

Willamina Boys Basketball Rebuilding, Focused



Jump Ball—Zach Burdon, 6'2" goes up for the jump ball against 6'5" Blake Hinckley during a game against Caitlin Gabel High School held on January 23. Burdon scored 30 points, but the team lost in overtime. Bulldogs' Head Coach Cliff Toney said his team is in a rebuilding year after losing seven seniors to graduation last year.

By Ron Karten

The Bulldogs lost seven seniors to graduation last year, so the team is doing a lot of rebuilding this year, according to Head Coach Cliff Toney, who works days as supervisor of the Community Service Program for the Yamhill County Juvenile Corrections Department.

Mid-season, the team was 7-7 overall, 3-4 in league play which put them in a tie with Nestucca and Amity for third in the West Valley League.

"We only brought back one varsity player that played a lot," said Toney. He was referring to senior James Hosley, a guard who has played

since he was a sophomore.

The Bulldogs "lost to some teams we probably shouldn't have lost to," said Toney, who added that you could describe the process as "growing

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 ~ Head Coach Cliff Toney

pains."

Leaders for the Bulldogs thus far include Zach Burdon, a sophomore Guard, who "is one of the better sophomores in the area at our level," according to Toney. He has been averaging 11

points and eight rebounds a game. "He's got a lot of years to play and he's already kind of shining," said Toney.

Hosley is averaging 14 points a game.

Daren Risseuw Jr is a 6'7" 325 pound junior playing at the Post who is "getting better day by day," according to Toney. "And he's still growing."

The team has four games left in February, with District playoffs set for February 14-21, with the State matches set to follow on February 26.

"Our league is so even this year," said Toney, "anybody can beat anybody," but when pushed, Toney predicted that "Santiam Christian and Westside Christian have a head up on the top two spots and everybody else is trying to get in for the last spot." ■



Leader—Willamina Head Coach Cliff Toney tries to rally his team during a recent game against Caitlin Gabel High School. The Bulldogs lost 74 to 65 in overtime.

Photos by
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True Point—Junior Point Guard Leo Ayala tries to break his way through two defenders from Caitlin Gabel.