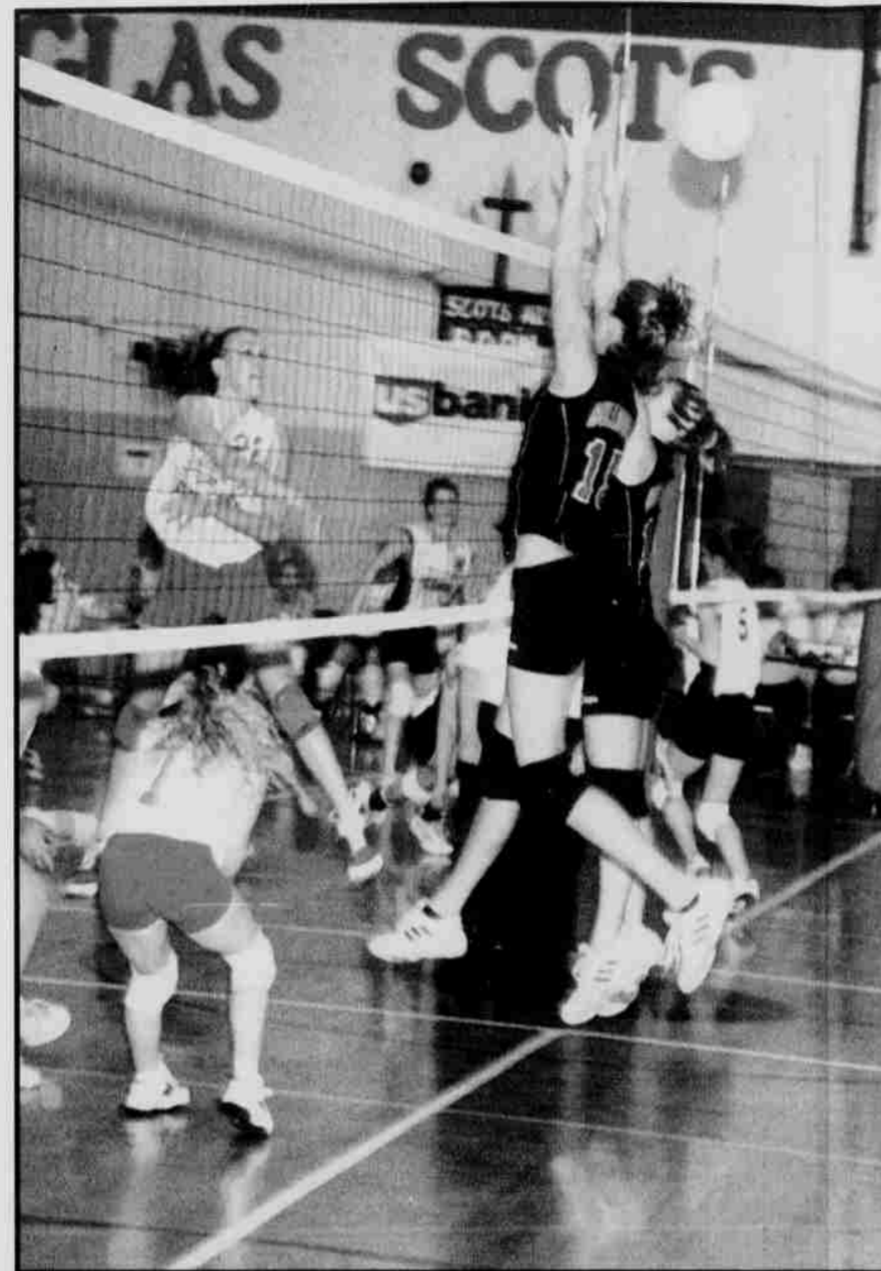




Photos by Ron Karten



**Intensity** — The Willamina High School Volleyball Team went to the state playoffs this year for the first time in school history. Although the team lost in their first two games and was eliminated from the championship tournament at David Douglas High School in Portland, the season was a success and bodes well for the future of the Willamina Volleyball program. Coach Carrie Zimbrick (upper left) shows her intensity with her team in trying to urge them on to victory.



