

CBC outlook

Mustangs 'darkhorse' again

By Wil Phinney & Bill Bighaus

From the rumors floating around the Columbia Basin Conference these pre-season hoop days, Heppner's Mustangs could be in for a long basketball season. But that's the same rumors that were floating around during the grid season where the Mustangs finished a strong

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third with a 7-2 record.

This writer has to look at the Mustangs in the winter the same way he did in the fall. An underdog.

The darkhorse Mustangs of the fall, termed the "Cardiac Kids" by the Hermiston Herald, should carry that same winning attitude onto the hardwood. Every coach, except Heppner's Chris Borgen, is picking another team besides the Mustangs as the team to beat in the CBC.

According to Borgen, he would have felt convincingly confident of the Mustang hopes had it not been for the loss of standout forward Dave Allstott. Allstott is out for the season with a broken left wrist, his shooting arm.

But despite the gossip from CBC coaches, Borgen's own Cardiac Kids could leave a little thrombosis in their tracks if they can win with hustle and desire.

Tagged the "new look" Columbia Basin Conference, this year's schedule has been thrown a twist with the division of the original ten team league.

Heppner is right in the middle of what coaches feel is the strong half. Along with the Mustangs in what will be termed the CBC east will be perennial hoop powerhouses Weston-McEwen and Pilot Rock, the tab by more than one CBC mentor to outlast the rest of the competition.

Along with Heppner and the two favorites are Umatilla, a strong finishing squad last year and unknown, and untried, Oregon Trail.

In the west are Riverside, Condon, Wasco County and Sherman County. Sherman County figures to be the top dog in that half.

While the coaches' consensus lean toward Sherman County on one side and Weston-McEwen on the other, it will take more than the best record in the league to sack the title.



Heppner girls expect to win district title



Junior varsity will rely on quickness, adaptability

Adaptability and desire. That's the key to the success of Heppner's Mustang junior varsity rim spikers this year. Chuck Lutsch, HHS JV coach, said his squad was showing a tremendous amount of pride and that if his shooters come along, it will be a good year.

Lutsch was blessed with some height, but said he'll rely on quickness in their opener Friday with Grant Union at 6 p.m.

"The height," he said, "will show later on. I'm stressing defense and balanced scoring." Lutsch said.

Lutsch listed his starting five that will include two juniors and three sophomores.

Curtis Sweek, a 5-7 junior and Mark Piper, a 5-10 junior, will be joined by sophomores Bob Miller, 5-9, Dave Piper, 5-11, and Ron Ward, 6-0.

Lutsch said junior varsity basketball was for exposure and that everyone would play.

Also to see action will be 6-4 Howard Huddleston, a sophomore; 5-6 sophomore Randy Cole; 5-8 sophomore Randy Warden; 5-10 sophomore Mile

Filly JV's take on Pirate girls

Heppner's Filly JV's clash with Riverside today (Thursday) in an afternoon encounter. Coach Hal Whitaker has a roster of 16 girls to choose from for his starting line-up.

Among the 16 are three juniors, six sophomores and seven freshmen. Whitaker listed Julie Grieb, Alice Abrams and Joan Warren as his best shooters.

Two teams from each half will meet in a district showdown in Pendleton on Feb. 24 and 25.

Three CBC teams are sporting new coaches this season, including the Mustangs. Along with Borgen, Darce Drinkel has taken over the task at Wasco County and Tom Wolsborn is the new coach at Oregon Trail.

The following is a brief look at the teams Heppner must face in their west half of the conference. They will play each of the following four teams twice. They will match up to CBC east squads one time before the district clashes.

OREGON TRAIL: Oregon Trail is an unknown substance this season as Echo's powerful Cougars will add a punch to last year's slow Tigers of Stanfield. The new squad is called

the Blazers.

New coach Tom Wolsborn has inherited six lettermen—five of them from Echo. Senior lettermen are guard Don Sutton, 6-0 from Stanfield, guard Rick Hale, 5-11 (possibly lost for the season to a knee injury), and center Rich Snow, 6-5.

