

Addition and subtraction of teams along with new playoff system shake up TRL

TY CLARKE

The new 2010-11 Three Rivers League has new schools and for some teams, a new playoff system. Gone are Rex Putnam and Milwaukie. In came Canby, and in some sports, Grant. These changes were part of an overhaul of leagues all across Oregon. A new playoff and ranking system (the Rating Percentage Index, or RPI) added new ingredients to the fresh season of sports. The RPI system applies to football, boys' soccer, girls' soccer, volleyball, boys' basketball, girls' basketball, baseball and softball.

"The biggest change was not just our league dropping to six teams, but the new OSAA's RPI system," Glen Lee, girls' head basketball coach, said. "Their new system really put the strength of schedule/opponent into play. So West Linn competing in

one of the toughest leagues in the state and our non-league schedule really made a difference on our placement in the post-season."

Boys' head soccer coach Gregory Bean agreed with Lee that the new playoff system made a big difference. It



Photo by Tracey Sitton

Brittany Smith, freshman, attempts a lay up over a defender from Canby, a team that was a newcomer to the Three Rivers League. Adding Canby and Grant along with a new playoff system transformed the league into a more competitive one.

added a ranking system for all of the teams, and ensured that each and every team had a postseason game. Bottom teams in leagues throughout the state now participate in a play-in game to see if they advance to the State Playoffs. Strength of schedule has become a huge part of the ranking system.

"It is rewarding the super conferences, like the Metro League," Bean said.

Consequently, leagues with better teams achieve a higher ranking. The new RPI system has changed the way teams approach preseason and out of league play.

"Preseason games used to be a tune-up," Bean said. "Now, they're a little more important."

Bean said his team plans to take on more challenging preseason games. Next season, included in the Lions' schedule is Sunset, a team that plays in the Metro League.

Both Rex Putnam and Milwaukie were moved down to 5A classification after spending years in 6A. To some, this was a good move for two teams who traditionally have been league bottom feeders in many sports.

"Considering that Milwaukie and Rex Putnam

had struggled for so many years, I thought it was good that they were placed in another classification where they could be a bit more competitive," Lee said.

Canby joined the Three Rivers League with a reputation for being historically good at most sports. It added a new level of challenge for the teams. Along with the Cougars came Grant. Although they didn't join the league in every sport, the team presented another hurdle for TRL teams to clear. For example, in boys' tennis, Grant brought the third ranked singles player in the State from last year. In track and field, head coach Joe Cerny said he knew before the season that the level of difficulty for his team had risen.

"At the start of the season I knew our league that is already very strong just got stronger with the addition of Canby and Grant," Cerny said. "I think the change in league members has made it tougher for us in terms of placing at districts and qualifying for state."

The new addition of the teams has raised the level of competition seemingly across the board. Both Bean and Cerny agreed that the new make-up of the league will improve the teams.

"The changes have been positive," Cerny said. "Better competition makes you better in the long run."

"Historically, the Three Rivers League has been good so I think it will help us in the end," Bean said.

Girls' Tennis Team powers through season matches

DANNY MCGARRY

The Girls' Tennis Team went into Districts with a winning attitude, hoping to gain momentum toward State. Four players that advanced to the State Tournament include Emily Erbin, junior, Natalie Smith, senior, Emily Shea, senior and Mackenzie Coronel, sophomore.

Erbin and Smith, who were seeded first, won every match at Districts, even against their own teammates, Coronel and Shea. The duo took home first place, and hope to continue their success at State. Smith returned to the team this year after tearing her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) last

lucky to make it [to State], but I'm really excited about it," Coronel said. "At State, I guess I'm looking forward to the competition because I know that everyone there is really good, so I have to step up my game."

The state tournament takes place May 19-21 and Ounaphom has high expectations for the team's two doubles teams.

"Win or lose, everyone's putting in 110 percent," Ounaphom said. "We're going to fight for points."

Although the two doubles teams are continuing to State, unfortunately singles player Amanda Wagner, senior, did not.



Photo by Laurel Massaro

Emily Erbin, junior, prepares for the State Meet during a practice on May 18. Erbin and Natalie Smith, senior, faced Lakeridge, scoring 6-4 and 6-0 respectively in the first round of the State tournament. They lost in the quarterfinals to West Salem, 6-1 and 6-1.

season.

"Natalie made a huge comeback after being out last year. Emily also really improved this year," Ke Ounaphom, head coach, said. "Macie and Emily really improved this year because they played year-round tennis."

Coronel and Shea, seeded sixth at Districts, placed third after beating every team except their teammates Erbin and Smith.

"This year, I was really

"Amanda is back this season, and has shown a lot of leadership," Alyssa Heath, junior, said. Wagner was seeded fifth in singles at the District match. According to Coronel, regardless of the team's finishes at Districts or State, they will have improved immensely throughout the season.

"This season was outstanding. Our team became more competitive during our (league) matches and at Districts," Coronel said.

Boys' Lacrosse Team excels after a season against high-caliber competition

JACK LAMMERS

Finding strength for the Boys' Lacrosse Team this season proved to be a great challenge. The season began with tough competition from top teams including Colorado's Highlands High



Photo by Laurel Massaro

Christian Wilson, senior, chases down Lake Oswego's Seth Goddin, junior, in a league battle on May 10. The Lions came away with a victory in an overtime nail-biter, 10-9, completing a three-game winning streak before a final regular season loss to Lakeridge, 5-10.

School and Arizona's Brophy Preparatory School. From there, the team picked up momentum and on May 18, the team won its play-in game for the playoffs against Harney, 17-4. The team continued its success on May 20, defeating Tigard, 11-4, before losing their second round playoff game against Wilsonville 7-8.

"I feel disappointed to go out this way, but hopefully

the young team can build on its mistakes and be successful in later years," Christian Wilson, senior attack, said.

The team experienced many accomplishments this season including the three game winning streak against league opponents Clackamas, 17-3,

one goal, 9-8, and the final game against Wilsonville, the team's perseverance was apparent according to Wilson. However, it was through the addition of tough teams that depth was added to the team's level of focus looking forward to the playoffs according to head coach Mark Flood and members of the team.

"We always play the best teams in Oregon and Washington. We added Arizona and Colorado to that list," Flood said.

What may have been a challenging start led to a confidence of the team in the Three Rivers League, clinching third place despite a final regular season loss to Lakeridge, 10-5.

Another aspect of the team's preparation and conditioning was the dynamic nature of the team's regimen.

"We always pick up new drills and adjust what we do to the kids we have," Flood said. According to Flood, the efficiency was derived from the adaptation of practice to bring out and improve upon the areas of potential.

Although the team didn't make it as far into the playoffs as last season, the program is still growing. With only 10 graduating seniors, they hope to improve even further in the future.

on May 3, Oregon City, 17-1, on May 6 and Lake Oswego, 10-9, on May 10, which was especially memorable according to Christian Wilson, senior.

"The big win against Lake Oswego was a huge confidence booster," Wilson said. "We had a very young team and tried to bring that same intensity like we did against them."

Despite tough losses to Oregon Episcopal School by