

Borgen

'They'll start dropping'

You're a first year coach. Fresh out of college with enthusiasm that bounces higher than Bill Walton.

You build a team from virtually scratch only to see it face bigger and stronger opponents and fall. Your squad compiles a dismal 1-6 record. A rest over the holidays and conference play begins.

Does a coach give up? Does he wonder what he's doing wrong? or right? What exactly is going through Chris Borgen's head?

Borgen is that coach. His Heppner High School Mustangs have had their fair share of troubles, including one AA basketball team, a state contender in the A ranks and a top notch B school all wrapped around a pre-season slate.

The outcome wasn't pretty. Borgen will attest to that. The Mustangs, 1-6 on the season, lost twice to Grant Union, a pre-season favorite to repeat as a state finalist; they lost twice to Helix, a top notch B school that gives most A squads hassles; they lost once to Gilchrist, rated high in the A polls; and they lost once more to Condon, a team their own standard who Heppner also bounced for their lone win of the season.

But Borgen isn't giving up. His attitude stands out with his squad who, despite their losses, have built somewhat of a notorious image of being the constant, 110 per cent hustlers. Ball hawks, jabbing, running, racing, diving and scrambling for the loose basketball, in the same frame as Dick Harter builds his Kamikaze Kids at Oregon.

After a dismal pre-season, what does Borgen look for now?

Definite improvement...in the right areas. He's looked at video tapes and stat sheets till his eyes water and he finds good things. It's the bad things he sees that are losing the ball games.

Borgen likes his team's attitude and effort and defensive work. He has a right to. The Mustangs have forced turnovers on opponents at least 22 times a game.

"I'm really pleased with a lot of areas," Borgen said this week. "In some areas, we do execute well. But there are obviously areas where we need improvement."

Borgen praised the attitudes of his Mustangs, calling them a "great group of young men." Attitude is well and fine, but it alone won't win ball games. Borgen is acutely aware of that, too.

"It hasn't been easy for us," he said. "Both me and the team want to win so bad."

Borgen has some adjustments in the bag for the Christmas holiday hoop practices. Among them is a difference in the Mustang offense.

He cited poor shooting as one of the biggest downfalls. Heppner has failed to drop more than 45 per cent of their shots through the hoop so far.

"We're starting to read the defense more. The shots will start coming now," Borgen says with confidence and optimism. "They really will," he said. "They'll start dropping."

More than anything else, Borgen is happy with the Mustang effort. "They're really willing to work...cooperation."

"We're not reacting well," Borgen said of the Mustangs' offense, which in the last seven games has totalled 318 points for a 45 point average.

Their opponents have compiled 449 points for a 64 point average.

Borgen will enlist a little more patterned offense when he faces Pilot Rock in the Columbia Basin Conference opener, Jan. 7.

"It'll be a little more pattern-oriented," the head mentor explained, "just a little bit."

Mustang fans will still see a lot of people on the hardwood. Borgen said depth is Heppner's biggest strength.

"We'll continue to play a lot of people. There's only been a couple of people who have emerged as people who have to play a lot."

No superstars. The Mustangs have 12 equal bodied people and that's why Borgen will continue to use his Riot Squad. The Riot Squad won at Condon, Borgen will tell you, and their turnaround aggressive style almost slowed Helix in the Mustangs' last game.

"We've been playing in streaks," Borgen said. "If we ever put a game together, we can play with anybody. We have consistent people in practice and I think we're ready for it now."

As far as the league looks, Borgen still has to eye Weston-McEwen and Pilot Rock as the teams to beat. Umatilla and Heppner are the only teams in the five squad league with losing marks. Oregon Trail is the other squad, sporting a respective 3-3 record.

Borgen has to realize another thing. None of the other teams in the CBC east have played a pre-season schedule that stands up to Heppner's stiff competition.

"I'm very optimistic," Borgen said. "I really think we're going to do real well now."

