

VHS Winter Sports Report

Wrestling- This is supposed to be a rebuilding year for the Loggers, but first year head coach Chris Barnes and assistant coach Tylor Owen are very pleased with what their team has accomplished so far this season.

After graduating a great class of wrestlers last season, the Loggers have a few returning wrestlers with varsity experience and a lot of new wrestlers to the program. With so many new faces Barnes and Owen have focused on teaching fundamentals early this season. Now, midway through, the team is starting to gel, all the hours of practice and learning are starting to kick in. The Loggers are showing determination individually and getting results as a team.

"One of the things we really try to focus on is not quitting," says Barnes. "That's what this sport is, just not giving up."

At the Clatskanie Winter Classic on December 29 the Loggers finished a respectable third out of eight teams

Barnes was especially impressed with a couple of third place finishes from his squad at Clatskanie-Bridger Steward at 160 and Damian Young at 138. "Bridger has struggled mentally but at Clatskanie it really came together for him," said Barnes. "He pinned every opponent he beat. He really stepped up and did what we know he can do." Barnes noted that "...nobody works harder than Damian Young. He just never quits."



Dawson Shay won first place at 182 and was named Outstanding Wrestler at the Clatskanie Winter Classic.

Also at Clatskanie, Vardan Grigoryan took third place at 126 and T John Wolf took second place at 195. Jason Bouslaugh took fourth at 132. All three are first year wrestlers in the Vernonia program.

Especially of note at Clatskanie, were two other new wrestlers for the Loggers. Sophomore Zane Green defeated his brother, freshman David Kovelda for the championship at 152. "They are both such tremendous athletes," said Barnes about the brothers who are new to the Vernonia School District this year. Both have previous freestyle wrestling experience.

Barnes says he has been pleased with the partnership he has formed with assistant coach Owen, a 2009 graduate of VHS and an extremely accomplished wrestler himself. Owen wrestled for three years in high school, qualifying for the State Tournament and also wrestled freestyle with the Cobra Wrestling Club in Scappoose. Owen represented Oregon and the United States and has traveled to Australia and wrestled against the Japanese National team.

"We have a lot of heart on this team," says Owen. "We don't have a lot of extreme talent, but we have kids who are willing to put out the effort and do what it takes to win."

Not only does Owen bring experience and knowledge, he also provides a good balance to Barnes and his

coaching style. "Tylor brings enthusiasm to our coaching staff, something I don't have," says Barnes. "I am very cut and dried, very mechanical, where Tylor has excitement and natural enthusiasm. He is really good with the kids, very patient, is a good teacher and the kids like him. I think we're a good combination."

Barnes also mentioned how pleased he has been to have help from VHS alumni wrestlers who have been returning to help with practices. Barnes has received assistance from numerous former wrestlers, especially during the holiday break when many stopped by to work out with the team. Barnes mentioned a list of wrestlers who all recently qualified for the State Tournament including Brett Benes, Jake Stevens, Quin Johansen, Calvin Barnes, and Joe Benes. "We're able to bring all these kids from our program, and say to our current kids, 'Look at these guys, they all did what you are doing and they were all super successful. This can be you too, if you do what we teach.' It's really valuable for the team and I appreciate that they come back."

The Loggers were headed to the Bob Bishop Invitational Tournament on January 5, the prestigious Pac Rim Tournament on January 11-12 and the Oregon Classic on January 18-19. They have league meets scheduled at Nestucca on January 24 and at Knappa on January 30 and then a league meet at home on February 7. The Loggers will host the District Meet on February 15-16.

Girls Basketball-The Lady Loggers varsity squad have a record of 5-3 on the season. The team is 3-1 in league play after a dominating 52-23 victory over Neah-Kah-Nie on January 4. The Lady Loggers looked strong in the win, holding to the Pirates to just 4 points for most of the first half.

According to head coach Steve Whiteman, the entire program is having a good year so far and looks to be strong for the next several years. Whiteman says the junior varsity team is the best in the league and Whiteman is pleased with the work of coach Teresa Williams. "Coach Williams is bringing those girls along fast," says Whiteman. "Several of those JV girls will be playing varsity next year," says Whiteman.

Whiteman has a very deep varsity team with a lot of experience and expects the team to continue to

impress as the season moves on. He says VHS should be right in the mix for one of four playoff spots in the Northwest League, battling with Riverdale, Portland Christian and Faith Bible. "We seem to be one of the top four," says Whiteman. "Our girls are playing really well."

In their only other recent competition, the Lady Loggers played an unscheduled game against Portland Lutheran over the holiday break, filling a spot in a holiday tournament. The Lady Loggers won 48-32.

Whiteman says his team is playing a run-and-gun style of play. He says he feels his team is playing some of the best defense in the league and has what he thinks is the best set of starting post players in Cierra Hensen and Stephanie Castro. Their backups, Rowen Cheney, Meagan Sullivan and Silje Jacobsen, are also playing very well.

Maina Martin is the starting point guard and according to Whiteman, is a very special player. She is extremely fast and is always looking to push the team up the court. Sophomore Julie Fletcher is the back up and is the point guard of the future, receiving a lot of praise from Whiteman. On the wings Samantha Lindauer and Samantha Wallace are the starters. Whiteman says both are a joy to coach and both have toughened up their game this season. The backup wings are Riplee Burch, Dezi Roberts and freshman

continued on page 14



Bridger Steward at the Clatskanie Winter Classic. Photo by Mckensie Titus.

against some formidable competition. The highlight of the tournament was Dawson Shay's first place finish at 182. Shay was named Outstanding Wrestler of the tournament for his performance. "Dawson wrestled phenomenally, better than I've ever seen him wrestle before," said Barnes. Shay moved down a weight class for Clatskanie; 182 looks to be his most natural place to wrestle this season.

Schools Update: Building Safety

By Dr. Ken Cox

It is my hope that you have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and have started out the New Year on the right foot. Carol and I were able to spend time with each of our grandchildren and still have some quiet time for ourselves. This is a special time of year for families to get together and make memories.

Unfortunately, just before the holidays a tragic memory unfolded in Connecticut. We watched in horror as the details of this event filled the news and impacted our lives even though we were three thousand miles away. In light of this event and the comments I have received since it happened, I want to share with you what we are doing to ensure the safety of our children while they are at school.

The new school was designed so that the three main doors: the front door, custodial entrance, and gym entrance, are electronic and can be locked remotely. All other doors into the building are to be locked at all times. The only exception to this is that one door leading to the covered play area is opened for recess and then closed again after recess.

Since this incident I have asked the custodial staff to check and make sure that all of the outside doors are locked during the day, with the front door being the only access to the building. We have also made a change asking that ALL visitors check in at the Main Office and NOT go around the corner to the Attendance Office as we did at the start of school. I have also directed all staff to assist in making sure that

continued on page 12

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