

New league suits Warrenton just fine

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

A league re-alignment was one of the best things that could have happened for Warrenton basketball in 2018-19.

After suffering through consecutive league records of 0-16, 2-14, 1-15, 1-15 and 0-16 the previous five years in the old Lewis & Clark League, the Warriors became part of the newly formed Coastal Range League, and promptly turned in a 13-12 overall record, 4-8 in league.

Not only that, the Warriors played in their first playoff game since 2011 and won their first post-season game since 2010, defeating Willamina in a league playoff.

Head coach Nate McBride — a league co-Coach of the Year — hopes for a little more luck in his seventh year at the helm, as the Warriors return with a strong lineup.

The league

Clatskanie, Rainier and Warrenton had a much easier go of it last year, with private schools such as De La Salle, Catlin Gabel and Portland Adventist remaining with the old Lewis & Clark League.

The Knights of De La Salle eventually won their second straight (and played in their fourth consecutive) state championship.

In the first year of the Coastal Range League, Clatskanie and Rainier tied for first with 10-2 league records. Warrenton and Willamina tied for third at 4-8.

Clatskanie was the only team out of the CRL to qualify for the state tournament, but the Tigers have to replace four all-league players lost to graduation. Clatskanie will also have its third different coach in three years.

Rainier returns seniors Easton



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

A Warrenton player receives a pass while running drills.

Crape and Connor Rea and sophomore Kenny Tripp.

"If you're looking for an interesting league to follow, it's this one," McBride said. "Clatskanie has a lot of kids back, but they're on their third coach in three years (Ryan Svenson, Deshaun Combs, Kim Rogers), and fourth in five years. Dawson Evenson (6-foot-5 senior) is probably the best big kid in the league."

If anything, the CRL was very generous in all-league selections last season, with Clatskanie placing an unprecedented eight players on the all-league team.

The Tigers lost Player of the Year Cooper Blodgett to graduation but return seniors J'Kari Combs and Evenson and sophomore Andre Combs.

Rainier graduated Joey Tripp, but the Columbians "still have two of the best players in the league," McBride said, in Crape and Rea.

Taft lost a lot of size (Ray Dar-

rington and Tyee Fisher), while Willamina "graduated five or six, but two of their best players are back," including Kaleb Floyd, a 6-0 junior guard.

Before the Warriors open league play, they will play a series of non-league games that will have them prepared for anything the Coastal Range League throws their way.

Warrenton plays a nonleague contest at Clatsop Community College against Mannahouse Christian (formerly City Christian), followed by successive games against Santiam Christian and Pleasant Hill (both at the Dayton Tournament), road games at Amity and Knappa and a home contest against Astoria.

"The middle part of our schedule is really tough," McBride said. "I just wish we didn't have all those teams in a row."

The Warriors

Dalton Knight was one of four

Warriors lost to graduation last year, and the absence of Warrenton's high-scoring, sharp-shooting guard leaves a tough hole to fill in the lineup.

On the plus side, "we're a little more dynamic," McBride said. "In the past, we relied on one kid, whether it was Brock (Johnson) or Christian (Holt) or Dalton."

Instead, McBride will look to a trio of seniors who have had loads of success in other sports in the last year.

Devin Jackson, Austin Little and Jake Morrow took the baseball team to a state championship game last spring and played huge roles in taking Warrenton football to the state quarterfinals.

"Devin has some offensive skills, Austin is a long, athletic kid who can pick up the slack and Jake can do a great job of distributing the ball," McBride said.

The coach said the Warriors will have a "seven or eight-player rotation," with a mix of youth and experience, but not a lot of size.

Freshman Erik Cooley is "probably the only true post player we have," McBride said. "We don't have a lot of size, so we'll try to pressure the ball and play a strong defense. We hope to pressure the ball and make our defense work for our offense."

Also in Warrenton's regular rotation of players will be sophomore Hordie Bodden Bodden, whose role increased as the 2018-19 season progressed.

"Hordie is a dynamic athlete, and we'll look for him to continue his development," McBride said.

Adding depth to the Warriors lineup will be juniors Ethan Green and Jalen Maddox and first-year varsity seniors Albert Nakka and J.J. Salcedo.

"Jalen has shown that he has skills and Ethan has the ability to score the ball," McBride said.



WARRENTON BOYS BASKETBALL

Coach: Nate McBride, 7th year

2018-19: 13-12 (4-8 CRL)

League Playoffs: Defeated

Willamina, lost to Rainier

All-League losses: Dalton Knight,

Ayden Stephens

All-League returner: Devin

Jackson, Sr.

SCHEDULE

Dec. 6-7 at Vernonia Tournament

Dec. 9 at Gaston 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 11 Neah-Kah-Nie 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 13 Mannahouse Christian
7:30 p.m.

Dec. 19-21 at Dayton Tournament

Dec. 28 at Amity 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 30 at Knappa 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 4 Astoria 6 p.m.

Jan. 7 at Yamhill-Carlton 5:30 p.m.

Jan. 17 at Taft 6 p.m.

Jan. 21 Rainier 6 p.m.

Jan. 24 at Clatskanie 6 p.m.

Jan. 28 Willamina 6 p.m.

Feb. 4 Taft 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 7 at Rainier 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 11 Clatskanie 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 14 at Willamina 7:30 p.m.