

# Cougars have mixed results against the Dragons

**Gwen Barringer**  
*IVN Contributing Writer*

## IVHS girls

The Illinois Valley High School varsity girls basketball team showed incredible perseverance during their home game against the Monroe-Alsea Dragons Jan. 28. Though both teams were neck-and-neck for much of the game, the Cougars ended up losing by a slim margin.

The first half of the game went by in a blur of motion as both teams scrambled across the court, with the Dragons and Cougars each making a 2-point shot within the first 40 seconds of the first round. The Cougars' defense was strong and their guard was up, but so was the opposing teams. This led to a few small scuffles as the ball and player holding it were brought to the ground. The

first quarter ended with the home team in the lead 7-6, and when the second quarter began it became apparent that neither team's determination was going to fade. For every shot the Cougars made, the Dragons found an opportunity to make one as well, but the Cougars continued to maintain the advantage. By the time the buzzer for halftime sounded, the score was 13-12 in favor of the home team.

The second half of the game was even more frenzied. Neither score budged until three minutes into the third quarter, when No. 3 Evalynn Guzman scored 2 points for the Cougars. Once again, the Dragons countered this with a 2-point shot of their own, with this trend continuing for the rest of the quarter. When the buzzer sounded, the Dragons were leading 20-19.

The fourth and final quarter was similar in its

intensity, though it was becoming obvious that both teams were starting to get impatient. The Cougars quickly regained their earlier lead and then some, and it really looked like the home team was going to pull through and defeat the Dragons. Then, the last 30 seconds became a mess of aggressive fouls and free throws, resulting in Monroe slowly evening the score and eventually gaining a 1-point lead. In the final 12 seconds, the Cougars were unable to defeat their opposition. The final score was 33-32, in favor of Monroe-Alsea.

After the game, Coach Jonathan Reece remarked that "the girls played well," and that it was "good to see them compete against a good team." Despite their loss, the Cougars really should be proud of their determination

and teamwork. They lost by 1 point to a team that had an 8-3 league record despite only having 2 wins themselves.

## IVHS boys

The Illinois Valley High School varsity boys basketball team faced off against the Monroe Dragons Saturday, Jan. 28. Although things seemed rough for the Cougars at first, by the time the game was over they were relishing in another victory.

The Cougars seemed like they were having a bit of trouble as the opposing team relentlessly drove through their guard. Though No. 0, junior Brendyn Bruner, made an impressive 3-point shot at the beginning of the first quarter, by the time the buzzer sounded Monroe was in the lead 12-7.

When the buzzer sounded for the second quarter, the Cougars were

determined not to let the Dragons best them. They quickly made up the five points that were needed to tie the score, though many members on both sides went crashing to the ground in the process. It was messy and the home team struggled, but by halftime the Cougars had a two-point lead, 17-15.

In the third quarter, it became clear that the Cougars had finally gotten their bearings. The boys blasted through the opposing team's guard, with the Cougars at one point leading by 13 points. Next, the Dragons began to catch up, but they were no match for the home team's tenacity and the third quarter ended with the Cougars in the lead 33-26.

Although Monroe eventually evened the score during the fourth quarter, nothing was going to deter

the Cougars from winning. This meant that the remainder of the game was vicious and fast-paced, with the score ending up tied more than once. The last 60 seconds were filled with free throws from both sides, and by the end a successful point was made by Cougar Daniel Polk that tied the score yet again. This meant that the game went into overtime, and the final 4 minutes were just as brutal as the ones that had come before. Fortunately, the Cougars came out on top 55-51.

Coach Tony Hess said afterward that although many of the boys had just recovered from a sickness that's been going around, "they played an awesome game, I was really impressed by their energy level," adding that he could see them going to state if they keep playing this hard.



## Illinois Valley High School Winter Sports Schedule

|                                             |
|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Thursday, February 2, 2023</b>           |
| 6:00pm Boys Basketball JV vs Toledo @ AWAY  |
| 6:00pm Girls Basketball V vs Toledo @ AWAY  |
| 7:30pm Boys Basketball V vs Toledo AWAY     |
| <b>Tuesday, February 7, 2023</b>            |
| 4:30pm Boys Basketball JV vs Oakland @ AWAY |
| 6:00pm Girls Basketball V vs Oakland @ AWAY |
| 7:30pm Boys Basketball V vs Oakland @ AWAY  |



No. 0 Brendyn Bruner receives a pass from No. 11 Connor Talty while No. 24 Dillion Shirley and No. 2 Daniel Polk look on during the Saturday, Jan. 28 home victory. The boys sit at 11 - 11 overall and 7 - 6 league.

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