

# Sports

## Lady Cougars lose in Clatskanie

**Tristan Stocker**  
IVN Contributing Writer

After traveling down a long and arduous path, the Illinois Valley girls' basketball team (5-3) played their final game of the year Saturday, Feb. 24, in Clatskanie against the Clatskanie Tigers (14-2) but couldn't quite manage a victory. The final score was 46-82.

When asked about the defeat, head coach Jonathan Valenzuela-Reece responded, "I mean really, Clatskanie, they were on fire.

They had two girls who between the two of them scored a total of 57 points. They were two freshmen, they were outstanding players and they came ready to play."

This isn't to say that the Lady Cougars played a bad game. Aarika Brooks was the top scoring player for I.V. with 13 points and next was Courtney Scott with 12.

"We put numbers up," said Valenzuela-Reece. "We stuck with 'em in the first quarter. We were down by eight but it's not like we ever backed down. We just didn't

score... It was a good way for us to go out and we didn't give up."

And even though they lost, Valenzuela-Reece felt that the road trip was a positive experience for the girls in terms of team-bonding. For example, on Friday they got to practice at Willamette University in Salem which features a much bigger gymnasium.

"It was good for the girls to experience that bigger gym feeling and experience something outside of the Illinois Valley," said Valenzuela-Reece.

As for next year, Valenzuela-Reece plans on coaching again and all of the girls on this year's team will also be coming back, save for Scott, the only senior on the team.

"It's good to know that I have a bunch of girls who are going to work hard for me," said Valenzuela-Reece. "Aarika Brooks is coming into her senior season and we're going to be playing at the 2A level so we'll see how that plays out for us. Next year, I think we're going to compete and go a little farther than we did this year."

## IVHS baseball will be a bit older, wiser this season

**Donnell Suggs**  
IVN Contributing Writer

Pitchers and catchers reported for duty Monday afternoon in anticipation of what is expected to be an important season of Cougars baseball. What was an inexperienced team last year (four seniors) looks to be a better prepared -at least on paper- and much more experienced team this year. "We were young but we were very competitive and we're hoping to be very competitive this year," said Cougars head coach Jesse Dugas. "We should have four to five seniors and four juniors this

season." The "should" that Dugas uses when describing his roster is because at this point the roster is yet to be finalized. The full team does not report to practice till the end of the month. "We have a lot of athletes and that's a good thing," adds Dugas, who is in his fifth year as the Cougars varsity coach. "We made the jump from being young to being right where we need to be."

There are key players returning, both seniors and juniors, and their impact will have to be felt greatly early on if the Cougars are to be successful this season. With the wrestling season done

the two-sport athletes (and in some cases three-sport athletes) on the team can focus on their work on the diamond. "We have a couple baseball-only kids but most of our kids play multiple sports," acknowledged Dugas. One of those players returning will be starting junior shortstop Rayes Dugas, the coach's son, and a starter since his freshman season. Rayes was an all-conference receiver for the Cougars football team; wrestled for head coach Zach Pagnotta; and he's now back in the Cougars' middle infield. "He's a strong kid, extremely fast," said Dugas of his son who stole 30 bases last season.

Other tenured infielders are returning including seniors Dane Alvarez, Andrew Bell and Isaiah McLanahan. All three started last season and look to be playing major parts in the team's success.

Alvarez returned to the Valley last year from Utah and stepped in as a second baseman, this year he will be used as utility player to better make use of his athletic ability and high skill set. "DJ is going to be pitching, catching, playing first base and some outfield," said Dugas. "He and Isaiah are very talented and will be playing multiple positions."

Isaiah McLanahan started

at catcher last season but will be pitching more this year and starting at left field according to Dugas. "Isaiah will bounce around this year." Bell will be taking over behind the plate according to Dugas who said, "He's looking promising out there."

Other juniors expected to contribute this season will be the team's strongest pitcher Bryce Bruner, who threw the school's first no-hitter last season as a sophomore. "He's our ace and will play in the mound when he's not on the mound. Tyi Brummett will be primarily at third base this season and will play a little first base as well. "Tyi is a

very natural third baseman and can hit the ball a mile," said Dugas.

Dugas also has high hopes that a few former junior varsity players will step into new roles this season. He has Colton Harms on his radar heading into camp. "Colton played very well last year at the JV level, he's super fast, an athletic kid with a great eye at the plate."

The Cougars first three games of the season are on the road starting with their season opener Tuesday, March 13, at Brookings Harbor High School at 2 p.m.

"We're excited and ready to go," said Dugas.

## Lady Cougars' potential looks to turn into productivity

**Donnell Suggs**  
IVN Contributing Writer

What was once young will one day become old. Such is the way of the world in all aspects of life and sports is no different. The Lady Cougars' varsity softball team coached by former Lady Cougar Beth Boatman, in her third year with the varsity, will have a unique situation on her hands this season.

Her team is young but uniquely experienced and familiar with one another. "We have kind of a young squad but we're looking at a pretty competitive team," said Boatman.

The team will only return one senior starter, Dede Ellis, a first baseman who also played a bit of third base last season and is a player Boatman called, "A key element in our infield." The other senior expected to play on the team will be Lily Bell, a volleyball player

who is going to give softball a try this season. "We should have gotten her out here earlier," said Boatman, "Lily looks like she has a lot of potential."

Along with Bell and Ellis are a group of sophomores that Boatman is hoping will quickly improve their skills. Six of the sophomores are returning starters from last year's team. Potential is something the core sophomores have demonstrated coming into the 2018

season. Another facet the group can hang their hats on is that they all know how to play together. "I have been working with this group of sophomores since they were in the fourth grade," said Boatman.

Shortstop Bailey Moore, second/third baseman Shylah Joy and right-handed pitchers Mallorie Menning are back to help get the program back to the postseason. Freshman Alexis Milner is also expected to contribute immediately.

"These kids all mesh well," said Boatman. "We're looking forward to getting out there; it should be a great season."

The Lady Cougars will open the season Tuesday, March 13, at home against Myrtle Point High School. The Lady Cougars' first five games of the season will be on their home field before their first road game Tuesday, March 27, at Coquille High School.



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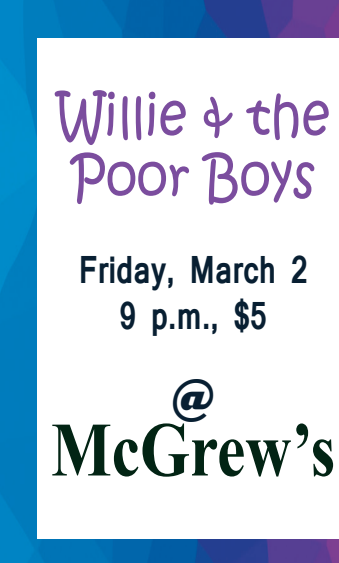


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