

Knappa Loggers are set for big year

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The “Super Sophs” from last year are back as juniors, and the Knappa Loggers have made some additions that could make them one of the top contenders at the 2A level this winter.

And not just this season. This group could be around awhile.

“If some of these freshmen develop, we could have a nice little run in the next year or so,” said Knappa coach Chris Spencer, entering his fourth year.

“I’m excited to see where this team can go. We did it all on hard work and hustle last year, and this year we can add more skill and talent. Everybody’s a year older, and we didn’t lose any of that toughness that we’re known for. Hopefully we can make a run and get back to where we need to be.”

THE NWL

The lineup of teams in Northwest League boys basketball looks pretty imposing, on any schedule:

Vernonia is the defending state champion at the 2A level, following their 57-49 win over Regis in last year’s state title game.

The Loggers lost their high scorer from that game (Robert Connor), along with three other



Jason Miller drives to the basket during practice at Knappa High School.

seniors, but they also return some key components from a team that finished 28-1 overall last year, and won the NWL with a 16-0 record.

The league welcomes **Columbia Christian** from the Class 1A ranks — the Knights lost one starter off a team that made it to the 1A state championship game a year ago (lost to Sherman, 53-45).

Life Christian finished third in the NWL standings last year at 11-5 (one game ahead of

Knappa), but the Lions’ season came to an end in the league playoffs with a loss to Knappa.

“I’d say it’s probably the toughest league in the state,” said Spencer, whose team made the state playoffs, and only lost one starter. “We have potentially four state-qualifying teams, and we only have three guaranteed spots.

“Vernonia is bringing back (6-foot-3 junior) Clay Sullivan and the rest of the characters who won a state title last year.

They have a lot of talent and experience, and they proved that they can win games.

“Columbia Christian has moved into our league, and they’re returning a team intact that lost in the finals at the 1A level. They’re big. Life Christian returns the Quinlan brothers (Bo and Zeke), two of the most talented players in the league.”

First place may be on the line Feb. 9, when Life Christian visits Knappa.

KNAPPA BOYS BASKETBALL

Coach: Chris Spencer, 4th year

2015-16: 17-11 (10-6 NWL)

Playoffs: Lost state playoff at Western Mennonite, 53-57

All-League Losses: Dakota Severson

All-League Returners: Jason Miller, Sr.; Dale Takalo, Jr.

THE LOGGERS

“We have one senior who played last year, so we basically have the same returning group,” Spencer said. “With nine freshmen, our numbers have increased dramatically (27 total). We’re picking up right where we left off.”

Leading the way — the same two who will lead the way next year as well — are juniors Dale Takalo and Colton Weirup.

“We’ll be looking for Dale and Colton to score,” Spencer said. “Dale (a 6-foot-3, do-everything player) is a two-year starter who was probably as good as anybody in the state his sophomore year, and Colton has played a lot of minutes.”

In addition, senior Jason Miller “is much-improved,” he said. “He can do everything. We’ll need for him to play

defense and be our lockdown defender.”

Seniors Michal Goodman, Ethan Rubus and Mitch Geisler “will be the guys banging down low,” Spencer said. “They’re extremely hard workers, team leaders, and set the tone for our toughness. We wouldn’t be a complete team without those guys.”

Timber Engblom is back for his sophomore season, and the Loggers gained a transfer student, junior Kaleb Miller from Pleasant Hill.

He was injured on the last play of the season in football, but will not miss much action. The former Billie will definitely play a key role in basketball.

“The best thing is that we’re a year older, bigger, stronger and taller,” Spencer said. “We don’t look like a bunch of young kids running around. We look like a varsity basketball team.”

Juniors Braedon Eltagonde and Reece Hunt also provide depth.

“Braedon can play multiple positions,” Spencer said. “And Timber is good at getting to the basket, and will be an improved defender. He could potentially have a breakout year.”

The list of talent “is a great problem to have,” he said. “Our practices have been very spirited and intense. It’s been fun.”



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Knappa Loggers’ Andrew Goozee, right, practices with teammate David Patterson at Knappa High School.

State wrestling qualifiers return for Knappa squad

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

With three returning state qualifiers from a year ago, the expectations are high in the Knappa wrestling room, as the Loggers prepare for a new season.

Last year, Knappa’s five state qualifying wrestlers were a combined 1-10 at state, with the lone victory coming from freshman Luke Goozee at 113 pounds.

Scoring at state is easier said than done, but Knappa coach Dan Owings has a good mix returning.

“We have three of last year’s state competitors back — Andrew Goozee, David Patterson and Luke Goozee.”

Junior Reuben Cruz is still out from a football injury suffered over the summer, “and probably won’t compete this season,” Owings said.

Still, the Loggers will be plenty competitive.

“Dawson Whiteside, Spencer Fulton and Nathan Hoikka are all looking good,” Owings said. “We have two girls on the team — Miranda Godwin and Kaitlyn Truax. Truax is a name that you will recognize (her brother Nate was a state placer), so I hope that will be a bright spot.