What about Pilot Rock? Well, Borgen is anxious to visit the CBC powerhouse.

"It'll be a tough opener. But we've gone through the tough ones. We're ready for league to get going. We'll have two weeks to work hard on our weak areas. If we keep pace, we'll be a good ball club."

Heppner faces Pilot Rock in their season opener on Jan. 7 in Pilot Rock.

THE GAZETTE-TIMES

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**New Years Eve
Party & Dinner**



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Dance at 9:00

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**Cards scare Ukiah
before falling 30-29**

It was the closest they've come, but Ione's young Cardinals faltered in the end and dropped a 30-29 tilt to Ukiah last week.

Ione led by five in the final period, but turnovers gave Ukiah a 6-4 final stanza edge for the win.

Even after blowing the five point spread, Ione had chances to win, according to Del LaRue, Card mentor. Ione missed two free throws and the first half of a one for one

situation gift toss that could have spelled the difference.

The Cards outrebounded Ukiah, 41-30, as Robin LaRue yanked down 10 caroms and Kevin McCabe added nine. On the scoring end, McCabe had ten, followed by LaRue with six and John Lindstrom and Dennis Stefani with five each.

Gilliland paced Ukiah with 14 points.

Ukiah jumped out to a 10-7 first period lead, but by half-

time held the edge by just one at 18-17. Ione outscored their rivals in the third period to take a one point lead, 25-24, before the fatal fourth.

Turnovers were a big key in the game. Ione committed 20 mistakes to Ukiah's 12. From the field, the Cards were 11 for 50 while Ukiah hit 14 of 62 tries. At the line, Ione made seven of 17 and Ukiah canned two of seven tries.

Ione faces Mitchell on the Card court tonight at 8 p.m.

Lexington happenings

(Continued from Page 4)
Tuesday there with her sister, Mrs. Martin, and visiting Randall.

Catie Padberg has been visiting with her daughter and family, Mr. and Mrs. L.D. Vinson in Monument over the holidays.

Anita Davidson spent a few days at home over the holidays before motoring to N. Seattle for a Camp reunion of the counselors of the Camp Fire Camp, where she was employed during the summer.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Davidson had visitors at their home Christmas Day; Mr. and Mrs. Vern Viall and family of Pendleton, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Davidson and sons, from Milwaukie, Mr. and Mrs. Harlan Flint and daughter of Beaverton, Greg of Portland, Anita, who is attending the University at Eugene, and Herb of Lexington. Later in the day, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Frank, Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Sutton and Mr. and Mrs.

Alleman of Hermiston dropped in for a X-mas visit.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Padberg and children, and Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Padberg are enjoying a vacation to Nevada, Disneyland, and other points of interest.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Cool and Mrs. John Karan were visitors with Florence McMillan on Tuesday of last week from Pendleton.

Charlene Whitney and daughter Kim of Portland, and Dale Whitney from Alaska were visitors at the C.C. Jones' home during the X-mas holidays.

Doc and Mrs. Pfeiffer of Pendleton were Christmas visitors at the home of their daughter and family, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Howard.

Linda VanWinkle, from Santa Monica, Calif., has been visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. J. VanWinkle. They all visited with Mr. and Mrs. Bob VanWinkle and family at Paulina on Christmas and on

Monday they visited Cleo VanWinkle at Heirsche's nursing home in Pendleton and Linda took a plane to her home.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth DuVall of Chicago, and daughter Renee of San Francisco have been visiting relatives and friends in Morrow County recently. Mrs. DuVall is the former June VanWinkle.

Jean Christman of Boise spent the holidays with her mother, Betty Christman.

Donna Grey and son Jeremy of Aloha spent the X-mas holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Don Pointer.

Vickey Walden and Linda Smith were overnight visitors at the C.C. Jones' home last week from Hermiston.

The first 1977 meeting of the Heppner Branch of the American Association of University Women will be Tuesday, Jan. 4, at the W.W. Weatherford home on South Court St.