

Sports

Cougars on verge of playoffs

By
Jenna Larkin
IVN Contributing Writer

After a tough loss the week before against Cascade Christian, IVHS regained themselves with a 44-26 win over St. Mary's this past Saturday at Spiegelberg Stadium.

Head coach Ray Yarbrough and the rest of the coaching staff spent the week preparing the team for the last two league games of the season.

"We have to win these last two games in order to go to playoffs," said Yarbrough.

Right from the start, the Cougars came out fired up and took a 13-0 lead in the first quarter. James Thompson chugged the ball down the field to make two touchdowns while the offensive line plowed the Crusaders, making a clear path.

The Crusaders were able to get in a couple of touchdowns in the first half to bring the score to 13-14, but the Cougars gained the ball back and scored, giving them a big lead by halftime.

St. Mary's had keyed in on Thompson in the second half, making it difficult for IVHS to get the ball to him. With 215 rushing yards and 16 points during the game, Thompson was definitely the one to focus on.

The coaching staff then changed strategy and CJ Manning played a key part in most of the plays. Manning who had 242 passing yards during the game. With Thompson tied up, Manning was able to get into the end zone bringing the score to 31-14. With such a gap in the score Yarbrough knew that the Crusaders would have a tough time playing catch-up.

Knowing that Thompson would receive the ball on kick-offs, St. Mary's kicked away from him. In the fourth quarter, however, the ball was kicked to Thompson, who then ran 87 yards for the Cougars' final touchdown of the game.

With this game in the bag, Yarbrough knows he will have a difficult time keeping the boys focused for their last game of the regular season on Oct. 31 at home.

A lot is riding on the game. Not only is it the last league game, but the IVHS squad must win in order to make it to playoffs. Friday night also happens to be Halloween, along with senior night

and homecoming.

"We are not going to change our routines any, everything will stay the same. Practices are going to be the same," said Yarbrough.



(Photo courtesy of Kelli Augustadt for The Illinois Valley News)

Lady Vikings end the season with fireworks

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Fireworks boomed while the I.V. Fire Department sounded sirens off as a cheering crowd gathered to give a hero's welcome.

As the bus pulled up, heads could be seen popping up to look out the windows. When the bus doors finally opened, the LBMS seventh- and eighth-grade volleyball teams were welcomed home by parents, friends and community members.

As the girls and coaches stepped off the bus they were showered with confetti, balloons, silly string and numerous hugs.

Wednesday, Oct. 22, marked a wondrous occasion for Lorna Byrne volleyball teams, commemorating the end of a grand season in which the seventh-grade squad went undefeated and the eight-graders nearly did the same.

That Wednesday, the teams had traveled to Rogue River to go up against their toughest rivals, the Panthers. With only six players, the seventh-grade girls kicked off the night, taking the win by a final of 3-0.

"The girls did really great. They went out there, they worked and did really wonderful," boasted head coach Rebecca Britt.

The eighth-grade team also had a three-set match, but was unable to secure a win in the final set against the Panthers. The Lady Vikings struggled with a few bad plays and calls, making it hard to come back and overcome Rogue River. The final score was 1-3.

"Eighth-grade did awesome! They had some amazing plays, they just did an awesome job," Britt said.

Regardless of the loss, the Lady Vikings ended their season with one for the record books. The seventh-grade team finished the season with a 9-0 record while the eighth-grade

team finished the season off with an 11-1 record.

With the loss of their last game, heads were still up and the girls were cheerful coming off the bus into the awaiting crowd.

"We had a great season," said eighth-grade team member McKenzie Engles, 13. "We were undefeated the past two years, and tonight, at the very end, it was (a loss). But we're winners in our hearts! I have been playing volleyball with these girls since third grade."

Because the Lady Vikings play at the middle-school level, there are no division or state championships; consequently they receive little recognition for their hard work and dedication throughout the season. Because of that, some community members thought that the rest of the Valley should come together and show the girls that their season's accomplishments were noticed.

To honor the girl's amazing accomplishments this season,

Mayor Carl Jacobson was on hand to personally congratulate the girls. He also had a special surprise, with a Mayor's Declaration that October 22, 2014 was "Lorna Byrne Lady Vikings Day." Mayor Jacobson proclaimed that the Lorna Byrne Lady Vikings volleyball teams have shown great spirit this year. He also went on to say that athletics are one of the most effective avenues in which girls may develop self-discipline, confidence and leadership skills regardless of backgrounds. A certificate was presented to coach Britt among cheering LBMS volleyball players and the crowd.

"It's pretty cool," said proud parent Beth Boatman. "I did not expect so many. The enthusiasm is great."

Coaches who have worked with this group of girls since they were in elementary school and the Cave Junction Boy's and Girl's Club also joined the celebration and commented on the high level of the girls'

teamwork, noting that there's several serious budding athletes in the ranks.

"It's awesome, amazing!" said past head coach Rene Jolley of the turnout. "It's cool that the community came together on such short notice."

This is coach Britt's first year coaching any sport and she could not be more proud of the girls and the hard work and effort they each put into the season. The anticipation of this final game against Rogue River was what kept the girls fueled and fired up during the tough times. Unfortunately, Britt will not be coaching the Lady Vikings in another exciting season next year, but wishes for the girls to continue to grow as a team.

Britt also gave the girls advice for moving up.

"Keep doing what they're doing; make sure they don't lose sight. It's a sisterhood and always remember that."

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