

Little League softball girls repeat district champs

By Dan Klapheke
IVN Staff Writer

The Illinois Valley Junior Little League softball all-star team was crowned District 8 champions for the second year in a row, beating out rival Grants Pass. The win took the girls back to the state tournament in Tulelake, California July 7-11, where they finished fifth out of eight teams.

The Illinois Valley All-Stars played three games in the state tournament. The team lost 11-9 against Tillamook County July 8, but came back to win 14-0 against South Salem the next day. The girls finished out the tournament losing 17-5 to Warm Springs Nation later that day.

The team's finish in the state tournament was an improvement over last year, as they lost two in a row and made an early exit.

All-star manager Nick Navarro said the last few years of success has been a process to build up the team's recognition.

"What we've been trying to do for the last three years is try and get this team recognized," Navarro said. "So other leagues and other districts see them and they're like, 'Dang, the Illinois Valley can come out and play ball.'"

The season started with tryouts in late February, and this year marks the first time there were enough girls to create two teams. Twenty-five girls made up two teams that played against each other and two Grants Pass teams, but Navarro said the challenge came

when narrowing down the two teams to a single all-star team.

"Honestly, we have so many girls right here in this valley that are extremely exceptional athletes, and they all do good," Navarro said. "To pinpoint one? You can't do it."

But when it comes down to it, Navarro said the team has to do what it takes, which means condensing.

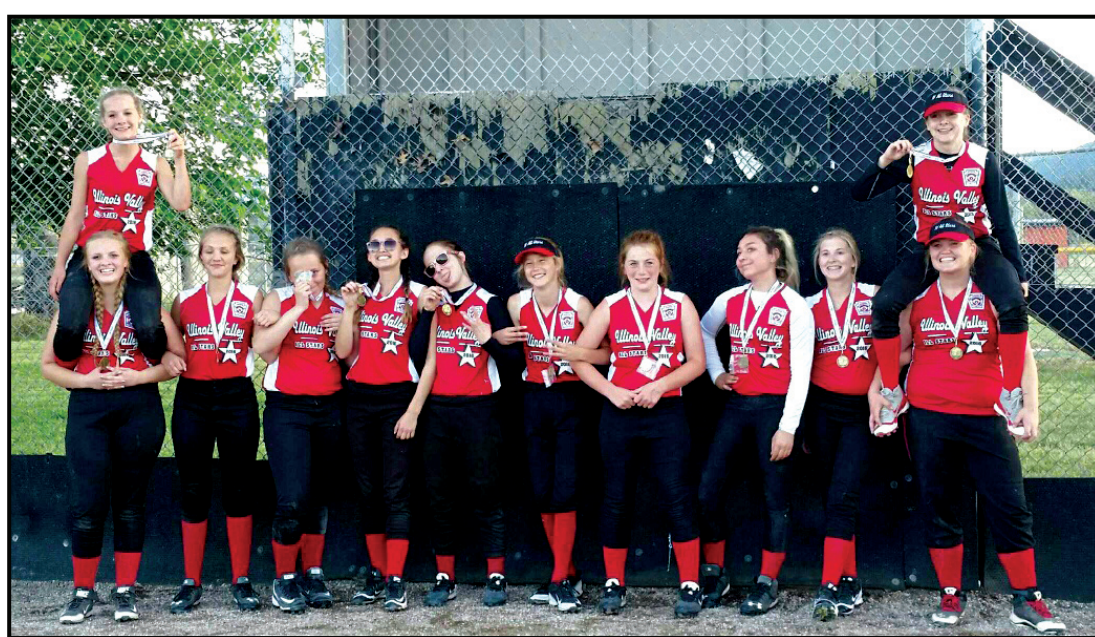
"That's just kind of how it goes when you're trying to build a team to go to state," Navarro said.