“Micah Sapp is brand new

THE LOGGERS

Spencer Fulton, Jr.
Miranda Godwin, Sr.
Andrew Goozee, Sr.
Luke Goozee, So.
Nathan Hoikka, So.
Justin Mayes, So.
David Patterson, Jr.
Justin Perdew, Sr.
Robert Pina, Fr.
Kaleb Roe, Fr.
Micah Sapp, Fr.
Kaitlyn Truax, Jr.
Dawson Whiteside, Sr.

but is learning. Kaleb Roe comes from the Roe family (Chase Roe was a multiple state-placer a few years ago).

“I think we will do OK in tournaments,” he added. “We don’t have all 14 weight classes covered, so we probably won’t do well in team duels. But we don’t wrestle many duels — mainly at the Oregon Classic in Redmond. We have a new team coming into our Special District 1 this year (Toledo). They had a team a few years back.”

The rest of the district lineup includes Monroe, Neah-Kah-Nie, Nestucca, Siletz Valley, Triangle Lake, Vernonia and Waldport.

Knappa hosts its annual “Mix-N-Match” meet Wednesday, with the action starting at 5 p.m.

Lady Loggers are hoping for better start

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

A 1-14 start to the 2015-16 season was a lot to overcome for the Knappa girls basketball team, which finished 6-19 overall last year.

The Loggers made the most of the league playoffs, going 1-1, but the ultimate goal for a 2A team is usually a trip to Pendleton. The third year just might be the charm for Knappa coach Marie Green.

“So far it’s shaping up pretty well,” said Green, the second week of practice. “I’m pretty confident in the group that we’ve put together. The atmosphere just seems a lot different this year.”

THE NWL

Northwest League girls basketball was not exactly a powerhouse last season. No team made it to Pendleton, with Vernonia, Faith Bible and Neah-Kah-Nie all losing in the Sweet 16 round.

“City Christian will be tough — they return their whole varsity squad, and they were really good last year,” Green said. “Gaston is going to be improved because they didn’t have any seniors, either.

“Neah-Kah-Nie will be a little down — they lost Alaina (Holm, the league’s Player of the Year), but they still have Caitlyn Scull, who’s such a tremendous player, with a great shot.”

Columbia Christian enters the Northwest League (up from Class 1A), and brings 6-3 senior Samantha Howard; while Life Christian (which beat Knappa in league play last season) will not have a varsity team this year.

“I’m pretty confident that we should be able to do fairly well,” Green said.

THE LADY LOGGERS

Knappa lost just one senior (Bailey Corder), along with 5-foot-10 post Kaitlyn Truax, who will be wrestling.

Still, a solid group returns,



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Devin Vandergriff, a Knappa senior, looks for her next move during practice at Knappa High School. Third year just may be the charm for Knappa coach Marie Green.

Logger Tip-Off Classic

The Daily Astorian

The 2016 “Knappa Tip-Off” will officially open the winter sports season, with a full slate of games Friday and Saturday at Knappa High School.

The Loggers will serve as the host team, with visitors including Astoria, Clatskanie, Ilwaco and Toledo.

Friday’s Schedule
(Times are approximate)
4 p.m.: Clatskanie vs Astoria (Girls)

5:30: Clatskanie vs Astoria (Boys)
7:00: Toledo vs Knappa (Girls)
8:30: Toledo vs Knappa (Boys)
Saturday’s Schedule
10 a.m.: Ilwaco vs Knappa (Girls JV)
11:30: Astoria vs Knappa (Boys JV2)
1 p.m.: Clatskanie vs Knappa (Boys JV)

Varsity Games

2:30: Clatskanie vs Toledo (Boys)
4:00: Clatskanie vs Toledo (Girls)
5:30: Astoria vs Knappa (Girls)
7:00: Astoria vs Knappa (Boys)

including seniors Kaitlyn Landwehr and Devin Vandergriff, and juniors Mack Strain and Paris Vanderburg.

Juniors Ressa Inman and Emma Taggett have also seen varsity action, as have sophomores Laicee Hendrickson and Kourtney Fischer.

Three freshmen who may end up playing varsity minutes include Sophia Carlson, Aiko Miller and Madeline Weaver.

“All the freshmen are so quick that they’re pushing the returners,” Green said. “It’s nice to see that hunger in the younger girls coming in.”

The tallest player is Landwehr, at 5-10.

“We’ll be a shorter team, but we’re quick, and I have a lot of girls that can interchange,” Green said. “We’ll start Kaitlyn at post, after being a point guard the last

KNAPPA GIRLS BASKETBALL

Coach: Marie Green, 3rd year

2015-16: 6-19 (5-9 NWL)

Playoffs: Defeated Gaston, lost at City Christian in league playoffs.

All-League Returners: Kaitlyn Landwehr, Sr.; Paris Vanderburg, Jr.

three years. I don’t want to have her exert so much pressure just from bringing the ball up.

“I feel confident with Devin and Paris, and also Aiko or Madeline helping us clear the press.”

The Loggers also hope to have more luck with players staying healthy this season.

“Who in basketball has four people on the same team out with a concussion? That’s what really crippled us last year,” said Green, who has added former Knappa Logger Tracie (Nyggaard) Brockey to the coaching staff.

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