



# Power in West in Columbia Basin boys basketball

Go West Young Man—Horace Greeley.

It's doubtful that Mr. Greeley had the Columbia Basin Conference in mind when giving advice to young men of the 19th century, but his words nicely summarize the CBC boys outlook for this season.

In a surprising display of agreement, the coaches of District 7A see the power of the conferences coming from the Western Division, as Wasco County, Riverside and Wahtonka are all drawing raves as the pick of the litter. In both halves, however, the coaches see the races as too close to call.

In the West, defending District champ Wasco County returns every single player from a Cinderella season that carried them to the Regional final. Tall and talented Riverside returns a substantial nucleus of a playoff team from last year, while the Wahtonka Eagles have opened a few eyes with their early season play. Even Sherman County looks to be substantially improved from a woeful 1-18 mark a year ago.

Much of the suspense in the West will center on the knee of league MVP Jeff Hull, Wasco County center. Hull was injured in football season, and as yet has not played for the Redsides this year. Given the strength in the West, Hull's knee could tell the tale for Wasco and the rest of the division.

"It's spooky," says Wasco coach John Howie. "We're the defending District champs, have everybody back, and may not make the playoffs."

In the East, it appears to be anybody's ballgame. No two coaches in the league picked the same combination of "teams to watch" in the East, and the only agreement is that there is no real favorite.

Even the secret to winning the East remains elusive: "The first team to establish itself could be the team to beat," stated Steve York of Stanfield, while Pilot Rock mentor Deacon Perkins observed "The last month of the season will probably decide the East—it's totally up for grabs."

One factor to consider in picking a winner should be the "football carry-over" effect. At some schools football injuries have slowed basketball development. At others, basketball coaches will either try to capitalize on the success of the football team or try to erase the stigma of losing, as the case may be.

The boys coaches of the CBC are as happy with the new bench rules as were the girls coaches, lining up with a barrage of necessarily anonymous comments: "The rulemakers want the coaches to do the officials' job for them" and "I don't understand why 95 percent of the coaches have to pay for the mistakes of the other 5 percent" and "It cramps my style—I can't coach properly from the bench. The players can't even hear me."

Despite the complaints, the early season indications are that the rules are being administered with an eye toward common sense. Still the doubt remains. Stated one coach: "If they're going to back off the rule now, I hope they do it all season. I'd sure hate to get in a late season game and get a 'T' when they hadn't called it all season."

For the contenders, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is that the District, Regional and State tournaments are all set for the Armory in Pendleton. District 7A didn't have any teams at the State last year, as Wasco County and Stanfield both were knocked out at the Regionals. For CBC coaches, the hope this year is for a reverse Horace Greeley, hoping they can challenge the powers of the Valley to "Come East"—to Pendleton to meet them.

Wasco County "If" would probably qualify as the byword for Wasco County Coach John Howie as his charges prepare for the '85-'86 campaign. If All-Everything center Jeff Hull can make a successful recovery from knee surgery, the Redsides could be a contender for state honors. If Hull has trouble coming back, the men from Maupin could be spectators come playoff time.

The Redsides have gotten the opposite treatment this year than they got last season, when they were virtually ignored by the polls. At one point Wasco was one of only two unbeaten teams left in the State, but had not cracked the top ten. This year, only defending champ Gervais ranks ahead of Wasco County.

The 6'4" Hull is clearly the key to Wasco's success, despite the fact that everybody is back from last year's 18-4 squad. Hull led the league in both scoring and rebounding last year, and led the Redsides to the Regional tournament, where they dropped back-to-back games to Enterprise and Grant Union.

"Both our offense and our defense key off Jeff," says seventh-year coach Howie. "If he has trouble coming back, we'd need to rely more on quickness. We do have good depth and balance, though."

Howie is hopeful that Hull will be able to return in time for the start of the league schedule. He is counting on a "good" pre-season schedule to toughen up his troops for the league wars.

"Our goal is make it at least as far as last year," says Howie. Even with the stiff competition in the Western Division, this would certainly seem to be well within the reach of Wasco County. If....

