

Cardinals earn No. 1 seed to state

The Ione boy's varsity pulled off an upset of South Wasco County in Saturday's Big Sky Conference Championship game, winning 53-47 and earning the Number One seed from the Big Sky. Getting to that game, the Cards had to put away a tenacious Condon squad on Friday, a game they had to win to ensure a home court advantage for the first round of the state playoffs. The Cards are slated to play in Ione Friday, Feb. 25 against the number three seed from the Casco League, Country Christian.

The Cards fought off a flu bug and a slow start against Condon on Friday. At the end of one quarter, Condon led 9-6. Ione dug deep in the second, going on a 14-0 run and holding Condon scoreless for the first six minutes of the quarter. The Cardinals took a 24-14 lead to the locker room at the half. Condon was nowhere near done though, hitting a three and a two to start the third quarter. The teams played evenly in the third quarter, scoring 11 points each. The fourth quarter started with a bang with Tyler Brown hitting a three and Kelly Thompson nailing a bucket as the Cards outscored the Devils 17-8 to give Ione the final margin of victory, 52-33.

Three players were in double figures led by Brown with 14, followed by Tony Bolin with 13 and Thompson with 10. Also scoring for the Cards were Tyler Raible with six, Nick Christman with four, Arthur Ekstrom and Dan Long with two each and John Walton

with one. Bolin led the team in several other categories including rebounds with 11, steals with five and assists with four. The Cards shot 20 of 52 from the floor for 38.5 percent compared to Condon's 13-45 for 29 percent. Ione also had a good night from the free throw line, making 11 of 16 while Condon made just two of ten.

"This was a win we had to have to hold home court for the first round of state playoffs," said Coach Dennis Stefani. "The kids did a great defensive job to get the win."

With the home court advantage secured, the Cardinals turned their attention to the possibility of winning the conference. Standing in the way was a formidable roadblock - a South Wasco team that was undefeated in league play and also unbeaten by a 1A opponent this season. South Wasco had defeated the Cards during the season and it was noted in that game that if Ione could have made their free throws, they could have won that game. Interestingly enough, success at the free throw line was a huge factor in the Cardinal's win on Saturday. Ione capitalized on 17 out of 25 attempts while South Wasco got just eight chances at the line, making five.

Things did not look good in the early going for the Cardinals as the Redsidies raced out to an 11-0 lead, taking advantage of an Ione team that seemed to be having difficulty dealing with the South Wasco full-court press. But the Cards settled down and went to work.

Ione was down 19-13 after one but put together a super second quarter, outscoring South Wasco 20-4 to take a 10-point lead at the half. The third quarter was slow for both teams with the Redsidies scoring six while Ione had just four, leaving the Cardinals with a 37-29 advantage. With the game on the line in the fourth, the action was fast and furious but Ione held off the Redsidies' charge to win the game 47-53.

Brown led all scorers in the contest with 24 points including two 3-pointers and 10 key free throws out of 14 attempts. He also was tough on the boards with eight rebounds, dished out five assists and grabbed five steals. Also scoring for Ione were Christman with 12, Bolin with nine, Thompson with four and Raible with three.

Ione actually made three fewer field goals than their opponent and the same number of three pointers so it was clutch free throw shooting that got the winning points on the board.

"This was a huge win," said a happy Coach Stefani. "Defense won this game along with some good free throw shooting towards the end. It will be nice to place another Big Sky District Championship board in our gym."

Ione Legion Auxiliary to meet

The Ione Legion Auxiliary will hold a regular meeting at Colliers in Ione on Tuesday, March 1 at 11:30 a.m.

Lady Cards take Number Two seed

The Ione Lady Cardinals kept their season alive by wrapping up the Number Two seed from the Big Sky Conference last weekend at the District Tournament in Umatilla. Ione fought off a constantly improving Cascade Locks team on Friday and threw a scare into the state-ranked Dufur team on Saturday to earn a home court for the first round of the state playoffs. Ione will host Powder Valley on Saturday, Feb. 26 with the winner advancing to the State 1A Tournament in Baker City March 3-5.