## Willamina Sought Some of the Old Glory

■ The young football team still has a lot to learn.

By Ron Karten

The Willamina Bulldogs football team was looking for the old glory days this year, but it was not to be. In the 1980s and 90s, head coach Ron Caligure led the Bulldogs to the state playoffs in three of eight years. Since then, his travels have taken him to coaching jobs in Dallas and at Central High School in Independence.

Last year, he returned to Willamina as assistant coach, shepherding the team through a difficult 1-8 season. This year, as head coach, he was expecting better, and succeeded, but not by a lot. As *Smoke Signals* went to press, the team was sitting on a 2-6 overall record.

"I always expect better," he said. At the season-opening Jamboree at Scio, the Bulldogs opened on a positive note with the team winning two of three games. Overall, Caligure "was really pleased" with the offense and thought "the defense was really good against the run." In the second game, the team's pass defense, he said, "was suspect."

Athletes to keep an eye on for the 2002 season included senior Matt Zimbrick, a wide receiver/split end and Tribal member, senior Freddy Ayala and sophomore Bryan Fendall, both running backs.

Regarding the interior line, Caligure was "looking for good things out of Jason Bergon (playing center or tackle) and Jon Talmadge (tight end or full-back)."

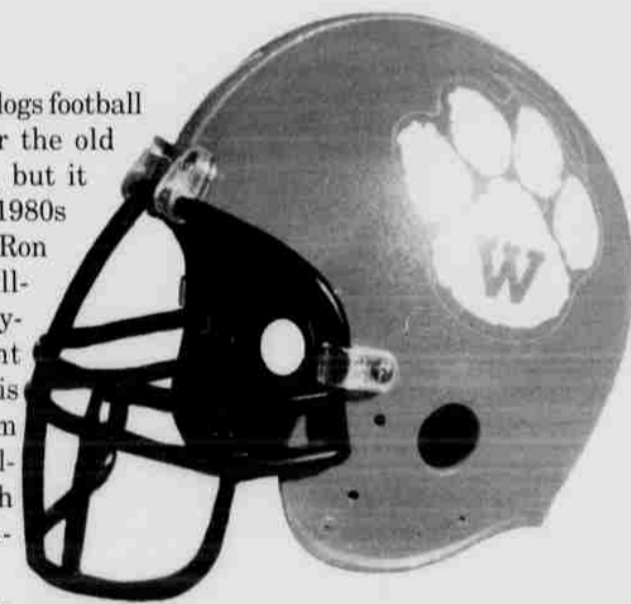
New players covered the rest of the line this year, he said.

The West Valley League also includes Amity, which has been state champ for the last four years, Dayton, which is a perennial statewide competitor, Santiam Christian, Nestucca, Gaston, and regular rival, Sheridan.

This year, the Willamina-Sheridan rivalry turned into something of a rout for the Bulldogs with a 42-13 victory at the end of September. It demonstrated some real character in the team, coming as it did after a crushing defeat a week earlier at the hands of Amity.

In addition to Zimbrick, Tribal members on the team also included Lee Wilson, running and defensive back, and Nick Kimsey, a full back, running back, and on defense, a line backer.

The team faced two devastating injuries, including running back Josh Krehbiel, who broke his ankle, and backup quarterback Koby Bryant, who broke his hand early in the season. ■



## Perrydale QB Turns Program Around

■ Tribal member Keith Brown never misses practice and is also a good student.

By Ron Karten

Tribal member Keith Brown's dad has been coaching him in football since the second grade. Last year, as a junior, Brown shared the quarterbacking responsibilities for Perrydale, a 1A school with an 8-man football team.

This year, Brown is the lead quarterback. And no surprise to the team, Perrydale is number one in its league and number two statewide in the latest poll of the Oregon 8-Man Football Coaches Association.

"We knew we were going to be good," said Brown the player. "We've been playing together for a long time. We really made an effort this year. It was either now or never. We knew we were going to have a better shot than last year."

"He's just a great kid," said Perrydale Athletic Director and Assistant Football Coach Chris Gubrud. "He's got a great work ethic and good athletic ability. He's one of those kids that combines athleticism with great character."

"He never has missed a practice. He never whines or complains. He is completely coachable and never makes excuses."