Riverside Bigger is definitely better. Well it certainly is for Coach Larry French as he prepares to lead the Riverside Pirates into the Columbia Basin Conference.

As French begins his second decade as skipper of the Pirates, he is counting on 6'4" seniors Brian Byrd and Bryan Sheadel to carry the load in a power-game line-up. Along with senior wing man Chris Stevens, the big men give French a balanced attack. In the early going, each of Riverside's key seniors were averaging around 12 points a game, providing the balance that could carry the Pirates a long way.

The biggest key for Riverside is for player(s) to emerge who will get the ball to the big boys.

"We need for someone to emerge," says French. "We need an assertive leader who can take charge. Right now there are three or four guys, any of whom could fill that role."

French is hopeful that the return of the injured Jim Putman at the point could be the answer to his needs.

"Right now we have to go with whoever is hot, which may be a different guy every night. We've done that before, but it's better to have someone take charge."

The Pirates will once again operate their "opportunistic running game," taking the break at clear opportunities, but otherwise setting up the offense.

When asked about the team's goals, French replied: "We just want to take it one step at a time." Eventually, the Pirates would love to make the final eight in Pendleton. "We have a good size and good experience, and we play good defense," says French. If some pieces fall into place for Riverside it could be a very "good" season for Pirate fans.

Wahtonka "One good team from the West won't make the District Tournament." So says veteran Wahtonka head coach Vic Kirchoffer as he prepares his Eagles for what looks to be a tough battle with Wasco County and Riverside in the CBC West.

Early in the season, the Eagles have fallen behind in basketball preparation, according to Kirchoffer. "We got a late start because of football, and the weather has cost us some practice, also," says Kirchoffer.

Don't take the comment about football as a lament, however, as the Eagles are counting on their success in football (CBC champs) to carry over into basketball.

Depth is a major concern for the Eagles in the early going, but Kirchoffer hopes that the problem will be relieved at Christmas-time, when his team will receive some new players.

For now, the heart of Wahtonka's club is the only two players returning with significant varsity experience. 5'11" senior John Shocker and 6'3" senior Randy Seibel are the only experienced returning Eagles, and Kirchoffer will count on them to team with 6'2" senior Kurt McConnell as the building blocks of his club.

Early reports from around the league rate the Eagles as a solid team, carrying excellent size. Kirchoffer will count on those factors, plus he expects "defense and rebounding" to hold the key to his team's eventual success.

From every indication, making the playoffs in the West is very much a numbers game. By season's end,

Wahtonka hopes that it's number is up.

Sherman County Sherman County is in the unenviable position of trying to make up ground from the toughest spot possible—the bottom of the CBC West.

Last year was disastrous for the Huskies, as they could claim only one win all year long. It would appear that prospects are brighter this year, and first-year head coach Ron Townsend sees brighter days ahead.

"We're weak fundamentally, but we're working up," says Townsend, who previously has served as head coach at The Dalles High School.

"We're very small, but we'd still like to run when we get the chance," says Townsend. "We'll try to play good defense and try to play a pattern running game."

The Huskies carry only three seniors on their roster, and all reports indicate that the underclassmen carry the promise of better days ahead. Townsend will count on 6'2" sophomore Bill Martin and 5'10" junior Tracy Fields as the catalysts for his club.

Sherman County has shown marked improvement this year having already bagged more wins than a year ago. It's possible that the Huskies could be the most improved team in the league and still finish last, given the competition. But that won't stop SC from causing a few headaches for other teams before the season is over.

Stanfield At first blush it would appear to be a rebuilding year for Stanfield, coming on the heels of a 19-4 season which saw the Tigers advance to the Regionals before being knocked out by Grant Union. Not so, says third-year head coach Steve York.

"Rebuilding doesn't really apply when you have some continuity in your program," says York. The infusion of some bright young talent doesn't hurt either.

In the early going, 6'5" sophomore Tony Brown has been the most talked-about newcomer in the league. The addition of Brown could help the Tigers ease the loss by graduation of all but two contributors from last year.

