

VHS Winter Sports Preview

Boys Basketball – There is a lot of excitement around the Loggers boys basketball program this season. The Loggers look like a legitimate threat to not just win the Northwest League, but earn a trip to Pendleton for the State Tournament, and dare we say it, have a real shot at competing for a state title.

Coach David Weller and assistants Byron Schorzman and Matt Blair are quietly optimistic about the team's chances this season. They return almost all of the starters from last year's team that made it into the

trying to push him to be a more vocal leader as well."

Weller has a group of juniors who have now played together for several years and are maturing into the nucleus of a strong squad. Tristan Adams is a dangerous outside shooter. "He's made a ton of improvement over the last few years," says Weller. "He's become a vocal leader and his defense has really improved. He's much more confident in himself." Brett Elliot is a great all-around athlete, has a good outside shot and isn't afraid to attack the rim. "Brett looks stronger this year," says Weller, "which should help his game." Brett Jones has been a spark off the bench and a stopper on defense. "He's a scrapper, that extra energy guy," says Weller. Luke McCallum has not practiced in preseason due to a wrist injury, but provides depth off the bench in the post. Blake Clark will swing between JV and varsity and is an aggressive backcourt player.

Senior Jared Medearis bulked up in the off season, adding about 30 pounds, and will play point guard, taking some pressure off Sullivan. "He's so darn quick and now with his added strength he's going to be able to get in and finish at the hoop better," says Weller. "He always plays hard, both defensively and offensively."

In addition to all the returning players, Weller has several new players that will compete for time on the court and provide some really good depth. Transfer Robert Conner has been resting an injured ankle. At 6' 6" with blazing fast speed and a good attitude and court leadership, Conner could be an X factor for the team. German exchange student Marc Henke is an extremely talented player who at 6' 2" can play point guard, has a good outside shot, loves to crash the boards and play defense and, Weller says, will probably start for the Loggers. "His

basketball IQ is through the roof," says Weller. Arne Schiemann is another German exchange student who is 6' 9", has good feet for a big man and is slowly getting more comfortable with the speed of the American game. Francesco Milan, the final exchange student on the varsity, is a 6' 3" guard from Italy who sees the floor well, is a good passer and should contribute significant minutes.

"This might be the most talented team we've had since I've been here, and I've been coaching for ten years," says Weller.

The Loggers played Clatskanie on December 2 and will host the Vernonia Tournament on December 4 - 5. They play at home against Oregon Episcopal on December 8, and open Northwest League play at home against Delphian on December 15.

Girls Basketball – The Vernonia Lady Loggers are the defending Northwest League champions and look to be the favorites once again this year. Head Coach Steve Whiteman's teams have actually won the league title three years in a row and are going for the four-peat. During that three year span, Whiteman's teams have gone 65-12 overall, have not lost a league game in two years, and have also not lost a single game at home during the last two seasons.

"We have real high expectations and we have a lot to live up to," says Whiteman. "Our number one goal is to win the league and then go from there."

Whiteman's squad looks deep, mature and talented at all positions and should be a handful for any team they compete against. In the front court, senior



Left: Clay Sullivan
Above: Brett Elliot
Below: Tristan Adams



Above: Paige Smith
Right: Sara Smith



state final 16 before being eliminated by Irrigon. "We're better, we're older, we're more mature," says Weller. "We have a few additions and it looks like it's going to be a fun year. The state championship is a realistic goal for us."

Weller says the team has six or seven players who can go out and score 20 points in any game. While it's good to have so many options, Weller's biggest dilemma is going to be figuring out how to mold the team, get the squad to gel, and keep everyone happy. "The season is going to hinge on how well we come together as a team and how well we relish each other's success," says Weller.

The varsity squad is loaded with talent and experience. Sophomore Clay Sullivan led the team in scoring as the focal point of the offense as a freshman last season and was a contender for Northwest League Player of the Year honors. Sullivan is a complete player, with a good outside shot, the ability to penetrate the lane, is a good rebounder and tough defensive player. "Clay always finds a way to be an effective player," says Weller. "He always plays so hard. Now we're

Paige Smith and Junior Megan Ely provide height and experience. Whiteman says that Ely, at 6' 2" could dominate in the post and Smith shows deceptive speed, quickness and agility. Sophomore Morgan Harral is developing into a very strong post player and is a great young athlete who shows lots of promise.

Senior Sara Smith is a diverse player who can play point guard, play on the wing, and play in the post. "This is her year to shine," says Whiteman. Senior Jocie Roberts is also ready to step into a starting role after seeing time off the bench during the last three years as a varsity player. Junior Payton Wolf is another outstanding athlete who can play the point and do a lot of other things to help the team.

Vivianna Bustamante is a junior transfer student who was a part-time starter at 6A Aloha High School last year and should be a big contributor to the team. Exchange student Leire Valladares is the only foreign player on the varsity and is another solid player who should help the squad.

Rounding out the varsity squad this year are junior Grace Coleman, sophomore Courtney Barklow and freshman Joyce Everett. Whiteman says all three show good potential.

Whiteman notes that the JV squad, coached by Teresa Williams, has had an excellent record over the last three years, and continues to help develop strong talent for the program. In fact, assistant coach Jim Krahn, who has been working with even younger players and plans to put together a tournament team of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders for the second year in a row, says the Lady Loggers look to be well stocked with good players for the next several years. "We have some very

continued on page 13

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