Navarro had plenty of thanks to give out to the community for donations and sponsors, including Jerry's Towing, DJO Trucking, Valley Timber Resource, the Liquor Store, Cascade Auto, Bobbalou's, Dean Lloyd Construction, Chevron, Redwood Service Center, NAPA Auto, River Valley Restaurant, Rock N Soil and A&W Auto Body. Individual sponsors include Roberto and Janice Brunner, Cal Messerli, Brandon Henry and Gary Montgomery.

Navarro said the team is appreciative of the community support, but could always use more.

"It would be great to see more support from the community for these girls this year, the next year, the next four years going through high school," Navarro said. "Because they're an awesome team. The hard part is getting such a small town recognized to go to college--it's almost impossible."

The Illinois Valley Softball Junior Little



(Courtesy photo for The Illinois Valley News)

Lucy Mayhem (left, on shoulders), Georgia Smith, Baillie Moore, Shylah Joy, Taylor Hruska, Alexis Milner, Nikki Yoshiwaka, Josey Biggs, Sydney Dailey, Taylor Inge, Mallorie Menning and Alexis Navarro.

League started in 2009 for girls' ages 12-14 as part of Oregon's district 8. The district includes Rogue River, Crescent City, Brookings and Gold Hill, but none of those communities produced teams this year. Next season's tryouts are set for late February of next year.

A majority of the girls on the Illinois Valley Panthers and Wildcats, the two softball teams, will be entering high school and seeking

to join the Illinois Valley High School (IVHS) softball team. Navarro said the league hopes to have enough girls for next year, but that the IVHS softball team will be a team to watch the next four years.

"I think in the next couple of years the high school program softball will be an excellent program to go and watch," Navarro said.

The Archive Zone: By Hillary Mohr from the Illinois Valley News archive

This week we fall back to July 19, 1973. It seemed like the Valley was ablaze from Kerby to Rockydale and places in between. This didn't stop the Lions Club from making a ROAR and finalizing plans for the Labor Day festival. The heat is up, and summer is sizzling, grab your hoses because it is time to fight the flames in this week's Archive Zone.

\$250,000 Cabax Fire. Arson is suspected in a fire at Cabax Mills, Kerby, early Friday morning that destroyed over a million board feet of stacked lumber, two trailers, and two high lift loaders. Total losses were estimated to be about \$250,000. Only by the combined efforts of the Illinois Valley Rural Fire Department, men from the Illinois Valley Ranger Station, State Forestry men, mill workers called at their homes, and volunteers who happened to be passing by was the blaze kept from the firm's cold deck. A 14,000 gallon diesel tank, half full, was in the path of the fire but did not explode. Flames soared

hundreds of feet into the air while unit after unit of lumber exploded into flames. In order to stop it from reaching the cold deck, other units were knocked down into its path to form a firebreak. One volunteer, Ken Kraft, was hospitalized with leg injuries and released after observation. Other firefighters suffered minor burns.

Home ablaze. The home of Winifred "Winnie" Renfro on Hays Cutoff Road was destroyed by fire early Sunday morning. It was completely enveloped when the first firemen arrived at the scene. Fire Chief Dale Martin said the apparent cause was a grayed electrical extension cord that smoldered through the rug and led the fire to an oil heating stove. Mrs. Renfro was on vacation in the Bay Area at the time. On the other side of the River, a bomber was brought in to stop a 9 1/2 acre fire on Rockydale Tuesday afternoon after it threatened structures on the Ruth Westfield property. Cause of the fire is under

investigation.

I.V. Lions plan 3-day festival for Labor Day. The Illinois Valley Lions Club board of directors met Tuesday night and approved a motion by the members to hold a 3-day festival September 1, 2, and 3. Each day will feature the traditional Lions Buckaroo Breakfast from 7 a.m. to 11:30, followed by the "Bully Steak Fry" from 12:30 to 6 p.m., draught beer and refreshments will be on hand. Live entertainment will parallel the events. Lion President "Chips" Combs stated that it is hoped the festival will grow into an annual event and build up to take the place of the defunct Jubilee. "It's a lot of work and we must go slow, steady, and eventually utilize all the talents in the Valley. We plan to have a kiddie carnival scheduled for 1974," Combs said.

Alferd Williams

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