Although Brown's statistics were not readily available, Gubrud said, "He's become extremely efficient - about half of his passes are for touchdowns. The biggest thing is he doesn't make mistakes."

"He comes from a great family and he's one of those kids that's real savvy with athletics. He has a lot of parental support in every-



thing he does, not just sports.

"He's developed into a team leader," Gubrud went on. "He's shouldered a lot of the weight - great command in the huddle. It's turned around our football program. We used to lose games because we missed the big plays. He makes the big plays at crucial times."

The highlight of the year for Brown was "beating St. Paul. The school's only beaten them once in our history, and my class has never beaten them."

How does he explain it: "We were prepared and came out fired up, not intimidated like last year."

The team went 5-1 for the season, clobbered (46-0) McKenzie High School in the opening round of the state playoffs, and easily defeated (62-34) the three time state champ, Dufer, in the second round, and at press time were scheduled to face St. Paul in the state championship game on November 30.

This year marks the first that Perrydale has reached the playoffs.

## Strong Willamina Volleyball Team Met Its Match at State

■ Next year looks even better.

By Ron Karten

With a 15-6 record, the Lady Bulldogs went to State Volleyball Playoffs for the first time in school history. With unanticipated losses toward the end of the season to Santiam Christian, Dayton and Amity, the Willamina volleyball whiz-kids were nevertheless excited about a season that could be a sign of things to come in future years. Second in league play, the Lady Bulldogs ran into the ultimate state champs, Union, in the first round, and lost a squeaker to Weston-McEwen in the second round of the state championships.

"It was an amazing season," said Coach Carrie Zimbrick. "They accomplished everything they set out to accomplish this year, which was to get to state."

"Our big strength," said Zimbrick, "is that we're young."

The team has only two seniors along with six juniors and four sophomores.

"We won't have to replace any-

body next year."

Even with a great deal of talent, said Zimbrick, "We still need to develop some strength in the hitting positions. We do have one of the leading killers in the district," she said, referring to her daughter, Tribal member Caitlin, who also plays in a women's power league. (And "killing" in volleyball-speak is a successful spike or point.)

Caitlin was an honorable mention in last year's All-League poll and this year she was named to the second All-League team, while teammates Jessica Cruickshank and Jessica White were named All-League honorable mention.

"Her (Caitlin's) game has improved tremendously," said Zimbrick.

Another honorable mention for all-league last year was Cass Cochrun, this year a senior utility player, also an honorable mention all-leaguer this year.

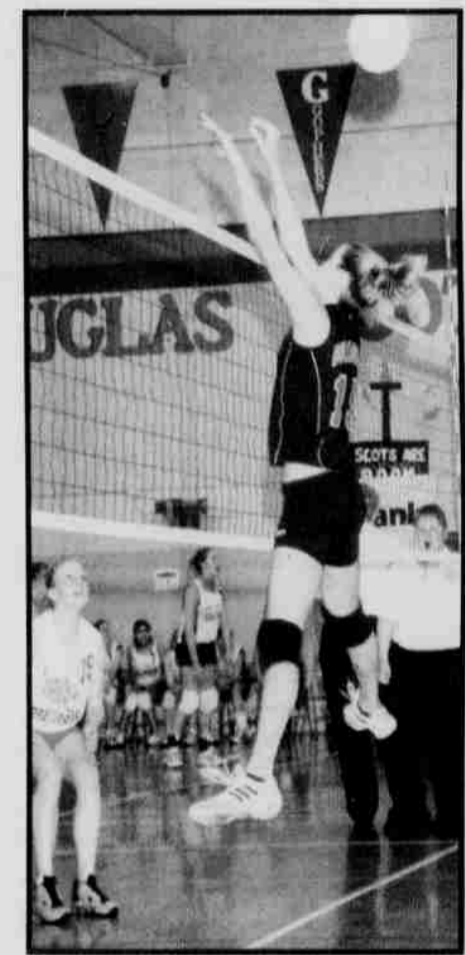
Zimbrick praised junior Jessica White as an "outstanding setter. She really commits her body to everything. She's really willing to hit the floor to save balls."

