

# Sports

## Cougars clash with Crusaders

**Tristan Stocker**  
*IVN Contributing Writer*

The Illinois Valley High School boys' basketball team began the week with back-to-back victories against Rogue River and Bandon, but come Friday night, couldn't quite cut it against the forever formidable Crusaders of St. Mary's, losing by merely one point.

Bringing it back to Tuesday's away game against Rogue River Jan. 9 - a team with an overall record of 1-13 and a league record of 0-1 - the Cougars, who are now 11-7 overall and 2-1 in the league at the time of this writing, came out on top with a final score of 79-45.

"Rogue River is kind of one of the more down teams in our league," said head coach Matt Knight. "So it was a good test for us to be able to go out and

work on some things that we're gonna need to perfect for the rest of our league play."

Top scoring players for the game against Rogue River were Caleb Hess with 22 points and Bryce Bruner with 17.

Then the following day the boys played Bandon at home which resulted in another victory for the Cougars with a final score of 51-42. At the time, Bandon's overall record was 5-9 and their current league record was 0-1.

"That was another really close game," said Knight. "It was pretty much back and forth for the whole game, but we hit a lot of free throws down the stretch which gave us a couple extra points there; a little extra cushion."

Bruner lead the team in total points with 17 and then Hess trailed just behind, scoring 16.

And finally, Friday,

Jan. 12, the home game against St. Mary's, (7-10, 2-1) in which the Cougars came up just one shy. The final score was 37-38.

Top scoring player was Hess again with 16 points.

"That game on Friday, it kinda came down to we needed to make some free throws there toward the end of the game. We only shot two for eight from the free throw line," Knight said. "And, we've been working on some new zone offense and St. Mary's zoned us for most of the game."

The Cougars are then slated to play at Lakeview (5-14, 0-2) after a 10-day break Friday, Jan. 26 at 7 p.m.

**No. 2 Caleb Hess (left) put 20 points on the board for the Cougars at home against Bonanza Friday, Dec. 29**

(Photo by Michelle Binker, Illinois Valley News)



## 3 consecutive wins for Lady Cougars

**Tristan Stocker**  
*IVN Contributing Writer*

The Illinois Valley High School girls' basketball team picked up another three wins in the last week against the Rogue River Chieftains, the Bandon Tigers and the Crusaders of St. Mary's, Medford.

The first of the three was an away game against Rogue River - a team with an overall record of 6-9 and a league record of 0-2 - which took place Tuesday, Jan. 9. The Lady Cougars walked away with a victory of 56-30.

Top scoring players in that

game were Aarika Brooks with 20 points and Bailee Moore with 17.

"That was the best game I'd seen Bailee play in a long time, which was awesome to see," said head coach Jonathan Valenzuela-Reece. "They were double-teaming Aarika and Bailey got a chance to say, 'Hey, I'm here too!'"

Then on the following day, the Lady Cougars brought it back home to play a non-league game against Bandon (2-12, 1-0) which resulted in another win with the final score resting at 38-16.

Leading the team in points

again was Brooks with 15 and Courtney Scott with eight. The entire team was able to grab a grand total of 32 steals.

And finally, Friday, Jan. 12, the girls welcomed St. Mary's, (3-13, 0-3) onto their home court for an epic battle which ended in the third win of the week for the Lady Cougars whose overall and league records was 11-5 and 2-1, respectively.

The points scored on Friday's game was spread out with Scott and Brooks scoring nine points, Alexis Gomez scoring seven and Alexis Navarro with five.

"And then Alyvia Miller was just outstanding for us," said Valenzuela-Reece. "She was creating turnovers and just killing it on the defensive side despite scoring only two points."

The girls get to take another 10-day break before traveling to Lakeview to play the Honkers (13-6, 2-0) Jan. 26. The game begins at 5:30 p.m.

**Aarika Brooks takes a shot against Hidden Valley at home in November 2017.**

(Photo by Michelle Binker, Illinois Valley News)



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