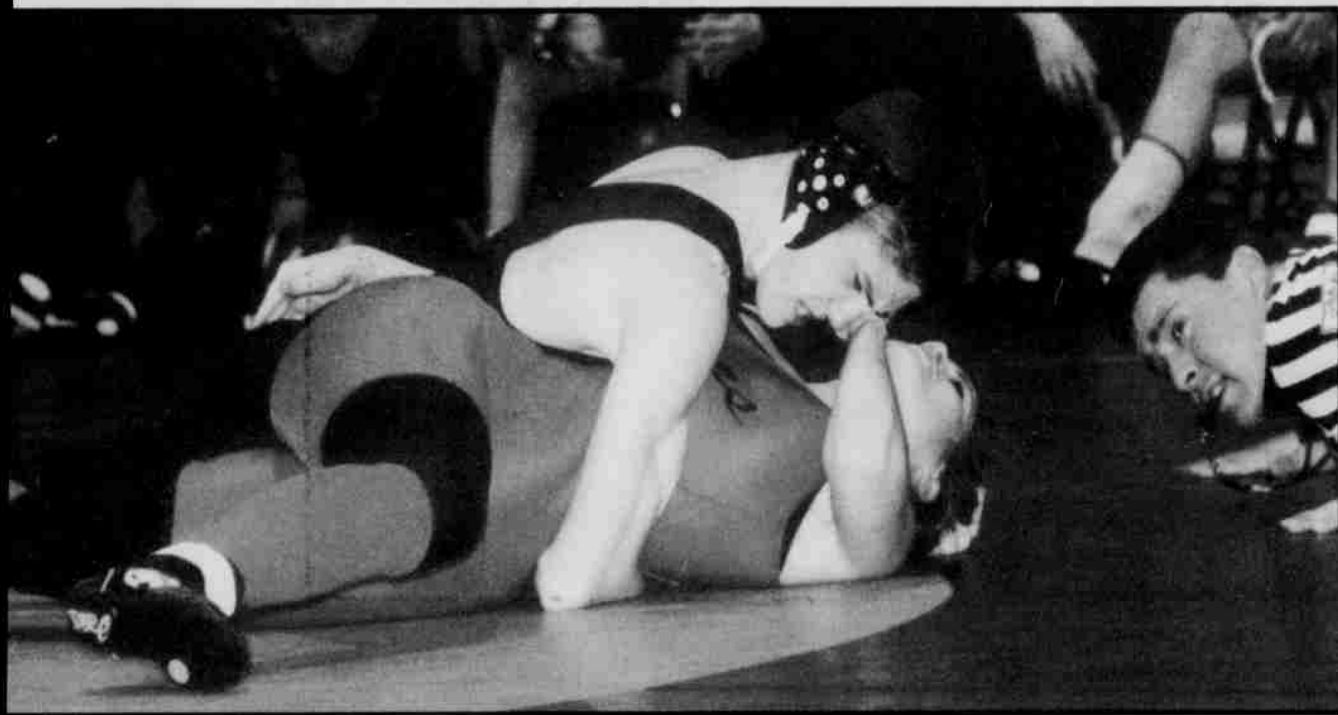


Basketball & Wrestling



Effort — Bulldog Senior Zach Bainter wrestles during the District 1 Wrestling Meet, held in Willamina on January 31.

Photos by Peta Tinda

The Dalles, with the state championships planned for the Coliseum in Portland on February 21 and 22.

For the State tournament this year, Fasana said, "Lee (Wilson) has a fairly good shot, or Brett (Leno)." Leno will wrestle at 119 at state and could face Wilson in this weight class.

Other standouts for the team this year expected to compete at State include senior Corey Bryant, 140 pounds, a state champ last year. Junior Vince Fagundes, 130 pounds, also competed at State last year. Junior Steve Schussman, 135 pounds, placed fifth in state as a freshman, but was defeated last year for a state berth by teammate Fagundes. Senior Jake Harper, 152 pounds, also went to state last year. Fasana also named Jared Staben (112) as a likely contender.

"There are a few others that have outside chances," Fasana said. "Zach Bainter at 130 and possibly Travis Schloder at 215."

With a 23-member squad, Fasana noted, "There are a handful of others that are good, solid kids and will do well."

"Wrestling's kind of strange," said Fasana. "You wrestle all year for the very end. (Earlier matches) add to your ranking, but if you don't win at district, you don't go to state."

"We're solid. No weak spots. No phenomenal all-stars, either. We have good balance this year. We really do. Our main thing is trying to get everyone healthy. There were a lot of bugs going around the last couple of weeks. We're trying to push real hard to get them into shape for the tournament." ■



Gaining Experience — 189-pound Freshman Brody Collins ties up with an opponent at the recent District 1 Wrestling meet held in Willamina on Friday, January 31.



Champ — Willamina Senior Corey Bryant, the defending state champion wrestling in the 140-pound weight class, attempts to turn an opponent with an arm bar.

Willamina Boys Basketball Has Hopes And Chances

■ Opening league play at 2-2 could have been better.

By Ron Karten

With 19 games under their belt and four left, the Bulldogs have played "average at best," according to Head Coach Cliff Toney, who supervises the Community Service Program for Yamhill County Juvenile Corrections during the day. "Not quite where we want to be. The kids have put a lot of expectations and hopes on themselves, to make it to state, a goal still attainable, but we've dug ourselves a little hole."



Photos by Peta Tinda

Skywalker — Tribal member and All-league player Matt Zimbrick leaps clear of his opponent to win the opening tip in a game against Nestucca. Zimbrick scored a career-high 28 points in the loss to Nestucca. Zimbrick scored 18 points, had 9 rebounds, 6 assists, 3 steals and 2 blocked shots in a win over Gaston.

The team is 4-6 in league play, still fourth in the league, which is enough to get them into the play-offs, but "we anticipated that we'd be 7-3 at this point."

Leading scorer for the team is senior and Tribal member Matt Zimbrick, who averages 17 points and 9 rebounds a game. "He's our go-to guy," said Toney. "One of the top three players in the league. An extremely talented kid. An extremely good kid. He's playing real well for us."

Tribal member Kevin Ruggles, who plays post under the basket, "has been playing very well lately." In the last three games, Ruggles has averaged 7 points and 8 rebounds a game. "He's been doing pretty well for us," said Toney.

Also performing well for the team is senior and Tribal member Nick Kimsey, who averages 4 points and 4 rebounds a game.

Team leader Freddie Ayala, point guard, averages 14 points and five steals a game.

Last year, the Bulldogs went to the league play-offs and lost to league champ, Dayton. This year, Toney is a little more low key. "With only four games left, I don't know if it's going to happen any more."

He pointed to play in the early season game against Amity to show that the team has the right stuff. "We were down by 14 points at the half. We trailed by 11 going into the fourth quarter. We got it to a



Solid — Tribal member Kevin Ruggles (right) has been a solid, steady presence on the Willamina Basketball Team this season. Ruggles has been a solid scorer and clutch rebounder for the Bulldogs and recently scored 9 points and had 8 rebounds in a victory over Catlin Gable.

tie with 17 seconds left. We fouled a kid with 11 seconds left, and thought we had fouled the right kid because he hadn't made a free throw all game. He knocked both of them down. We had 11 seconds to play. We drove down and got an open shot that hit every part of the basket but didn't quite go in, and lost by two. We've had our moments," he said. "But not enough of them."