York will count on those two returners as keys to his ballclub, looking inside to Jeff Walker (6'0" senior) and outside to Howard Wagner (5'11" senior).

There are some holes to fill for the Tigers, however. York sees his team as a little thin, and a little small. "Our depth is not good," claims York, "and we're not very big. We need to count on defense and rebounding as keys."

York has been fairly well pleased with his team in the early going. "We've played some decent ball so far—the defense isn't where it should be, but the offense has been okay."

Like everyone else in the East, the Tigers would love to qualify for the District tourney. "It's a realistic goal for all five teams," says York, "It's not out of anybody's reach."

The reach of Stanfield may well depend on the reach of Tony Brown and other youngsters. If they develop, the sky's the limit.

Umatilla Don't feel sorry for new head coach Kingsley Wayman when he says that he doesn't know much about the history of his ballclub. He'd rather not know.

Wayman left his post as assistant coach at Eastern Oregon State College to come to Umatilla "because I wanted my own opportunity." He sees early growing pains for his Vikings, but hopes that the dividends will be later improvement.

"The players are very weak on fundamentals—they seem to have a lack of court savvy, but I can see improvement," says Wayman.

In attempting to improve last year's mark of 8-12, the Vikings will look to Wayne Sehman (6'3" senior), who Wayman says is "playing well." Sehman will be expected to carry the load while several players heal from football injuries. One such player is senior Dan Kurtz, whose shoulder injury is not football-related, but which has made him a day-to-day proposition.

Wayman feels that it will take time for his players to adjust to a new system, but he can see some definite progress. "Hopefully we can peak at the end of the season."

The carryover from football is being counted on at Umatilla, also. "Everyone of our players played football," says Wayman. "There is a good attitude carryover from that." In setting goals, then, perhaps the basketball team could look to the football team. If they reach the same level it'll mean playoff time in Umatilla this year.

Heppner Heppner coach Brent Eggers also sees the CBC East as a dogfight, but appropriately the Mustangs are counting on some horses to carry the day.

Led by 6'2" seniors Todd Lindsay and Keith Kennison, the Mustangs will be able to employ some inside muscle. The key then becomes being able to flex those muscles.

"Our biggest key coming into the pre-season games is to find a point guard," says Eggers. Both of Heppner's experienced point guards from last year were casualties of graduation, and the Mustangs will need to try to develop a court general from among underclassmen.

Eggers will also be able to count on 6'0" wing man Wayne Wilgers, who is being counted on to supply the outside artillery needed to open up the lane for the big men. The Mustangs are also hoping for a contribution from 6'2" post-up player Tony Clement.

Eggers is guardedly optimistic about his ballclub. "They're a hard-working group of kids—they're fun to coach." Considering that Heppner has only been to the District tournament once in the last ten years, half the battle may be convincing the players that they have the right stuff. If Eggers can do that, his team may be more fun to coach than ever.

Pilot Rock The Rockets have already suffered their biggest loss of the year, so from here on in it could get better in the Rock.

Everybody knows that Ken Keuhl transferred to Pendleton that he gave the Buckaroos one of the links they needed to become a top-10 AAA football team. What they forget is that Keuhl was also probably the best basketball player in the CBC East. Coach Deacon Perkins accepts the loss of Keuhl, while acknowledging that it hurts.

"Those kind of kids only come along once in awhile," says Perkins. "His interests are in football, and it was a good move for him."

Meanwhile back at the ranch, the Rockets will try to put a winless football season behind them and start anew. But it isn't easy.

"It's frustrating," says third year boss Perkins, "the kids don't know how to win—they're playing not to lose."

Pilot Rock has lost some close games early in the basketball season, and Perkins sees it as part of the learning process. "Maturity and consistency are our biggest keys right now."

The Rockets have faced a very tough pre-season slate so far, and Perkins believes that it can only help his team.

The only returners for the Rockets will be counted on to carry the ball. They are 6'3" senior Rob Sewell and 5'10" senior Gary Longhorn. Perkins is also hoping for help from newcomer Rick Rasmussen, a sophomore.

