

VHS Winter Sports Report

Girls Basketball- Head Coach Steve Whiteman and the Lady Loggers headed into the holiday break with a 7-1 record, all against non-league opponents. The Lady Loggers are ranked 10th in the state in 2A.



Julia Fletcher scores for the Lady Loggers. Photo courtesy of Tracy Easlon.

After winning their first seven games of the season the Lady Loggers lost 74-36 to Damascus Christian in their game on December 22nd. Damascus Christian is the number one ranked team in the state in 1A. Coach Whiteman says the loss taught him and his players some things they needed to work on and came at a good time early in the season. "I wasn't ready and our players weren't ready for that game and now we know what we need to do," said Whiteman.

The Lady Loggers resume play on Friday, January 2nd at Westside Christian and play again on Saturday, January 3rd at home against Southwest Christian. Vernonia opens Northwest League play on Tuesday, January 6 at City Christian and plays at home on Friday, January 8 against Faith Bible.

Whiteman notes that the JV team has also only lost one game so far this season.

The varsity Lady Loggers victories included wins over Jewell and Colton to take the Vernonia Tournament on December 5-6 and a decisive 59-32 win over Santiam, the team that knocked the Lady Loggers out of the

state tournament last season.

Coach Whiteman says he has been especially pleased with the leadership and desire displayed by seniors Julia Fletcher and Meghan Sullivan so far this season. He says Maca Veselkova has been very good as the point guard and is an all around "wonderful" player. He has also been impressed by the front court play and rebounding of Paige Smith. Lisa Paje has shown a "street smart game" and earned a starting spot on the wing.

Whiteman says his second string players, Sara Smith, Maria Alvarez, Jocie Roberts, Peyton Wolf and Megan Ely have all made big contributions and have pushed the starters for playing time. "We have confidence that all our players are good enough to be out there for us," says Whiteman.

Boys Basketball- The Loggers boys entered the holiday break with a 2-6 record. Head coach David Weller's young team has struggled against some tough non-league competition, but have kept most of their games close.

After defeating Portland Lutheran 68-47 on December 13th, Vernonia has lost three straight to



Brett Elliot goes to the hoop for the Loggers. Photo courtesy of Tracy Easlon.

Santiam 60-48, Gervais 70-50 and Damascus Christian 54-51 on December 22nd.

Following the holiday break the Loggers return to action on Friday, January 2nd at Westside Christian and then face Southwest Christian at home on Saturday, January 3rd. The Loggers begin Northwest League play on Tuesday, January 6th versus City Christian and face Faith Bible at home on Friday, January 8th.

According to coach Weller the Loggers' record so far would indicate they are having a tough year, but says his young team is gaining a lot of game situation experience that will be valuable when they start league play. Weller says the coaching staff is still figuring out their rotation and says his players have shown a lot of growth and are learning how to manage games. "They've showed a lot of fight," says Weller.

Weller says his young team is still learning to react on the court. "Sometimes we need to stop thinking and just play," says Weller.

Weller says he has been especially impressed with the play of freshman Clay Sullivan who has been one of the most consistent players so far. "Clay has really stepped up," says Weller. "He always plays hard and makes things happen for us on the court."

Weller says he has also been pleased with the inside game of Gui (Will) Botelho. Weller mentioned the play of Brett Elliot who he says has struggled to find his shot so far this season, but had what was hopefully a breakout game against Damascus Christian. Weller also mentioned Tristan Adams who has remained positive and really stepped up his defensive play. Weller also says Nikita Moskalev has been playing aggressively and even earned a starting spot for one game because of his strong play. "I see the team and each player growing game by game," says

Weller.

Wrestling- Head coach Chris Barnes is pleased overall with the growth and progress of his young team. Several of the more experienced wrestlers has performed well and placed in several tournaments and the younger wrestlers are learning and growing.

Coach Barnes says he is focusing on a lot of fundamentals and skills to build confidence in his squad. "I'm trying to teach them to react and the ability to respond without thinking," says Barnes.

With wrestlers filling out the lower and middle weight classes, the Loggers have the ability to score well in



Daniel Rice goes for the pin.

tournaments, although they are lacking in most of the upper weight groups.

Barnes says junior Jake Harbour, wrestling at 152 and 145, placed third early in the season at a large tournament and just took second at the Clatskanie Tournament on December 27th. Senior Daniel Rice at 138 has wrestled very well for being just a second year wrestler and has two third place finishes. German exchange student Nik Merzadah at 220 has placed in several tournaments including a win at Clatskanie and is winning a lot of matches. Junior Alex West at 152 has also placed in several tournaments and took second at Clatskanie. Andrew Jennings at 126 has also wrestled well and is improving technically.

Young wrestlers who are showing promise include Storm Henson, Noah Rylands, Ian Torres, Kyran Coleman and Mekhi Williams.

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