

## Suppah hopes to repeat win at state

By Brian Mortensen  
Spilyay Tymoo

Jaylyn Suppah said the 2002-03 season, in which her Madras White Buffaloes won the Oregon Class 3A girls basketball championship, was mostly fun, sometimes stressful, but 100 percent basketball.

She'd be happy to do it all over again during her senior year.

Suppah, a senior forward and one of the Buffs' co-team captains along with senior guard Raylene Thomas, is one of the last links to Madras' last state championship, when the Buffs won the Tri-Valley League title and swept through the Class 3A championship bracket, ending with a win over Burns for the state title.

"I'd do it every year," she said.

A two-year starter at forward (she also started some games as a sophomore in '02-03), Suppah will have a lot to say about whether the White Buffaloes return to the state playoffs after last year's absence, as a senior and as a team captain.

The Buffaloes finally playing at full capacity, after a brief stretch earlier this month when they were missing players, coinciding with a stretch in which they lost seven out of nine games following a 3-1 start, Suppah, who averages 10.0 points per game said she thinks the team will be ready to make a move in the Tri-Valley League.

Suppah has scored 35 points in the Buffs' last two games.

When the Buffaloes started league play at Sherwood, they had only seven players available, with one suspended due to poor grades, one having just returned from a Hawaiian vacation over the holiday break and one gone to a family funeral. Six players played the bulk of the minutes in a 17-point loss to the Bowmen. The team rebounded with a four-point home win over Valley Catholic three nights later. The Buffs were 2-2 in Tri-Valley play pending their game against LaSalle Tuesday.

"I feel confident that once everybody gets back into it and we have all our players back, I think we'll be able to (compete)," she said. "Because in practice it's kind of hard to go hard if you don't have all your players there, and so I think that was kind of part of it, but I think once everybody's back into things, we'll get back into it and our games will start going the (right) direction rather than the other direction."

Suppah said she comes from what she calls a "basketball family." Growing up on the Warm Springs reservation, she originally learned to play the game, she said from her grandfather, and her uncle coached a team of nine and 10-year-olds.

"His daughters were a couple years older than me, and I would go practice with them," she said.

Suppah, at 5-8, is a gritty rebounder who can also handle the ball and shoot from outside.

Her favorite part of the game, though, along with rebounding, is running the fast break.

"When you get a fast re-



Brian Mortensen/Spilyay  
Jaylyn Suppah averages 10 points a game in her senior year.

bound, and you outlet, and on the other end and we score, that's probably the funnest time," she said.

"She keeps us together. She has a lot of ability to keep team together when we're out of sorts defensively," Madras coach Bruce Reece said of Suppah. "She keeps everybody going in the right direction."

Suppah became a starter for the Madras varsity her sophomore year, playing for a team that had placed at state the previous two seasons, including a second-place finish in 2001 before she ran into an old nemesis about midway through the season - her knees.

"I've always had bad knees, and it got really bad that year," she said. "I had to get (special) soles made for me."

When she was able to come back following a two-week absence, Suppah was the first player off the bench as the White Buffaloes reached the state tournament.

It was at that tournament Suppah said she had her best game as a high school player, in the second-round game against LaGrande.

"I did everything right," she said. "I didn't score a whole lot, but my defense was pretty good that night."

"People told me a lot of things about how I did and they said it was one of the best games I had."

After that 54-36 Madras win, the White Buffaloes went on to beat Pleasant Hill, Tillamook, and finally Burns to win the state championship, finishing off a xx-x season and their second state championship in girls basketball.

"I still can't describe it," Suppah said of that enchanted season. "It was exciting, sometimes low. We had problems every team has problems, but it was probably mostly fun and serious."

"It took a lot of time and effort. It was like basketball, 24/7."

Having such a huge part of a state championship carries a certain cache, particularly with a young team, particularly one that has only three returning

play well enough to catch a college coach's eye and hopefully earn a basketball scholarship.

"If not then, I'll probably go to school, probably Portland State or Chemeketa (Community College in Salem)," she said. "I want to go school for a while, but I'm not 100 percent sure yet."

She's not certain about school in Oregon because, as she says, her future could include an international experience.

"Either this summer or next summer, I want to go to Italy and go to school there or just go over there to work for a while," she said. "I've always just liked Italy, and it's just someplace I want to go. And if I get a chance, I want to try to play."

"If I don't get a scholarship here, I want to try to play over there."

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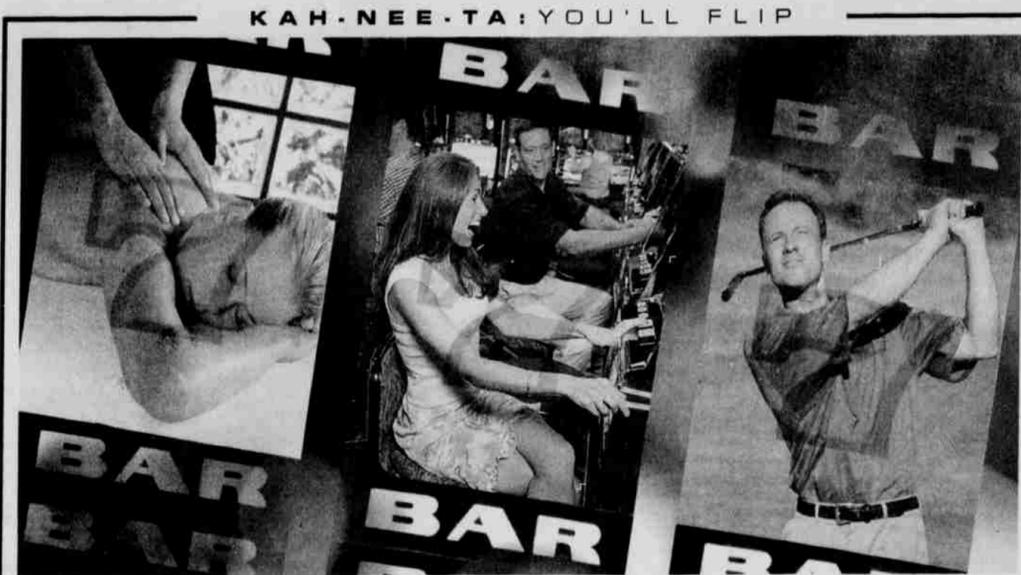
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