

Day directs HHS season

Since the opening of basketball season a year ago at Heppner High School, the Mustangs have lost: a coach to a Washington high school; seven seniors to graduation; and a lot of games to inexperience and mistakes.

This year there's a new coach who can't do much about the graduation deal but is enthusiastic about doing something about all those lost games.

Tom Day is the man at HHS and he's got his 12-man varsity squad working hard to overcome some of those problems that can befall a team with a first-year coach. The Mustangs know those problems all too well, having endured a 2-16 season under first-year coach Chris Borgen last year.

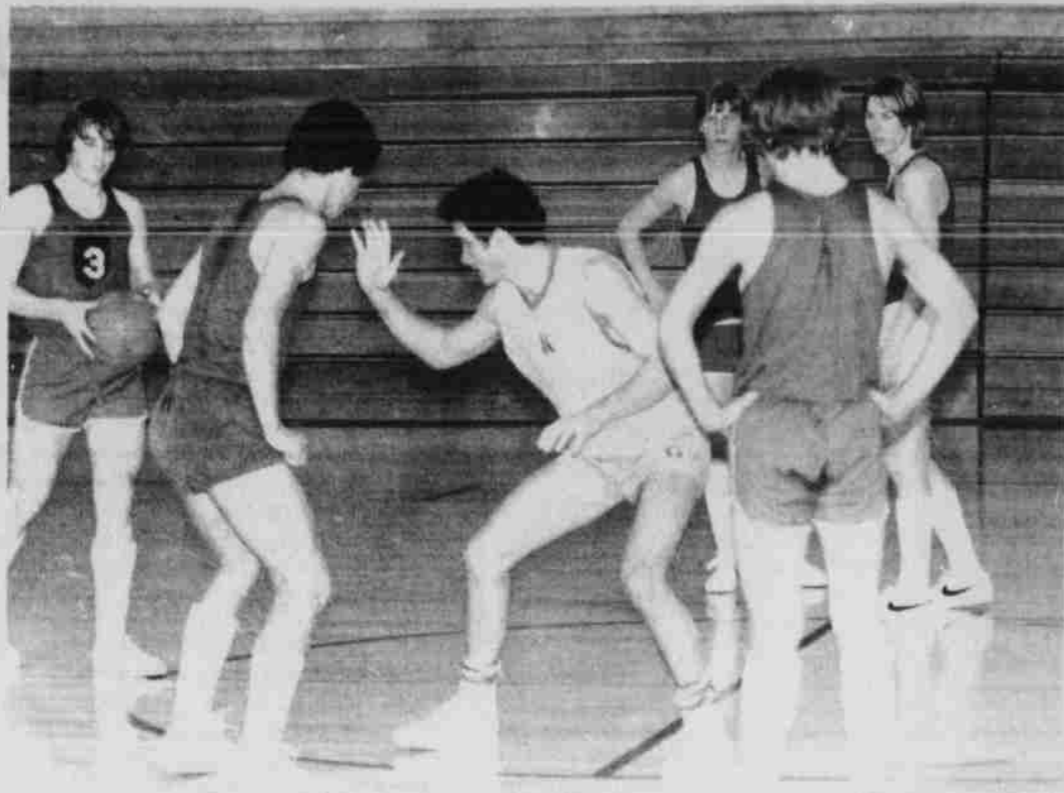
Day comes to Heppner from Seattle Pacific University where he graduated last spring. This is his first shot at a head coaching position, having broken into the coaching ranks as an assistant at Tyee High School during his student-teaching time. He brings a confident attitude and fresh approach to the Mustangs at a time when both are much needed.

Despite the heavy loss to graduation, Heppner still brings an experienced lineup into the 1977-78 season—six seniors, four juniors and two sophomores are listed.

"Everyone has a chance to start," Day said prior to practice Saturday morning. "There's good competition at all positions."

Mustang practice sessions under Day have been mainly stressing fundamentals as the new coach says, "We're fairly weak in those areas". Ball handling skills and technique development are practiced to more of an extent than conditioning drills.

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This way

Fundamentals and technique are being stressed by new Mustang coach Tom Day.

"There's been a big improvement in our practices so far, but there's still a long way to go," Day said, noting that the Mustangs season opener is only nine practices away.

Although the starting lineup is not yet determined, Day plans to settle on a starting five soon and stick with it. Last year the Mustangs experimented with numerous starting lineup combinations—none too successfully.

"It's important to go with a set starting unit with other players knowing they can make their contributions," Day said. "It helps to build

confidence in the players." Day is planning to utilize a 1-3-1 offense in man-to-man situations with some variations if the Mustangs encounter a zone defense.

"You get a weak side-strong side type of game," Day said. "It's a continuity type of offense."

Inside strength will mainly come from 6'4" junior Howard Huddleston and 6'1" sophomore Dale Holland. A lot of the scoring power lost to graduation is expected to be shared by other team members picking up the slack.

At the other end of the court,

the Mustangs will rely on man-to-man style with Bryan Marlin emerging as one of the better defenders.

One of the problems faced by a new coach is unfamiliarity with opponents. Day said he will have to depend on information supplied by Freshman coach Dale Holland concerning upcoming CBC opponents. Although he does not really know what to expect, the same can be said about the opposition—nobody has a "book" on the new Mustangs and Coach Tom Day is hoping to write several winning chapters before its all over.

New look planned for Cardinals

Twenty eight players—a record number for lone—have turned out for basketball this year and Coach Del LaRue is planning some significant changes for the 1977-78 round-ball season.

