

VHS Winter Sports Update: Lady Loggers Headed to Pendleton

Girls Basketball - The Vernonia Lady Loggers basketball team extended their season for three more games after a decisive 55-45 win at home over the Weston-McEwen Tiger Scots on Saturday, February 28, in the first round of the state playoffs.

With the win the Lady Loggers earned a trip to Pendleton and the final eight in the state tournament. This is the first time the Lady Loggers have made it to Pendleton in the history of Vernonia High School.



Senior Julia Fletcher helped lead the Lady Loggers into the state playoffs and was named First Team All League.

The Lady Loggers will begin play in Pendleton on Thursday, March 5 when they face Burns at 6:30 PM. Burns played in the Wapiti League where they went 12-0 in league play and finished their season with a 19-8 overall record. They lost in the Wapiti District Championship game to Union 57-36 before defeating Faith Bible 55-42 in the first round of the state playoffs.

For Lady Logger head coach Steve Whiteman and seniors Julia Fletcher and Meghan Sullivan, the

win was especially sweet, as the Lady Loggers had been eliminated from the state playoffs in the two previous years, losing both games at home.

Vernonia struggled early in the contest against Weston-McEwen, trailing at the end of the first quarter, but came roaring back in the second quarter with an 11-0 run and led at half time 27-20. The third quarter was tight and tough as the Tiger Scots fought hard to stay in the game and ended with Vernonia clinging to a 39-35 lead. Vernonia took control in the fourth quarter, hitting some key baskets and free throws, and grabbing clutch rebounds down the stretch to hold on for the win.

The Lady Loggers offense was once again led by point guard Marketa Vesselkova, who continually tested the Tiger Scots defense with drives down the lane, hitting her running jumper and sinking several longer range outside shots. Fletcher also played an important role, helping run the offense and contributing several big baskets. Lisa Paje was also key to the Lady Logger offense and returned from a forearm to the face that knocked her to the floor for several minutes in the fourth quarter to knock down a huge three pointer down the stretch. Paige Smith and Sullivan patrolled the post and played tough defense while making several big baskets. Megan Ely, Jocie Roberts, Sara Smith and Maria Alvarez played key minutes off the bench.

The Lady Loggers advanced to the State playoffs and won the Northwest District Title with a 44-35 win over Faith Bible on Saturday, February 21.

Following the District Championship game against Faith Bible, Northwest League Awards were announced. Meghan Sullivan was named First Team All League and was also named Player of the Year. Julia

Fletcher was also named First Team All League. Marketa Vesselkova was named Second Team All League and Lisa Paje was named Honorable Mention.

Boys Basketball - The Vernonia boys basketball team completed a great season, returning to the state playoffs for the first time in several years as the 16th and final seed in the tournament. The Loggers season ended in the first round when they were eliminated after traveling to Irrigon on Friday, February 27, losing by a score of 97-40. Irrigon was the #1 ranked team in the state in 2A basketball.



Sophomore Brett Elliott was named Second Team All League for the Loggers this season.

The trip to the state playoffs was good experience for head coach David Weller and his young squad, who earned their spot in the state playoffs with a 51-43 win over the Nestucca Bobcats on

Thursday, February 19 in the Northwest District Tournament. The Vernonia Loggers then lost to Knappa 80-68 in the District Championship.

Following the district final Northwest League Awards were announced. Freshman Clay Sullivan was named First Team All League, sophomore Brett Elliot was named Second Team and sophomore Tristan Adams was named Honorable Mention.

Wrestling - The Vernonia Loggers sent five wrestlers to the State Tournament on Friday and Saturday, February 27 and 28.

Andrew Jennings, Daniel Rice, Jake Harbour, Alex West and Niklas Merzadah all earned trips to the state tournament following the District Tournament on February 20-21. Jennings, Harbour, West and Merzadah all finished second at the tournament; Rice finished third but won a wrestle-in match by default over the second place finisher to earn the spot at state. Harbour defended his place at state, winning his wrestle-in challenge with an intense 7-5 overtime victory.

Vernonia finished third in team scoring at the district tournament behind Monroe and Nestucca.

For the Loggers Makhi Williams finished 3rd at 113 and Noah Rylands took 4th at 120. At 126 Jennings won two matches by falls before losing in the finals while Storm Hensen took 5th. Jeffery Goodman finished 6th at 132. Rice had an excellent tournament in a stacked 138 pound bracket pinning three opponents to finish 3rd. Harbour won three of his four matches to earn a spot at state while West won two of his three matches by fall at 152. Merzadah won his first match at 220 before falling in the final.

The Loggers struggled at the State Tournament, with all five wrestlers being eliminated after the first two rounds.

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