Juniors who will see varsity action are guard Lyle Nichols, 5-10, and forwards Charlie Berry, 5-10, and Kent Madison, 6-1. Snow had an 18.0 points per game average at Echo and he will have a pivotal role in the Blazers' success.

Oregon Trail is working hard at practice on conditioning and fundamentals. Wolsborn wants the Blazers to run a

THE GAZETTE-TIMES

SPORTS

Heppner hosts strong Grant Union tomorrow

With a gleam in his eye, Chris Borgen admits that he and his Mustang hardwood squad are "looking forward" to Friday night's clash with AA powerhouse Grant Union of John Day.

Grant Union finished the season last year as the runner-up in the state championships. Borgen said GU would probably be the best competition of the year for Heppner.

The Mustangs will be facing a team that went 18-2 last year before tournament play and a team that returns four lettermen.

Among those returners is Tom Dieker, a senior guard, who was a top scorer in the state AA last season. Joining Dieker will be Jim Sheets, a senior forward; Dean Porter, a junior-center at 6-3; and Steve Talus, a senior guard.

The other forward spot will be filled by Brian McKinnis, a junior forward.

First year mentor Bob McGuire said his squad was "quick and can shoot fairly well." But he added that they are "awfully green" and other than Dieker, Talus and Sheets, have little experience on the varsity floor.

McGuire wouldn't make any predictions, but said it would depend on how his young kids come along. He said they would be "weak at the start, but with any luck, we should be competitive by the first of the year."

Borgen said the Mustangs have a lot to work on, too. "We're starting to feel comfortable at what we're doing," he said, "and we're understanding. But we're still having to think at times, not reacting. We need to work on reaction worse than anything else."

Borgen was impressed with the Mustang defense in an intra-squad scrimmage Saturday. "Our defense is improved. It's solid," Borgen said.

Borgen said he figured Grant Union would run and shoot. He said if Heppner could control the fast break and get back on defense adequately, it would be a good ball game.

Borgen listed a tentative starting lineup, but said he'd be playing a lot of people during pre-season contests.

On Borgen's top roster Friday night will be Dennis Peck, a sophomore guard at 5-9; Mark Huddleston, a junior forward at 5-11; Wayne Seitz, a senior forward at 6-0; Carl Christman, a senior forward at 5-10; and Kevin Haguewood, a senior forward at 6-1.

According to Borgen, Heppner might not go with the riot squad this week. He expects Grant Union to pick the Mustang offense up with a full court press and run with the basketball.

Borgen said he was expecting a big crowd for the 8 p.m. tip off.

Fillies meet Riverside today

Rebecca Randall plans to look at a lot of individuals today (Thursday) as the Heppner High School Fillies match hoop savvy with Riverside's Pirate females.

But, she'll be looking for teamwork, too. Her tentative starting line-up lists some height as well as quickness with good shooters, too.

Little surprise is that sophomore Wendy Meyers will be in the pivot spot. The 5-7½

Meyers can get off the ground and puts up a jump shot that could shame many boys.

Along with Meyers, Randall has tabbed sharp shooting Guy Kenny, a 5-5 senior; Jackie Mollahan, a hustling 5-6 sophomore; and Deb Holland, a 5-7 senior forward. The other position is up for grabs between two sisters.

Either Janice Healy, at 5-6 and a junior, or little sister, Maureen, a 5-8 sophomore, will get the call.

Randall said that she'll go with the two teams, almost like a platoon system. One squad, (the one named above), will rely on fast break and quickness while the other squad, termed the riot squad, will hassle the opposition defensively and work for as many points as they can.

On that squad will be the remainder of the unit. Vicki Edmundson, a senior guard, has the only spot nailed down. At the other guard, it's a

toss-up between Diane Holland, junior; Shelley Thompson, junior; and Leri Rhea, senior. Either Janice or Maureen Healy will be on this squad, depending on the first team.

Teresa Thurmond and Darla Cooper, and possibly Rhea, will all go for the forward spots on that roster.

The Fillies take on Riverside today at 6 p.m. in Boardman.

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