

SPORTS

Redmond ends Eagle boys basketball season; large senior group leaves its mark on program

By Joe Petshow
For Columbia Gorge News

Hood River Valley's boys basketball season ended June 23 with a playoff loss at Redmond, but the imprint this year's senior players left on the program dates back three prior seasons.

Coach Christopher Dirks is hoping that imprint extends into the future, as well.

The Eagles fell for the third time this season by single digits to Redmond, the most recent loss coming in the Intermountain Conference semifinals. HRV entered the game coming off a 76-46 home win over Pendleton in the 2015-16 first round. A slow start against Redmond enabled the host Panthers to build an early lead which it essentially maintained the rest of the game, winning 58-49.

"They had our number this year, so hats off to them," Dirks said of the 12-3 Panthers, who lost to unbeaten Crook County in Friday's championship. "The guys did what we asked them to do but we took a little too long to settle in and get going. They got us in the first quarter, and we played basically even from then on."

Redmond defeated Hood

River, 59-58, in an IMC game June 15 and 54-50 on June 1.

"I am very proud of what we were able to accomplish with the hand we were dealt this year," Dirks said. "There are always areas where we can improve, but we had a group of guys who were all in on what we wanted to do, and as a coach I can't ask for too much more."

"This group of seniors really helped send this program in the right direction," Dirks said. "Some of them have been on varsity since their freshmen year and others since their sophomore year. In that time, we put together three winning seasons in a row. I don't know the last time that has happened for HRV boys basketball, but I think it has been a while."

The Eagles went 0-23 two years before Dirks took over the program in the 2015-16 season. HRV was 14-7 in 2018-19, 12-10 in 2019-20, and 9-5 this shortened, delayed COVID season.

Seniors Ian Searcy, Sebastian Zeman, Zac Wells, Davis Yates, Jack Siekkinen, Michael Goodman, and Emilio Castaneda each played roles in changing the face of Eagle basketball.

"The seniors set the tone



The Eagles huddle up one last time after defeating the Pendleton Buckaroos 76-46, before heading to the IMC Tournament semifinal against No. 2 seed Redmond. Noah Noteboom photo

for the future of this program, and I know the younger guys have learned a lot from them," Dirks said. "It has been a long time since we

have been the favorites to win games and expected it from ourselves."

The Eagles qualified for the state playoffs in 2019,

marking the first time HRV played in the boys basketball postseason since 1994.

"Over the past three seasons we are getting close

to who we want to be," Dirks said. "I appreciate all of the time and energy they all put in."

SWC GBX AT STATE

South Wasco girls take fourth place at state tourney

By Mike Weber
For Columbia Gorge News

The South Wasco County girls basketball team enjoyed its most successful season in 20 years by taking fourth place in the Oregon Class 1A Community Bank/Steens/Baker County State Tournament June 21-24 at Baker High School and Powder Valley High.

South Wasco, guided by fourth-year coach Carly Johnson, won 60-58 over Trinity Lutheran Saints to earn the fourth-place trophy June 24 at Baker High School. It marked the Lady Redsidess' highest state tournament finish since 2001, when they won the state title.

"For our seniors this was a great way to conclude our season and it was so exciting for them," said Johnson. "I've coached them since they were in eighth grade, so this was a great experience for them. After four years, all our hard work finally paid off. We all cried our eyes out in the locker room after the game because we were so emotional and so happy with the way our season ended. It was a wonderful experience for the whole team."

The Redsidess won three of four games in the 16-team tournament, including a 52-48 win over the No. 8 seeded North Douglas Warriors in the first round.

"The girls played awesome in the first game, and it was such a relief to know that they could play so well after making the long drive out there," said Johnson. "It was a great way to start off the tournament and just being able to stay in the winners bracket was just awesome too, because we clinched a spot in the Baker eight-team quarterfinals."

Senior Destiny Mora-Lopez scored 23 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and had two blocked shots to help lead the Redsidess. Senior Jade McCoy had 14



The Wasco County girls basketball team poses with their trophy after taking fourth place in the Oregon Class 1A Community Bank/Steens/Baker County State Tournament. Mike Weber photo

points, five rebounds and three assists and junior Kylie Iverson had 11 points and four rebounds.

South Wasco lost 65-26 in the June 22 quarterfinals versus the eventual state champion and No. 1 seeded Crane Mustangs (13-0). The High Desert League champions won their second consecutive title with a 75-54 win over the Country Christian Cougars June 24.