On Friday, the Lady Cards were reminded that Cascade Locks is no pushover. In a low-scoring game that featured good team defense and not-so-good shooting from either team, the Lady Cards found themselves in yet another situation where the game came down to the last few minutes. Ione took an early 6-2 first quarter lead but watched that evaporate in the second. Ashly Grams hit a two that looked a lot like a three at the buzzer to knot the score at nine at half time. Neither team could seem to pull ahead in the third but the Cards held the slimmest of leads, 21-20 going into the final period.

With six minutes to go, Emily Rietmann hit two free throws to put the score at 23-20. She then stole the ball, got fouled and made one more. Amber Patton hit a big bucket to make the score 26-20 before Cascade Locks connected again. Emily Rietmann then hit Patton with a nice pass, which she banked in with about 1:40 to go. Cascade

Locks scored once more but ran out of time with the score at 28-24 in favor of Ione.

Senior Sara Peck had a strong game for the Lady Cards scoring 11 points and grabbing five rebounds. Patton had six points, eight rebounds and four steals which were key to the win. Also scoring for Ione was Grams with five, Emily Rietmann with three and Jenny Griffith with two.

"This was a close game that we used good team defense to secure the win. Cascade Locks played well and I give them a lot of credit for playing us tough," said Coach Ryan Rudolf. "We have played several close games this year and I think the girls know how to win tight games." The win put the Lady Cards in the position to play for the League Championship for the second year in a row and also allowed them to host the first round state playoff game in Ione.

On Saturday night, Ione ran up against a Dufur team that is ranked number five in the state and was playing for their third straight Big Sky District Title. This was also a team that had rather soundly put the Lady Cardinals in their place twice already this season. So rather than adopt a "been there, done that" attitude, the Lady Cards decided to give the Rangers a game.

Admittedly, things didn't look good in the first quarter when Dufur put 15 points on the board before the Lady Cards managed two. The Cards trailed at the end of one quarter, 17-7. It was about then that the Ione girls started to string

together one of their best games of the season pulling to within eight points midway through the fourth quarter. In the end, that's as close as they could get and thanks to Dufur hitting some free throws in the late going, the final margin of the Ranger's victory was 55-42.

Peck had another strong showing for the Cards with 11 points and 10 rebounds. Patton had eight points and nine boards while Griffith tallied 10 points, three assists and two steals. Senior Alyssa Rietmann had three points, three assists and three steals and Grams scored six points and dished out three assists. Emily Rietmann and Kylee Svetich each scored two points.

"This was the best game we have played all year," said Coach Rudolf. "Dufur is a very good team with several good athletes. The girls never gave up and played Dufur tougher than any other Big Sky team this year. This game, even though we lost, gives us confidence heading in the state playoff's next Saturday. I am very proud of the girls and how they have played all year. I think we have a good chance of advancing to Baker City."

Legion and Auxiliary to meet

The American Legion and Auxiliary-Heppner Unit will meet on Monday, Feb. 28, at 6:30 p.m., at the St. Patrick's Senior Center, beginning with a potluck supper, followed by meetings. Several projects are in the discussion stage at this time. All members are welcome to attend.

GOOD LUCK TO THE IONE CARDINALS!

First Round Regional Playoffs: Ione Cardinal Varsity Boys will play in Ione on Friday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. against Country Christian from Molalla. (Winner goes on to Baker City, the loser is out.)



Ione Cardinals Varsity Boys (L-R): top row—Coach Jim Swanson, John Walton, Tyler Raible, Arthur Ekstrom, Dan Long, Kip Krebs, Coach Dennis Stefani; middle row—Tyler Brown, Tony Bolin, Kelly Thompson, Taylor McElligott, Nick Christman, Kyle Palmateer; bottom row—Paul Hams, Manager Zac Orem, Alan Rietmann

First Round Regional Playoffs: Ione Cardinal Varsity Girls will play in Ione on Saturday, Feb. 26 at 5 p.m. against Powder Valley from North Powder. (Winner goes on to Baker City, the loser is out.)



Ione Cardinals Varsity Girls (L-R): top row—Kylee Svetich, Jenny Griffith, Sara Peck, Coach Ryan Rudolf, Amber Patton, Ashly Grams, Emily Rietmann; bottom row—Julianna VandenBrink, Kayla LaRue, Alyssa Rietmann, Kaylee Palmateer

The following individuals and businesses congratulate the Ione Cardinals on their victories and wish the teams Good Luck - All The Way To State!

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