

Willamina Bulldogs Take 2nd Place At State, Earn Sportsman Award

By Toby McClary

Being named the second best team in the state of Oregon reserves plenty of room for excitement. But for Tribal member and Willamina Senior Meghan Zimbrick and the girls' varsity basketball team, there seemed to be plenty of disappointment.

Being ranked number one all year and going into the Oregon 2A State Tournament with an undefeated season, there was a lot of pressure riding on the team's shoulders.

The Lady Dawgs stomped Gold Beach, 70-39, in the first round of the playoffs on Friday, February 24 in Willamina.

On Wednesday, March 1, they came from behind in their first game of the state tournament in Pendleton facing Portland Christian and beating them, 48-37. Senior Crislyn Chewning rallied together 19 points in the second half and Zimbrick scored 7 points and brought down

13 rebounds. That win over the Royals secured them a spot in the semi-finals held on Friday, March 3 against the No. 4 ranked Central Linn Cobras. The Cobras brought a physical battle to the Dawgs and one might have thought that Willamina had been taken out of their game for the first time all season. But Willamina's intelligence, experience and leadership proved to be too much for Central Linn. Zimbrick led the team with nine points and nine rebounds as they went on to defeat the Cobras, 35-27.

With that win, Willamina had tied a state record of 30 wins and was headed to the state championship game.

The Bulldogs would face the Myrtle Point Bobcats, who had only recorded two losses on their season, on Saturday, March 4 at 6:30 p.m.

On Saturday, at about 5:00 p.m. the gym began to slowly fill up.

The anxiety and intensity grew thicker and thicker with every fan that walked through the doors. At 6:30 p.m., the starting lineups were introduced and it was time for tip-off. It was truly like a fight between cats and dogs.

By the end of the first period, the Bobcats were up by two and Zimbrick already had two fouls. With 5:48 left in the first half, Zimbrick had picked up her third foul and at the half-time buzzer the Dawgs were down, 35-24.

To begin the third period, both teams went scoreless for the first three minutes. Senior Brittni Wilson fouled out in the third period and Willamina had narrowed the lead to ten going into the fourth quarter. Wilson scored 10 points and grabbed five rebounds before having to cheer her team on from the bench. Early in the fourth quarter, Zimbrick fouled out with four points and two rebounds. With 5:26 left in the game, the Dawgs had cut the lead to six. During a timeout, the 300+ Willamina fans began singing "Hey Baby" at the top of their lungs which might have helped inspire the Dawgs' comeback.

The game went back and forth for several minutes and Willamina eventually cut the lead to one point. But foul trouble and problems at the free-throw line proved to be too much for the Dawgs to overcome.

