

Sports

I.V. basketball teams gear up for playoffs

Tristan Stocker
IVN Contributing Writer

On Tuesday, Feb. 6, the Illinois Valley girls’

basketball team (5-3) won their last league game of the season against Cascade Christian (4-4) finishing second in the league and earning a spot in the

playoffs; and the boys’ (4-4), despite having lost to Cascade (8-0), finished third, which also earns them a playoff game.

Aarika Brooks led the

team in total points with 19, followed by Alexis Navarro who scored 14; Bailee Moore picked up 10 rebounds while Courtney Scott completed seven assists; and the final score rested at 59-43.

“We put forth a really good team effort on this one,” said head coach Jonathan Valenzuela-Reece, “we shot 50 percent from the field, three-pointers we shot over 50 percent, and free throws we shot about 75 percent, but those four girls really stood out the entire game.”

And as for the boys, top scoring player was Cody Box with 16 points, however, they were playing with a few players out due to injury and grade eligibility. The final score for that game was 47-65.

“For playing short-

handed we actually played really well,” said head coach Matt Knight. “It was a close game up until the fourth quarter. We just kinda ran out of gas. And it was the best we’ve played Cascade Christian in maybe four years. If we would’ve had that extra little depth on the bench, it probably would’ve been a heck of a lot closer of an outcome.”

Then, Tuesday, Feb. 13, the Lady Cougars play Cascade Christian at home once again in their first league playoff matchup which is scheduled to take place at 7 p.m. after press time.

And the league playoff game for the boys is slated to take place against St. Mary’s, (6-2) in Medford Wednesday, Feb. 14 at 6:30 p.m.



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

No. 2 Caleb Hess takes a pass from No. 10 Tyi Brummett during a home game against Rogue River Tuesday, Jan. 30.

Cougar wrestlers prepare for a run to state titles

Donnell Suggs
IVN Contributing Writer

On Friday afternoon Illinois Valley High School wrestling coach Zach Pagnotta and his team were taking advantage of the weather and getting ready to go out on a run. The state tournament was coming up in a week’s time and there’s never too much preparation time a team can partake in.

The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) wrestling state championships begin Friday, Feb. 16, at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland and the Illinois Valley Cougars wrestling program and first-year head coach and former Cougar Pagnotta will be sending two wrestlers to compete in this year’s competition. Technically the Cougars will have three wrestlers make the trip Thursday afternoon with senior Dillon St. Onge (113) not qualifying for the state meet due to his not having wrestled at the District meet

following an injury. A two-time state qualifier during his career, Dillon will make the trip up to Portland with his other teammates because he’s earned one last trip to the state tournament according to his coach. “Dillon would have qualified for state, I’m 100 percent sure about that,” said Pagnotta. “We’re still taking him up because he’s worked so hard these past four years.”

The Cougars opened the season with a dual meet at Brookings-Harbor High School Nov. 30, 2017 then participated in the Coast Classic at North Bend High School Dec. 28 and 29. The new year started with the League Dual Championships Jan. 20 at Cascade Christian High School before the Cougars hosted a dual meet with Brookings-Harbor and closed the winter season at the 3-A Special District 4 meet at Glide High School. On the season as a whole Pagnotta said, “We did all right, we had two seniors we expected a lot of.”

This past season went well and Pagnotta has high hopes for the

Cougars next year but first things first, senior Chase Nelson (170) and freshman Jesse Valles (106) will be representing the program in Portland and Pagnotta thinks both wrestlers have a solid chance to return home to the Valley with a title in hand. “Chase has been a pretty good leader this year,” said Pagnotta. “This is a new role for him and he does a great job of keeping the guys motivated. I feel like he’s playing the cards he’s been dealt.”

On Valles, who is competing at a high level despite his age and the upcoming wrestlers entering the program next year Pagnotta says, “We have some young kids and I look forward to next season. Our youth program is on the come up, so look out.”

Nelson and Valles have high hopes for next weekend as well. Both are accomplished in their own right and want to make the most of this trip to the high school wrestling big time. “It’s nice to be a returning qualifier but I have a lot to accomplish next

week,” said Nelson who has plans of pursuing a career in cage fighting. “I’m also going to try and get noticed because I’d like to take my skills to the next level.”

“It’s pretty cool to have my family come out and watch me wrestle,” says Valles who says he comes from a family of former high school wrestlers. “I just want to go up there and do my best.”

“I am very excited for our two guys,” said Illinois Valley High School Athletic Director Bruce Reece. “They should do very well at state.”

Nelson and Valles were there amongst the wrestlers getting ready to workout. The two wrestlers- one making one last run for a state championship, the other beginning what looks to be a very successful career- preparing for the biggest run of their lives in Portland next week were focussed on finishing the season strong.

First an afternoon run, next, a run for a state title.



IVHS
Athletes of the Week



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