

Vernonia HS Winter Sports Report

The Vernonia High School Wrestling and Basketball Teams are having good winter seasons, and all three head coaches have lots of praise for the student athletes who make up their squads.

Wrestling Coach James Brookins is excited about his team this year, and expects to do well when the team heads to the District Tournament on February 20 and 21 in Gervais. "Our team is doing very well and really wrestling fantastic this season," said Brookins. The team has finished first or second at a number of tournaments, and performed exceptionally well at the Northwest Duals and Oregon Wrestling Classic meets.

Coach Brookins noted excellent performances this season by Trevor Gwin, Tyler Owens, returning District Champion Dalton Rumboltz, and Justin Caputo-- who has been wrestling in heavier weight classes this season. Brookins also mentioned Calvin Barnes, who has shown the importance of wrestling all the way through a match, and Freshman Shylo Dooley, who has done well, and who the coaches hope continues to work hard and improve.

Assistant coach Chris Barnes noted this was the toughest group of Vernonia kids he's been around. "They have the best attitude and don't complain about anything." Barnes encourages his wrestlers to keep looking for small improvements. "It's the little accomplishments that matter," he says. Barnes is especially impressed with some of the younger wrestlers on the squad, who are paying their dues right now. He expects the team to be even better in upcoming seasons.

Brookins expects his team to finish the season strong. "I think we can advance a few wrestlers to the State Tournament-- a best case might be as many as six or eight," said Brookins.

The team wrestles at home on Thursday, February 5, and in Scappoose on Saturday, February 7-- if you want to get a look at the team before they head to Districts.

The Boys Varsity Basketball team is having an very good season, including a historic win over Portland Adventist in early January. The team was 6-5 in league play after two tough home losses near the end of January, and with five league games remaining is still working for a high seed in the league playoffs starting February 16.



The Girls Varsity gets some advice from their coach

Coach Ted Aubin mentioned the play of Byron Schorzman-- who has been playing with a broken hand, Cody Eaton-- who has shown a lot of improvement from last year, Blake Moeller-- the teams defensive specialist and Jason Weller and Brandon Gilbertson as highlights. "Everybody has been filling a role for us," said Aubin. "We've struggled offensively at times, but our defence has been keeping us in some games."

Aubin called the win at Portland Adventist-- the first time Vernonia has beaten them in twelve years-- "Momentous!" and said "...it was fun to coach, and a proud moment."

The Junior Varsity Boys, led by coach David Weller are "...really young and inexperienced," according to Aubin. The team is made up of mostly freshmen and sophomores. "They are very athletic and have a lot of potential," said Aubin, who encouraged the team to work hard in the off-season to improve.

The Varsity Girls Basketball Team has made steady improvement over last year and throughout the season. With only two seniors on the squad, but a number of talented underclassman filling key roles, Coach Steve Whiteman has been impressed by his teams' hard work, even though they have only won one game in league play. He noted the scoring, leadership and tough play of seniors Tricia Levenseller and Gillian Cheney, and his starting back court of Katie Wilson and Ivory Garrymore. Garrymore was named to the All Tournament Team at the Christmas tournament the team competed in this year. Whiteman also noted the play of underclassmen Souvanny Miller who has been a real contributor and can play anywhere, Ariel and Megan Rock, who have pushed his back court starters, and post players Bonnie Birkmaier and Adrienne East, who Whiteman says are undersized at their positions, but rarely get out-rebounded.

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"We play in a very tough league, including last year's state champions-- Ranier," said Whiteman. "I think we've turned a corner and are on our way back up."

The Girls Junior Varsity has also been improving and has upped their intensity level as the season has progressed. The team is 3-9 near the end of January. Coach Theresa Williams noted the play of Megan Rock as the teams lead guard," "...who delivers when the heat is on." She also mentioned Mickell Maller and Kim Allen," ... two strong forwards that will be forces to be reckoned with on their way to the varsity level." She also mentioned the aggressive play of Shyla Tungwenuk and the natural instincts of Natalie Wallace, two freshmen guards.

"I see great things in the years to come for this JV team-- they are fighters!" said Williams.



Jason Weller brings the ball upcourt for the loggers

Snow Anyone?

By Brandy Fosdick

If you asked this question in late December, most of the people in Vernonia would probably give you a most definite "NO!" Having seen the most snow here in nearly fifty years, we got a little more than we were asking for when we prayed for a white Christmas.

But even though there were a few rough patches with the long power outages, one on Christmas day, and the threat of flooding afterwards, people still had a lot of fun. Kids from both inside and outside the city limits were found competing for the best sledding hills. And I, myself, got in plenty of fun snowball fights before the snow got too icy. People in town were able to walk downtown and enjoy the beauty, many of them taking pictures on their way. Everywhere you looked in December, there were snowmen, three-foot icicles, and mountains of ice on the street corners from the plow. Our town really did look like a winter wonderland, with everything covered, at some point, in at least two feet of snow.

...Although a lot of people didn't get to see much of it. Many of them just bundled themselves up inside, next to the wood stove, not wanting to risk it out in the treacherous ice and slush-- conditions which caused many wrecks to line our highway. Fortunately, if you were stuck, you weren't stuck for long. There were dozens of people seen stopping and helping pull others out of the ditch, or, if their car was too far down, helping them to safety. Many thanks to those good Samaritans, and all the rest of the people who helped run the shelters and who spent a good deal of time out in the cold restoring our power or making our roads drivable.

Well, that's most of the good and the bad-- the good probably outweighing the bad by just a little to make it all worth it. We can all smile-- other than one basement I heard about, we didn't flood. All our stuff in our schools has been put back in the cupboards again, and with good weather, the sandbags should be returned to storage again soon. And, to top it all off, we did get our white Christmas, even if it was a bit whiter than we had in mind.

Brandy Fosdick is a sixteen-year-old sophomore journalism student at Vernonia High School. When not writing for The Timberline and Vernonia's Voice, Brandy enjoys reading and art-- mostly drawing people.

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