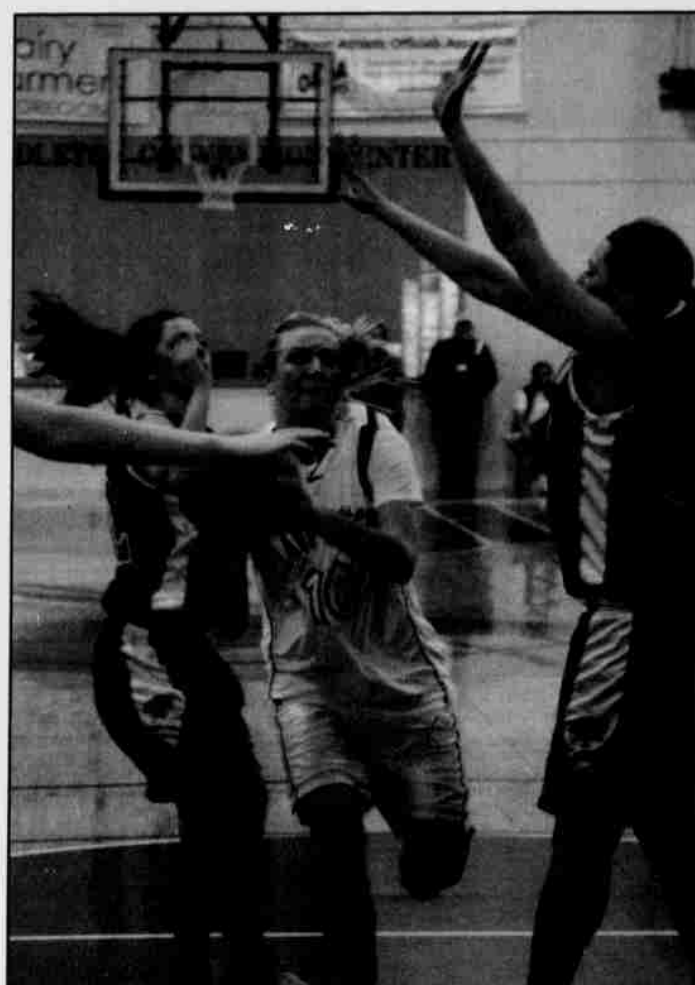


Photo by Toby McClary

Almost — Tribal member Meghan Zimbrick takes the ball to the hoop against Myrtle Point's Kayla Hixson and Ashley Duey during the championship game on Saturday, March 4 in Pendleton. Zimbrick fouled out early in the fourth quarter and Willamina fell to Myrtle Point, 59-55. Willamina finished the season with a 30-1 record and have amassed an 82-8 record over the last three seasons.

Willamina fell to Myrtle Point, 59-55. The Dawgs shot 56% from the line compared to Myrtle Point's 78.6%. Senior Brittany Woolley recorded a double-double with 20 points and 13 rebounds.

Along with earning 2nd Place honors, the Lady Dawgs were also awarded with the Sportsmanship Award. Woolley and Chewning were named to the first all-tournament team at the 2A state championship.

Despite a heartbreaking loss at the end of their season, the girls finished with an overall record of 30-1 and have amassed an 82-8 record over the last three seasons.

"We had an awesome season," said Zimbrick.



Photo by Marietta Brisbois

Tournament Champions — The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde hosted the 1st Annual All-Most All Indian Men's Basketball Tournament on the weekend of February 24-26. The Northwest Chiefs, led by Tribal member and Recreation Coordinator Melvin Brisbois, won the championship game by one point. Back Row: Terrell Hill, Haa-nah Mike, Toby McClary, Vance Brisbois and Chance Rush. Front Row: J.J. Keys, Melvin Brisbois with son Naziare and Luke Blakeslee.

Colorado Will Host Oregon Athletes At Indigenous Games

By Toby McClary

The North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) will be held in Denver, Colorado from July 2-9, 2006. The NAIG is a multi-sport cultural event that is expected to feature more than 8,000 Native American athletes.

The 10-day event will begin on July 2, 2006 with the opening ceremonies held at Invesco Field at Mile High in Denver. The ceremonies will include a blessing of the athletes, a Parade of Delegations from the U.S. and Canada, Native music & dancing and the lighting of the torch. There will be 16 sports featured in college and regional venues and athletes from across the continent will be invited. The

events will be held in both Denver and Colorado Springs.

The 16 sports featured will be:

- ◆ Archery
- ◆ Athletics
- ◆ Badminton
- ◆ Baseball
- ◆ Basketball
- ◆ Boxing
- ◆ Canoeing
- ◆ Golf
- ◆ Lacrosse
- ◆ Rifle Shooting
- ◆ Soccer
- ◆ Softball
- ◆ Swimming
- ◆ Tae Kwon Do
- ◆ Volleyball
- ◆ Wrestling

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Mountain Ute Tribes of Colorado have officially pledged a combined total of \$1.2 million as the host sponsors of the 2006 games. The 2006 NAIG is anticipated to be one of the largest First Nations and Native American sport and cultural events in the United States

and expected to attract more than 50,000 spectators.

Tribal member and Recreation Coordinator Melvin Brisbois is also a contact person for the Grand Ronde and surrounding communities. Brisbois is also the Director of Basketball Oper-

ations for Team Oregon and will be in charge of selecting the six basketball teams that Oregon will send to the 2006 games. There will be three juvenile categories including 13-14, 15-16 and 17-19 years old. There will also be a senior category made up for athletes 20 years of age and older. All age requirements will be based on the athlete's year of birth and not their date of birth.

Anyone interested in trying out for the 2006 North American Indigenous Games may contact Susan Guerin at: 541-553-3097 or sg_naig@hotmail.com or Melvin Brisbois at: 503-879-1369 or melvin.brisbois@grandronde.org.