She named junior Jessica Cruickshank as "the second leading hitter in the kill department," and praised junior Breann Wilson as the teams "defense specialist," junior Alex Bishop, also a Tribal member, as "a front row hitter who can place it on the spot," and senior Jessy Rosenberry, as an excellent setter who came back from a wrist injury.

"I'm really stressing their mental game," said Zimbrick. "They're tremendous athletes and they know it."

Tribal member Janelle Lara was a junior varsity player last year and next year will join the varsity team, said Zimbrick.

"They've already set their goals higher for next year," said Zimbrick. ■



## Shannon McKenzie Runs a Great Race

■ Barlow Junior has racked up a string of impressive Cross Country victories.

By Ron Karten

Barlow Cross Country coach, Jim Babson, called Tribal member Shannon McKenzie, "Just a great girl. Never complains. She's very coachable. Extremely durable. She never gets injured."

She is a 3.85-point student. She plays the flute.

But on the Cross Country course, she is something else. She played soccer (a fall sport) and ran track (a spring sport) in her freshman year and then last year, the fall of her sophomore year, she traded soccer for Cross Country which is a 5,000 meter (3.1 mile) course over hill and dale.

"I've always been able to do distance," she said. "My coaches were wanting me to do cross country and I like that a lot better."

She made the all-state team and finished in the middle, somewhere. But she has improved dramatically this year, said Babson.

"Some is experience but she worked hard. She trained really well. She's a very disciplined kid."

"I just know that if I work hard now, it's going to pay off in the future," she said. "If I work hard now, it will most likely get easier."

This year, she finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Seaside Invitational in September, a region wide race, this year including 300 runners from California, Oregon and Washington.

"It's a fun race," she said. "It's a really good course. I like the ones that have a lot of hills - that go hilly and then flat."

McKenzie finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Mt. Hood Crossover held at Grant High School in October, which included runners from the Portland Interscholastic League and the Mt. Hood Conference. And, said Babson, of Barlow's number one runner, "she's

won several smaller meets with runners from only three or four schools."

What's ahead for McKenzie? Babson thinks she's going national. "If she runs well at State (November 2 at Lane Community College, 1:30 p.m.) that would help her go to the Kinney Meet," (sponsored by Kenney Shoes), held in San Diego in December. If she gets within the top 23 at State, she qualifies for the Border Clash sponsored by Nike and held at their Portland campus. Border Clash pits an Oregon team against a Washington (state) team.

And also in the cards is the possibility that she could join the select team of WINGS, an Indian running team based in Kansas. "Last year I tried and got declined," she said.

"It just made me think. It pushed me for this year. That was my goal to make them want me. Made me work real hard to get where I am right now."

She described her recent one-second victory over Grant High School runner Annaliese Chapa. "It was very scary. All this stuff was going through my head - 'I got to stay with it.' It was very dramatic."

Not all have been victories, but McKenzie said this about losing - "When I've done my hardest, then I'm pretty satisfied."

McKenzie is the daughter of Sherrie McKenzie, the niece of Claudette Parazoo and the older sister of two brothers and a sister, who get out of school early to watch her races. She does not know, however, whether they like to watch her run or they just like to get out of school early. ■



Photo courtesy of Paul Quirke

**She's The Best** — Tribal member Shannon McKenzie (left in blue uniform) leads a group of cross-country runners at meet earlier this year. Shannon beat Annaliese Chapa — the daughter of Oregon track legend Rudy Chapa — to highlight her young running career.

## Willamina Cross Country Teams Improving

■ Boys team is number one in academic achievement.

By Ron Karten

Cross Country is a growing sport at Willamina High School. "We haven't had many girls participate," acknowledges third year coach Ariah Fasana. Four participated this year.

The boys' team drew 11, and though the team finished third in the district, there was more dedication to the sport than Fasana has seen in the past.

"When I first began coaching, kids

were running to get in shape for another sport. Now, we're starting to get runners that are out to compete for the running."

On another level, too, the team has excelled. "The boys' team is number one in the state for academic achievement," said Fasana. "I don't know exactly what it is, but it's very close to a 4 point. I really emphasize that," said Fasana. ■