

Sports

Lady Cougars hold league lead

Ray Brown
IVN Contributing Writer

The Cascade Christian Challengers from Medford came

to play basketball at the Ken Mann Gym and challenge they did. The score was close from start to finish, with many lead changes and a final minute that athletes dream about.

Aundrea Miller led scoring for I.V. in the first quarter, while Tori Johnson, who has had the hot hand lately, was quiet and got into early foul trouble with three early in the second period. The first quarter ended 12-10 Cougars and despite the Challengers height advantage and athleticism, the girls did a great job of disrupting their passing to the scoring positions - in particular, No. 40, Emily Stephens, their go-to 6-foot forward. Midway through the second quarter, the Challengers took a one-point lead, which was taken back with a shot from Diamond Murphy and some strong play by Aarika Brooks. The score at halftime was 25-21, with the home team leading. The intensity ramped up in the second half, and just when it looked like the Lady Cougars were pulling away, the Challengers went on a run and took the lead at the end of the third quarter, 33-35. Then came a fourth quarter to remember, with Miller hitting a free throw to tie; then Brooks with two free throws for the lead - then losing the lead and regaining it over and over. Cascade took a timeout with 42 seconds to go in the game and a one-point lead. The Cougars did the rest with sheer determination and some much improved foul line shooting, with Courtney Scott tying the game

with 28 seconds to go, then Miller immediately drawing a foul and getting the lead at 44-43, and again with a little more than a second left on the clock, she knocked down both free throws to ice the win, 46-43, for the league-leading Cougars! The Lady Cougars are now at 3-0 in the Southern Cascade League. Coach Serena Barry summed up the game, "Aundrea Miller led the Cougars on Tuesday vs. CC with 14 points, five assists and four steals. Her late game drives and ability to get to the foul line helped secure the victory in a very close game. Aarika Brooks finished with 12 points, nine rebounds and three steals. Courtney Scott scored 10 points, with five rebounds and two assists."

In non-league action, the Lady Cougars welcomed the Gold Beach Panthers to their court for what turned out to be an exciting "cat" fight. The hometown girls led the game two-thirds of the way, and then Gold Beach turned up the heat. At the end of the first quarter, the score was 12-6, with Aundrea Miller disrupting the Panthers offense and Roza Jonas, the defensive specialist, rebounding and stealing the ball. At halftime, Tori Johnson had already tossed in seven foul shots with her total scoring at 11, helping to post the score of 27-21. The third period

brought trouble for the Cougars when their anchor underneath, Aarika Brooks, was pulled out with four fouls, and with two minutes left, the Panthers took the lead 34-35. Despite Miller tying it up with a free throw with 35 seconds to go in the period, the Panthers hit a three pointer to end the third leading, 37-40. In the fourth, Brooks fouled out of the game with the score at 40-47, Gold Beach leading with only three minutes and 16 seconds left. Despite a lot of effort by Miller, who scored 9 of her 18 points in the fourth, and some successful strategy, the Cougars came up short by two, with Jonas grabbing a rebound with two seconds left, but not enough time for Miller to get it down court for a shot. Final score, 52-54. Coach Barry said, "On Saturday vs. Gold Beach, we lost a close one 52-54. Aarika Brooks spent a lot of the game on the bench due to fouls and fouled out in the fourth quarter. Seniors Aundrea Miller and Tori Johnson led the Cougars, Miller with 18 points, five rebounds, and five assists and Johnson with 18 points, and 13 rebounds. Brooks added 10 points, with six rebounds."

The Lady Cougars will play another league game when they host Lake View Friday, Jan. 27, 5:30 p.m.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Aundrea Miller moves the ball down court while Roza Jonas looks on, Jan. 21. The girls fell to Gold Beach at home 52-54.

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