

Lady Cougars start slow, pick up steam

Ray Brown
IVN Contributing Writer

After losing an away game 42-57 to the Hidden Valley Mustangs, the Cougars took on the Oakland Oakers Saturday in their first game this season at the Ken Mann Memorial Gynasium at IVHS. The game was close throughout as the momentum shifted in short bursts,

which kept the crowd on the edge of their seats.

Cougar's coach Serena Barry's team was tied with Oakland, 9-9, at the end of the first quarter where Aundrea Miller led the way in scoring. By the end of the half, the Cougars were down 18-22. With Miller getting into foul trouble in the third, Tori Johnson and Diamond Murphy caught fire and combined

for 11 points, getting the lead back at 34-30. In the fourth period, Miller, Johnson, and Aarika Brooks did most of the scoring and enough to put the game away at a score of 58-48.

"We came out really sloppy in the first half, making poor decisions and we weren't able to put the ball in the hoop on a lot of quality looks. But the second half the girls

picked their heads up and came out strong, going on a really big run for 40 second half points, 24 of which came in the fourth, led by Miller and Johnson. I was really happy with the way we finished. Now we have to work on putting together four solid quarters a game," said coach Barry.

Miller led scoring with 18, Johnson - 14, Brooks - 11, Murphy - seven, Roza Jonas - four, Courtney

Scott - two, and Abbigayle Jolly - two. After losing three valuable starters to graduation this year, the season will be a challenge, but with the improved free throw shooting and intensity on defense, the Lady Cougars will keep it interesting. Watching a game is a great way to spend a rainy evening. Tuesday, the Cougars travel to Del Norte.

Cougars lose 2 close games to start season

Ray Brown
IVN Contributing Writer

After opening their season at Hidden Valley with a 36-40 loss, the Cougars were anxious for their home opener against the Oakland Oakers. In front of their home crowd

Saturday, they led at the end of each quarter except the fourth. These evenly matched teams battled back and forth to end the first quarter with the Cougars on top 14-9. The home team's scoring was held in check by the Oakers in the second quarter where Chase Nelson got to show off some defensive and rebounding skills. The

half ended with the Cougars leading 20-17. Bryce Bruner was first to score in the second half, but Oakland came back halfway through the third to tie at 22 each, but by the end of the period, Illinois Valley was back on top 31-28. The Oakers came on strong in the fourth and simply outscored the home team despite a

three-point buzzer beater by Elijah Polk, ending the game at 40-46. Scoring went as follows: Skylar McLanahan - 10, Bruner - nine, Caleb Hess - seven, Tanner Davis - four, Polk - three, Isaiah McLanahan and Cody Box - two. This was a great game to watch and Tuesday, Coach Matt Knights' Cougars travel to Del Norte.

IVHS's new band director brings real-life experience

Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Senior Contributing Writer

Aspiring musicians attending Illinois Valley High School (IVHS) have scored an experienced mentor in new music teacher Joshua Dargavell. Before accepting the job at IVHS last September, Dargavell was a professional musician on cruise ships in Europe, playing the trombone.

"My most recent contract was traveling from Barcelona, Spain to Venice, Italy. We went back and forth," Dargavell said. "We had a show band that played music for dancers and other performers. We also played late night in the cocktail area, doing a more jazz-oriented set and all kinds of styles - not just classical and jazz, but also rock and funk. That versatility was great.

And getting to travel the world just because I played the trombone was really exceptional to me."

Dargavell had only been off the ship for a week when he saw the job post seeking a music teacher at IVHS. "I jumped at the opportunity and everything just worked out. It was literally perfect timing."

So why did Dargavell switch from performing to teaching?

"As a musician who has studied performance, it's just known that so many people have such an impact on you," he explained. "People that put out so much effort to give you this gift of music, from band instructors through childhood and private lessons, and then later, college instructors. Anyone who studies music has so many monumental

influences on them and I think it's a responsibility to give back."

Now, Dargavell says he's looking forward to sharing his professional experiences with his students. "This is another way to get kids excited about their own possibilities," he said. "Having been a working musician who experienced real-world scenarios I learned what it takes to be successful in the music industry. While many high school kids may not be interested in music beyond school, for those who are, I think I can give them the tools to succeed."

Dargavell was raised in Berea, a small town in Kentucky, where his extended family still lives. He earned a bachelor's degree in Music Performance from the University of Kentucky; and went on to complete his master's degree at Michigan

State University in Jazz Studies, with an emphasis in trombone performance.

Dargavell met his girlfriend, Elani Pienaar, while still in college. Pienaar is now the band director at South Middle School in Grants Pass, which prompted Dargavell to seek work in the area.

Dargavell explained that while in high school he was "never really psyched" about being there. "It was just something I did because I was required to. But my family instilled in me that college was something that you needed to do, and really, it was music that got me through it all." Indeed it did - Dargavell's skills on the trombone earned him a full ride through college. "So for someone like me, who had no clue what I wanted to do, music was something that just took over and

dictated my path and opened up so many opportunities. It can be hard for high school students, or even in college, to say what you want to do with your life - but if you have that one passion, it can help you find that path. So now, I'm hoping to help others find their path."

In addition to directing the IVHS band, Dargavell teaches choir. He said that after sitting at a desk all day, "music provides an opportunity for students to be more hands on and creative. Being able to express yourself, whether with your voice or an instrument, to take a piece of music, listen to different recordings and then put your own stamp on it, making it your own - that's really special.

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