When asked to point out his team's strength, Perkins is hard-pressed. "We're kind of in limbo—we play well in spurts, but we're inconsistent. We'll count on pressure defense and hustle and enthusiasm."

At most schools, a comment like that would be a tip-off of a lean year. Talk to the coaches around the league, however, and they are ever-wary of The Rock and its solid tradition. In the wild, wild, East, it would be foolish to count the Rockets out just yet.

Weston McEwen Last year was a case of missed opportunities at Weston McEwen.

This year, coach Larry Stevens would like to see his club hit instead of miss.

"Fulfilling potential is really the key at this level of play," says Stevens. "Most kids have more talent than they exhibit, it's just a matter of making it come out."

The TigerScots will count on depth to make up for a lack of experience. Stevens feels that he can go as many as eleven players deep on his bench, which helps eliminate the worry of foul trouble.

Last year, Stevens' third at WM, was an exercise in frustration for the TigerScots, who finished third in the East-one game behind Pilot Rock—despite whipping the Rockets three times.

This year, Stevens sees the East as "a real toss-up" while conceding that the Western Division holds the power.

In terms of his own team, Stevens won't count on any one individual, but will strive for the team concept. "We don't have any real big guns," stated Stevens, "we could have any one of 6,7 or 8 kids as the leading scorer on a given night."

On a team showing a fair mix of seniors and underclassmen, the TigerScots hope to parlay "defensive teamwork" into a successful season. If they do it could be playoff time again in Athena-Weston, after a year's absence.

Spartaneters	
December 10	
	Won - Lost
TJ's Camera	36 - 20
Gardners	38 - 22
Len's Processing	36 - 24
Petersons	31 1/2 - 28 1/2
Central Market	31 - 29
Black Mt. Electronics	30 1/2 - 29 1/2
Les Schwab	20 - 40
Bud's Pub	13 - 47
Splits converted: Theo Greenup 5-6-10; Carol Norris 3-9-10; Joan Tanory 5-8-10.	
High game:	Kirsti Willson-198.
High series:	Chris Limanen-541.

Thursday Night Ladies	
December 12	
	Won - Lost
B.P.O.E.	36 - 20
J & J Ceramics	34 - 22
Depot Nursery	33 - 23
Kirzua	28 - 28
Bark n Chips	28 - 28
B & C Repair	22 - 34
Ray Boyce Ins.	22 - 34
Country Rose	21 - 35
Splits converted: Inetia Cantin 5-10; Millie Hanna 5-7; Katie McRoberts 4-5-7; Melba Quackenbus 4-5 & 4-7-10; Phyllis Piper 4-5-7; Cathi Pointer 3-10; Vicki Turrell 5-6-10; and Karen Palmer 4-5-7.	
High game:	Inetia Cantin - 205.
High series:	Marie Boor - 543.

We still have a good selection of Radio Shack toys & games

**Pellyjohn's**

RADIO SHACK  
676-3001 676-9157

**Front End Alignment**

**M.C.G.G.**  
989-8221

All I Want for Christmas is ...

**JUSTIN. THE BEST LOOKING, BEST MADE BOOT IN AMERICA.**

Redwood Glazed Bridle leather makes this dress cowboy boot as comfortable as it is good looking. It has a 13" top with extra deep scallop and features a medium round toe. Like all other Justin cowboy boots, it required over 200 individual steps and about six weeks to complete.

**Justin**  
Standard of the West Since 1879

**GARDNER'S MENS WEAR**  
193 N. Main Heppner 676-9218

**Merry Christmas**

We hope it's the very best ever for you.

**SWANSON INSURANCE**  
Jim, Monica, Nancy, Cathy & Ron.

The Offices of  
**Kuhn & Spicer**  
and  
**Barnett, Dennis & Moro**

invite their clients and friends to share the joy of the holiday season at their offices at 269A Main.

**OPEN HOUSE**  
December 20, 1985 2 to 5 p.m.

**Glad Tidings**

Here's hoping you glide right through the Christmas season. Our best wishes.

**LEXINGTON LUMBER**