

Lady Cougars climbing the ranks

Tristan Stocker
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The Lady Cougars kicked off the season with a couple of close victories against Hidden Valley and La Pine before suffering their first loss against Amity, and this week they earned themselves two more wins against Phoenix and Milo Adventist Academy and a loss to Oakland.

The first win of the week was Tuesday, Dec. 5, against Phoenix - a team with an overall non-league record of 1-2 - wherein the final score sat at 37-29.

Top scoring players were Aarika Brooks with 14 points, Alexis Navarro with seven and Courtney Scott and Bailee Moore both scored six. Brooks also brought nine steals, 13 rebounds to the team that game and in total the team had 26 steals - a welcome number up from their average of 17 steals per game.

A few days later, the Lady Cougars played another away game against Oakland Friday, Dec. 8, but couldn't get the win. The final score was 31-55.

Top scoring players on the Cougar side were Brooks again with 10 points and newcomer to the team, freshman Alexis Gomez, who scored seven.

"We had 32 turnovers that game and nine steals," said head coach Jonathan Valenzuela-Reece. "We weren't playing our game that

game. We were playing their game."

Then Saturday, Dec. 9, on the road again, the girls gave it their all against Milo Adventist Academy, earning themselves a sweet victory with the final score sitting at 61-14.

Brooks and Moore both brought the team 14 points that game for a total of 28 between the two of them.

Valenzuela-Reece used this opportunity to swap in some girls who don't get that much play time, but with a comparatively small team,

that isn't too terribly difficult to do.

"We're only running with eight girls," said Valenzuela-Reece, "and five of them are freshmen. We're basically rebuilding this year."

The girls are scheduled to play yet another away game this Thursday, Dec. 14, against Myrtle Point, who is currently 2-2 in their non-league games, and then the following day, Friday, Dec. 15, the Lady Cougars play Days Creek (3-1) here at home.

I.V. boys' basketball heating up

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The Illinois Valley boys' basketball team scooped up their third non-league win for the season Saturday, Dec. 9, at Milo Adventist Academy after a couple of consecutive losses against Phoenix and Oakland.

On Tuesday, Dec. 5, the Cougars hightailed it over to Phoenix to play the Pirates but couldn't quite keep it together. The final score sat at 34-54.

Top scorer for the Cougars was Caleb Hess with 15 points, earning nearly half the team's points for the entire game.

"Yeah, that game wasn't our best performance," said head coach Matt Knight, "but we were also missing a couple guys, so that didn't help."

Then Friday, Dec. 8, the team made their way up the 5 to Oakland to do battle with the undefeated Oakland Oakers and lost 44-76.

Top scorers in the Oakland game were Cody Box with 14 points and Elijah Polk with 12.

Dec. 9, the Cougars finally managed to reel in a victory against Milo Adventist Academy - the final score resting at 86-29 bringing their non-league standing to 3-3.

Caleb Hess led the team in scoring with 20 points. Tyi Brummet had 15 and Elijah Polk had 14.

"We were able to get some guys in who don't get many minutes and get them some time," said Knight. "It was a good game for us to kind of shore up some things defensively and offensively that we just haven't had a lot of practice time to get

working on stuff. We've got a couple weeks now with three games so we get two practices in during the week and then play a bunch of games so we've been kinda trying to learn some stuff on the fly."

The boys then play a home game on Tuesday, Dec. 12 against Lost River - a 2A school known this year for beating 3A schools. Thursday, Dec. 14, the team takes to the road again to play Myrtle Point and then the following day they play Days Creek at home.

Oregon holds off winless Texas Southern 74-68

EUGENE, Ore. (AP) — It was the kind of ugly win Payton Pritchard would just as soon forget, except for the performance by the freshman seated next to him.

Pritchard scored 16 points, and Troy Brown had 10 points and 12 rebounds as Oregon struggled to down winless Texas Southern 74-68 on Monday night.

The difference-maker was Kenny Wooten with 13 points and four blocks for the Ducks (7-3), who started the second half on a 16-2 run

to open a 48-33 lead but still couldn't shake the Tigers (0-9).

"He's really the reason why we won this game," Pritchard said. "As the season goes on, Kenny is going to have to step up big like he did tonight."

"His talent is there, and he's just got to be ready to play every night like that. He's gotta be a dog. That's what we need and that's what we expect out of him."

Wooten had a dunk and two inside baskets midway through the

second half as the Ducks saw their lead dwindle to single digits.

"Kenny saved us," Oregon coach Dana Altman said. "I thought he was the difference in the game."

Texas Southern trailed 65-64 with 3 1/2 minutes to play before driving layups by Pritchard and Paul White gave Oregon some breathing room. White had 11 points as six Ducks scored in double figures.

Brown scored seven of Oregon's last 12 points, capped by a 3-pointer of an assist from Pritchard.

"We fought it out," Pritchard said. "We had a 15-point lead, so we have to be better than that, we can't give that up"

Donte Clark led the Tigers with 17 points and Demontrae Jefferson had 16.

After a lethargic first half, Oregon relied more on its inside game led by Wooten, MiKyle McIntosh and Brown. The Ducks were 13 of 17 at the foul line in the second half after shooting just five free throws in the first 20 minutes.

"The second half with us yelling (from the bench) to drive it at them, they did a little better job," Altman said. "The big difference there is you shoot more free throws, because you're going to the basket hard."

The Ducks shot 13 of 25 in the second half to finish 25 of 59 for the game (42.4 percent). Wooten was 6 of 7 from the floor and Pritchard 5 of 8.

"I'd like to give all the credit to my teammates," Wooten said. "They fed me. I was just trying to get open and they found me."



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