

Sports

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IVHS on track for success



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

IVHS track team works out on the city streets Friday, April 8.

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

The track and field season is in full swing for a young, but hard-working, Illinois Valley High School team.

The Cougars traveled to Sutherlin High School Saturday, April 2 followed by the Brookings-Harbor Rotary Invitational on April 9.

Lady Cougars have only one senior, Kayla Johnson, though she competed in State last season and is already among the top three so far in 3-A district throwing events.

"In discus, [Johnson] is third

best in the district right now and the best in javelin in all of 3-A," said track coach Ray Yarbrough.

According to Yarbrough, softball is Johnson's main sport so she has only competed in two meets so far as of April 8. But she has already beaten her best javelin throw of last year by seven feet, up to 117.7 feet.

Several Lady Cougars have shown their potential in recent events, including freshman Amanda Brooks, who placed as high as sixth among 16 competitors in the 100-meter hurdles. Fellow newcomer Theresa Frederick runs hurdles, long jump and high jump.

Another freshman, Samantha

Milner, came from a successful cross-country season under coach Bill Yeoman, who is also coaching distance runners in track.

"[Milner] did really well in cross-country as a freshman," Yeoman said. "I suspect she'll do the same thing in track if she can keep that momentum going. She surprised some people [in Districts]."

Yeoman said fewer students are running distance this season, but he believes the small group is still just as dedicated despite inexperience. Several distance runners also played soccer or ran cross-country and are looking to build on their progress from the fall season.

"The main thing is that they all improve and get their times down every meet," Yeoman said. "Hopefully they'll get the 'bug' and I can get them to return [next season]."

On the boys' side, senior Jesse Bethke returns after winning most-improved status last year. Celilo Nordal also returns to IVHS track to put more focus on sprinting events.

"[Nordal] is kind of Mr. Do Anything on the team," Yarbrough said. "He does anything we ask him to do to get a time and get us some points."

James Buck also did well in the 100- and 200-meter sprinting events, and Yarbrough said he could make it

to State in 3-A competition.

Junior Brian Terry is another Cougar showing potential on the team, participating in the 200-meters and placing tenth in long jump in Sutherlin April 2.

Other Cougars hoping to build on their progress in distance events include Soloman Zook and Jordan Rich.

"I'm really impressed with the group of kids we have," Yarbrough said. "I think the future is pretty great right now."

Illinois Valley was scheduled to compete Tuesday, April 12, in North Valley and Saturday, April 16, at the Crater Classic.

Cougar baseball falls to South Umpqua Lancers



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Cougar Anthony Baker, #3 steps up to the plate during an April 5 game against South Umpqua at IVHS.

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

The Illinois Valley High School baseball team lost to a tough South Umpqua team on Tuesday, April 5, at home.

South Umpqua, a 4-A team with only one loss so far this season, isn't used to giving up many runs. In the first few innings, they ran up six points against the Cougars and seemed to have set the tone for the game.

But according to Illinois Valley coach Bob Johnson, the Cougars came back after the second inning, tightening up their defense and gaining 12 hits as a team, but it wasn't enough to win.

"One more time we came up just a little bit short, but we played well again," Johnson said. "We played good defense for the most part, but had a couple of mental errors."

Several players pitched for the Cougars to gain experience on the field. One was newcomer James Chastain, whom Johnson said played four innings without giving up a single run.

"[Chastain] gave up one hit, one walk and had a strike-out," Johnson said. "No runs at all. That was a real plus and he's a freshman."

Five players had two hits apiece: Anthony Becker, Curtis Paulson, Andrew McLaughlin, Zach Anderson and Lander Nordal.

On the field, Johnson said Nordal also played well on first base, showing that Cougar freshman have been rising to the challenge.

"That was the first game [Nordal] started I believe," Johnson said. "One reason I'm so positive is because the young guys are stepping up and doing a good job."

As of April 5, the Cougars are 1-7 overall, but still have 14 regular-season games left on their schedule.

For Illinois Valley, the challenge now seems to be getting strong pitching and hitting to line up at the same time. Johnson said most of their opponents up until now were 5-A and 6-A teams from larger schools with more students to draw from.

Cougars showed potential in both defense and offense in their games so far; now, Johnson says the team is working to eliminate mistakes and gain momentum going into league play.

"I like the work we're doing right now," Johnson said. "I think once we start to get a couple wins things will really take off. I would've liked to win more before the start of league play just to get that feeling of winning. But we're not quitting."

Illinois Valley was scheduled to travel to Hidden Valley at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, April 7 at the Grants Pass Sports Park, and play Glide on Tuesday, April 12