Included in the turnout are two seniors, four juniors, 10 sophomores and 12 freshmen. Unlike two years ago when the graduation of nine seniors decimated a 14-6 co-championship team the Cards this year will only have to replace graduated guard Ashley McCabe off of last year's 1-19 squad.

Practice opened Nov. 14 and LaRue and junior varsity coach Gordon Meyers are now in the process of finalizing the rosters in anticipation of the varsity home opener Dec. 2 against Heppner.

Commenting that he wasn't satisfied with his team's performance on offense last year, LaRue is bringing a new look to the hardcourt his year in the form of a rearranged offensive set-up.

"Last year we ran mainly a 1-3-1 offense," LaRue said. "This year we'll be trying a 2-1-2 and we plan on running quite a bit."

LaRue, beginning his 17th year of basketball coaching, also has changes planned for the Card defense.

"In the past, we've mainly stuck with man-to-man defenses," LaRue said. "We may incorporate some zones this year and we'll do a lot of

pressing." To prepare for the running attack and pressing defense, the Card practices are placing a heavy emphasis on conditioning—lots of break drills and line work.

"We're running the heck out of them right now," LaRue said.

Considerably brightening the lone outlook this season is the return of junior Danny McElligott who missed most of last year with injuries sustained in a car accident. McElligott is back at full strength and LaRue calls him "one of the best defenders in

the league".

Last year's top scorer, sophomore Dennis Stefani, and the team's second leading scorer, junior Kevin McCabe, are both back for another season. Stefani averaged 12.2 points last year while McCabe scored at a 9.0 clip.

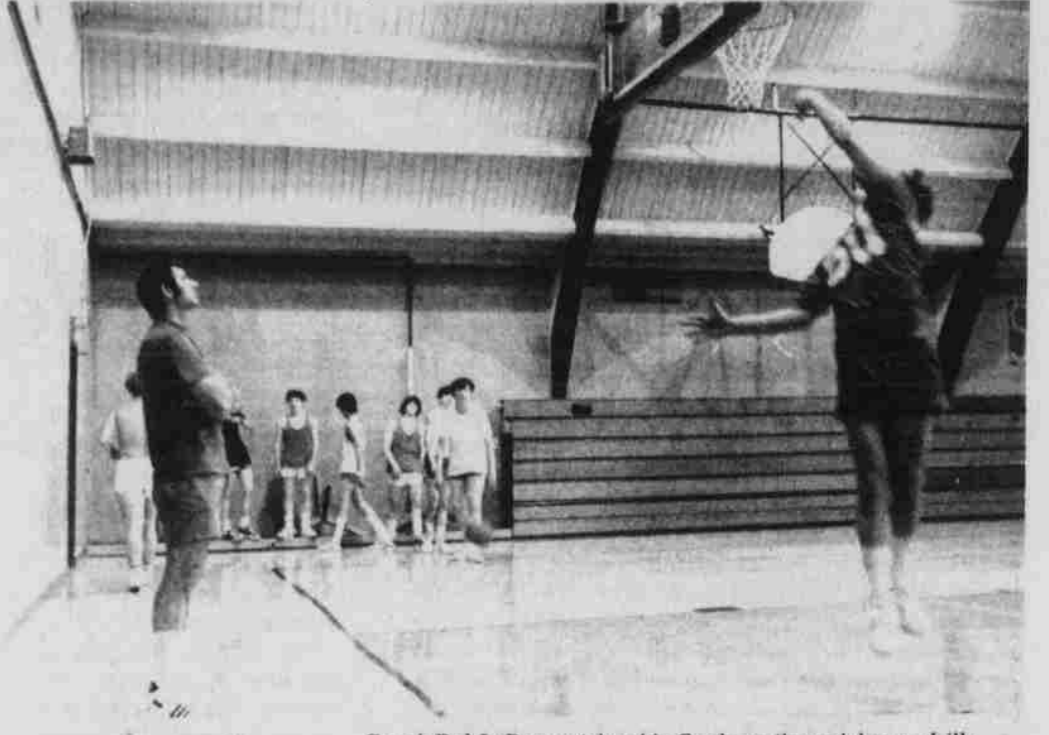
McCabe, who LaRue says is a strong jumper despite his 5'9" size, led the team in rebounding last year with 144—a 7.5 average. Sophomore Robin LaRue was second in rebounding with 115.

Height may be somewhat of a problem for the Cards this year since they have only one

player listed over six feet.

A team that has only two seniors on its roster can't really be considered experienced. But many of the Card underclassmen have quite a few minutes of game time behind them.

For some games last year, LaRue sent a starting lineup of three sophomores and two freshmen onto the floor. Although the results weren't all that successful, the experience was valuable and should show up in the win column this year.



perspective

Coach Del LaRue watches his Cards go through layup drills in preparation for Dec. 2 opener.

City league continues

City league basketball will continue this Sunday on an informal basis beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Heppner High School gym.

A sign-up sheet will be provided and all participants are encouraged to finalize their team rosters this week. A deadline for all entries has been set for Sunday, Dec. 4 and league play will begin the following week.

A clarification of player eligibility stipulates that the league is open to non-high school participants only.

Hoop Shoot Dec. 10

Basketball sharpshooters ages 8-13 are invited to take part in the annual Elks Hoop Shoot on Saturday, Dec. 10 at the Heppner and Lone gymnasiums.

The competition—25 shots from the foul line—is open to all boys and girls in the specified age group and participants can sign up on the day of the contest. Activity will get underway at 10 am at both locations.

Trophies will be awarded in six categories: boys 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13; and girls 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13. Winners will advance to District competition in Hermiston scheduled for January.

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