another 360 to right. Finally he tried a 1080 which is three full rotations, slipping but still winning. A 1080 is a trick that most professionals try in their competitions. Kyle Holmes came in 4th place, helping West Linn to take first in the competition. The team has competitions every Saturday.

Ski Team battles weather conditions for first place finishes early in season

DRAKE EDWARDS

For many skiers, the post-holiday season on the mountain means only one thing: competition. For the Ski Team, competition means success.

The season began with a first place finish for the Boys' and Girls' Varsity teams, and a third place finish for the Boys' Junior Varsity team. The Varsity team was led by Alec Ramsey, junior, who came in first place with a combined time of only one minute, 1.31 seconds.



Photo courtesy of Emily McNabb
Alec Ramsey, junior, hits a gate in the slalom course at Mt. Hood Meadows. Ramsey helped lead the Boy's Varsity Team to a first place finish in both its first and second competition.

McKenzie Burns, junior, came in first for the girls with a combined time of one minute, 3.11 seconds.

The day began with wet snow on the course due to almost a week of rain on Mt. Hood.

"Even though the course started kind of soft, the people who did course maintenance cut it down to

where that wasn't a problem anymore," Ramsey said. Though the quality of the snow wasn't an issue, Burns noticed that there were some icy spots and bumps that were giving some skiers a hard time.

Although the second course wasn't as icy, turns near the end were pretty difficult.

"Some people who were going too fast near the end missed the gates, and had to hike back up to get through them," Ramsey said. Inexperience in icy conditions

and Maddie Martus, junior, stepped up, according to Ramsey.

In their second competition, the Boys' Varsity team took first place again. Ramsey came in second for individuals, but with the low times of AJ Glass, freshmen, Goran Hallum, senior, and Chad Dingle, senior, the total time was enough to give them first place.

The girls finished in third place overall, with the fastest times for the team going to Jackie Steeh, junior, and Emily McNabb, sophomore. Burns was disqualified for one run because she straddled a gate, an unusual turn from her usually fast times. However, that was not the worst thing that happened for her that weekend; she broke her arm at a Western Regional competition the following day.

"This year is going to be a very successful year for both teams," Ramsey said. Even before this race, he was confident that the team would make it into the State competition.

"The only thing that could hurt us would be injuries," Chris Jonsson, junior, said. "There's always a chance of someone getting hurt and not being able to race for the rest of the season. But other than that we should be fine," Jonsson added.

If the skiers manage to stay healthy and excel like they already have this year, they may very well end their season with that State title.

did prove difficult for some of the skiers.

However, the team didn't let conditions get to them.

"There was a lot of support from the whole team, and there was lots of energy from the start," Burns said. On top of the energy, the team's more experienced members such as Sean Campbell, senior