

Ione girls bring home the gold

Cards prove they're best in the state

Photos by Wayne Hams

By Anne Morter

The Ione Lady Cardinals, making their first ever state tournament appearance, lived up to their number one billing by capturing the championship of the State Class B Basketball Tournament last weekend in Baker City. The Cards negotiated their way through the eight-team field to nab the title by putting away Jordan Valley on Wednesday, slipping by Butte Falls on Friday and finally by defeating a stubborn Mt. Vernon squad 50-41 on Saturday night in the title game. The Lady Cards end their sterling season with an overall record of 22-1.

Jordan Valley

Ione played the opening game of the 1990 state tournament on Wednesday, February 28, against the Mustangs of Jordan Valley. In what coach Dana Heideman summed up as a "typical first-time-at-state game," the Cardinals looked nervous and unsure for most of the game. Fortunately Jordan Valley had much the same look, this also being their first trip to the state play-offs.

Ione got out to a 12-9 first quarter lead, but the quarter was a costly one for the Cards as they lost senior standout, Mary Cupps for the tournament to a knee injury. She went down 3 1/2 minutes into the game in a freak accident where she landed on her knee wrong and tore the ligaments. Continuing on, the Cardinals built a 10-point half-time lead, 28-18. The third quarter was ice cold for both teams as Ione scored five points to Jordan Valley's two. In the final period, Ione used its strength at the freethrow line to outscore the Mustangs 10-4 for the final 19 point margin.

The Cardinals had to dust their man-to-man defense to shut down the Mustangs. The Cards held Jordan Valley to just six points in the second half and Linda Morter put the clamps on the Mustang's three point expert, Shawna Soderling, holding her to just five points. Soderling had made 64 three pointers in the regular season and she has 128 in her career.

Jo Cupps led all scorers with 17 points followed by Amy Wagenblast with twelve. The Cards out-rebounded the Mustangs 34-25, paced by Cupps with nine and Wagenblast with eight. Cupps and Linda Morter each handed out three assists to lead that category.

"It was not a smooth operation," commented coach Heideman referring to his team's opening game jitters. He also said that the loss of Mary Cupps took an emotional toll on the girls. He commended Amy Wagenblast for solid play and Kari Morgan for coming off the bench to spark the team.

Butte Falls

Round two pitted the Cardinals against the Loggers of Butte Falls, first round winners over Eddyville. The game was a see-saw battle that saw numerous lead changes and the Cards down by five in the second quarter. The score was tied heading into the final period before the Lady Cardinals hit their stride outscoring the Loggers 18-10 for a final score of 50-42.

Ione ended the first quarter ahead 11-8 after Linda Morter bombed in a three pointer to break an 8-8 deadlock. The Cards watched their lead disappear and found themselves down by five in the second quarter before Morter hit again from the three point range to begin a rally that put Ione up 26-23 at the half. Butte Falls scratched back to a 32-32 tie at the end of the third quarter, but in the fourth quarter, it was all Cardinals. Darcee Padberg hit three critical baskets to put the cards on top and Jo Cupps hit four straight free throws in the late going.

Jo Cupps once again led the scoring attack for the Lady Cardinals with 14 points. Amy Wagenblast and Darcee Padberg each chipped in 10 and Linda Morter added eight. Butte Falls powerful inside game led them to a 35-25 rebounding edge. Jo Cupps pulled down 14 boards for the

Cards. Cupps also led in steals (six) and assists (four) to round out an outstanding game before fouling out late in the fourth quarter. Sophomore Kari Morgan added four assists.

"They were a good team," says coach Heideman. "We were lucky to escape." Heideman said that Butte Falls had two big girls inside who could shoot well. The Cards tried to force their offense through the tall Loggers, coming up with "too many turnovers." He said that the Cards played good defense but didn't execute well on offense. The big difference in the game was at the free throw line. Ione shot 14-20 from the line for 70 percent while Butte Falls made 14-31 for just 45 percent. In the critical fourth quarter, the Cards made 6-7 free throw attempts while the Loggers managed just 4-15.

Heideman credited Darcee Padberg for clutch play in the fourth quarter, as well as the other seniors, Jo Cupps, Linda Morter and Amy Wagenblast, for making the plays at different crucial points in the game.

Championship Game

The championship game matched the Mount Vernon Bears against the Cardinals on Saturday night. The Bears reached the top of their bracket by defeating Canyonville Bible Academy in the opening round and knocking off Wheeler in the semifinals by 10 points. The Lady Cards had their hands full with Mt. Vernon as they found their opponent to be very quick and defense-oriented, much like themselves. The overflowing Baker High School gym shook to the rafters as the Cardinals finally broke free of the tenacious Bears in the fourth quarter and went on to claim the first ever state championship in girl's sports for Ione High School. The final score was 50-41.

The teams battled to an 11-11 tie at the end of the first quarter but the Cards fell behind by five points at the half 21-26. The Bears returned to the floor in the third period to make a quick bucket, making the Cardinals deficit seven points, the largest deficit they had experienced all season. At that point, the Lady Cards' competitive juices started flowing as they ran off a 15-point rally during which Mt. Vernon scored only one point. The third quarter ended with the Cards ahead, 36-33. They kept their momentum alive in the fourth quarter, outscoring the Bears 14-8 for the final margin.

A key to the rally was sophomore sparkplug, Nancy Morter, who made four crucial baskets including a three-pointer followed by a free throw to give the team new life when they were down.