"We played awful against Crane, but they were the only team we lost to, and they won the championship," said Johnson. "We've played them several times over the last few years. Obviously, they're a great team, they played very well, but we just made too many mistakes and that's something that we normally don't do. They're a fantastic team and we just didn't play very well."

The Redsidess shot 17 percent from the field and committed 28 turnovers. The 26 points were fewest for South Wasco in a game this season. Mora-Lopez led the Redsidess with 15 points and six rebounds.

South Wasco bounced back with a 64-44 win over the No. 5 seed Nixyaawii Golden Eagles June 23. The Redsidess led from the entire game and the 64 points were

the most they scored in any game. Mora-Lopez had a career high 24 of those points and added 20 rebounds and two blocks. Jade McCoy had 17 points and seven rebounds.

"The Nixyaawii game was my absolutely favorite game of the tournament," said Johnson. "My girls were very fired up before the game and it was really an intense game too. We had lots of fouls and it was a pretty rough and physical game and we got kind of frustrated at times. We battled through it though and we shot the lights out offensively and we just played a really great game against the No. 5 ranked team in the tournament."

The players had what they called a good luck charm, which was a little squeeze toy spirit pig that they used often to make a squeaking noise. Johnson said it always made them happy to have it and helped provide them with an upbeat and positive attitude

throughout the four-day tournament.

In last Thursday's fourth-place contest versus No. 11 seed Trinity Lutheran, South Wasco jumped in front 16-6 after the first quarter and led 23-15 at halftime. The Redsidess' momentum continued in the third as they extended the margin to 46-29 after three quarters. The Saints fought back, outscoring the Redsidess 29-14 in the fourth to trim the margin to two at the end. Iverson scored a career-high 20 and had eight rebounds and Miles scored 14 and had four assists. "All the girls seemed to be really inspired to play an outstanding game and that's exactly what they did," said Johnson. "In the last minute, we were up by 10 points and then number 42 (Eli Kent) just went off and she was able to score some quick baskets and then our lead was down to only two points. Luckily, we were able to hold them off."

The senior duo of Mora-Lopez and Jade McCoy played the final game of their South Wasco High School careers. Mora-Lopez scored 10 points and had 15 rebounds and five blocks. Mora-Lopez was selected by coaches to the all-tourney second team. Jade McCoy had 12 points, eight rebounds, three steals and three assists. Jade's sister Sadie had four points and a team-high five assists. Kent scored 42 of her team's 58 points for Trinity.

Mora-Lopez will continue her basketball career in college, as she received an athletic scholarship to attend Central Maine Community College.

HRV GBX WRAPUP

HRV girls look to future

By Joe Petshow
For Columbia Gorge News

Small victories, not in the win-loss column, should pay future dividends for the Hood River Valley girls basketball team.

HRV was winless this COVID-extended — and shortened — season through 13 games. But Coach Steve Noteboom knew going in that it would be a learning experience for his young team.

"The girls have shown a lot of progress and the future looks promising," Noteboom said.

The Eagles' season ended in the first round of the Intermountain Conference playoffs June 21 when they lost 55-46 at Redmond. It was third meeting between the two teams and the score progression (at least between the first and then the second and third games) exemplified some of the promising future Noteboom referred to. Redmond easily handled HRV the first game June 1, 52-27, but the next two contests were competitive until late.

"We played a more consistent game and did not have the huge letdown that we had in many of our games early in the season," Noteboom explained of the latter two contests, decided by single digits.

Inconsistency is typical of younger teams; HRV's varsity roster included one senior, Molly Routson, who missed most of the first half of the schedule because of injuries and softball commitments. Routson will play softball next season at Mt. Hood Community College.

"Our lone senior this year was Molly Routson. She was a two-year starter for HRV. She did not always fill up the stat sheet, but she was our best defender and was a physical, competitive player," Noteboom said. "We will miss her leadership and positive attitude."

Five freshmen played on the varsity, including the team's leading scorer, Marina Castaneda, who scored 20 points against Redmond in the season finale. "Marina Castaneda continued to be our biggest scoring threat and much of our offense went through her," Noteboom said. "She had a season average of 14.7 points per game."

Castaneda was selected by the conference's coaches to second-team all-league and figures prominently in HRV's future.

Ridgeview defeated Redmond in the semifinals, 68-24, and won the IMC championship game, 51-29, over Pendleton.

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