Jo Cupps chalked up another outstanding game, scoring 14 points, pulling down 12 rebounds, dishing out four assists and grabbing three steals. She led all categories except steals where Linda Morter had four. The scoring was rounded out by Amy Wagenblast with 12 and Nancy Morter with 11. Morter also added four assists and Wagenblast had three. The Cardinals improved their shooting accuracy making 19-44 (43 percent) from the floor and 12-19 (63 percent) from the line.

"They were the best team we've played," said coach Dana Heideman. He said the team matched up well in terms of height and quickness. He stated that they were a well-balanced squad with five good players, all who were able to score.

As for how the game shaped up, Heideman said the first half was a little shaky with the usual unshakable Cardinal defense becoming a little rattled. The second half was a different story, however, as the team pulled itself back together to overcome a seven point deficit and shut down the Bears in the process. He credited Jo Cupps for outstanding play under the basket. Cupps pulled down 11 defensive rebounds, holding Mt. Vernon to just one shot attempt on most trips down the floor.



Ione team (lead by head coach Dana Heideman) celebrates

first place finish at state.

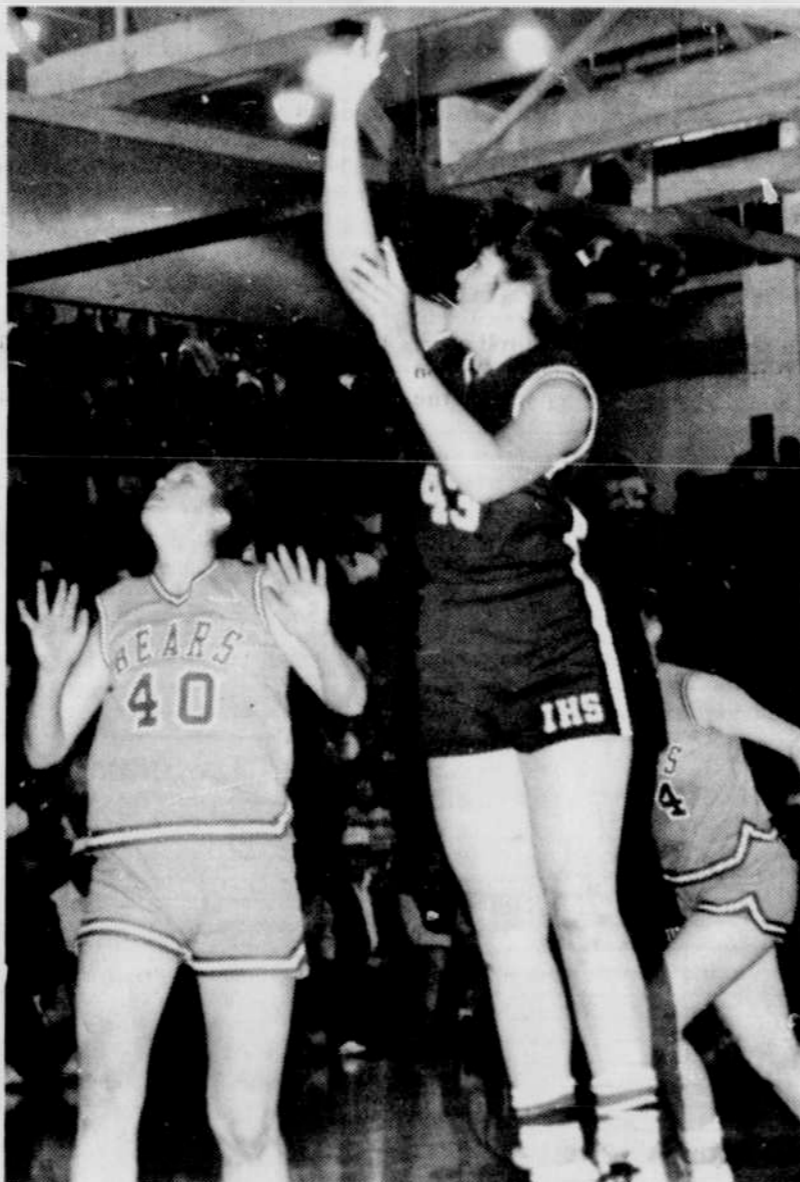
"Jo cleaned house (on rebounds) in the third and fourth quarter," said Heideman. He said the seniors pro-

vided confidence and a stabilizing influence. "Everybody went out in the second half and did a great job." As for his own thoughts as the

minutes ticked away, Heideman said he finally felt it was in the bag with a minute to go but "it was one long

last minute. It was exciting, just great, but it hasn't really sunk in yet," said the jubilant winning coach.

Cupps makes All State



Jo Cupps was named to all state first team

By Anne Morter

Ione senior standout, Jo Cupps was named to the Class B All State first team last weekend at the state tournament in Baker City. She was joined by senior point guard, Linda Morter, who was named to second team. Cupps was named to the All-State Volleyball first team in 1988 and 1989 but no Lady Cardinal has ever made the All-State Basketball roster.

Jo Cupps also broke an 11-year old free throw record held by Rene

Eakin of Cove since 1979. Cupps shot a sizzling 15-16 free throws during the tournament for 93.75 percent breaking Eakin's record of 11-12 for 91.7 percent.



Linda Morter named to second team

Births

Richard Bedello Garcia—a son. Richard Bedello was born to Roberto and Esthela Garcia of Boardman on Feb. 23, 1990 at Good Shepherd Community Hospital in Hermiston. The baby weighed 9 lbs. 7 ozs.



Mary Cupps missed most of tournament with knee injury

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