

## Ponies "B" team girls hold successful basketball season

The Heppner Ponies "B" girls' basketball team finished their season with strong team defense and a balanced offense with solid inside scoring. This combination helped run the team record to 9-3 (9-1 CBC) and a third place "B" tournament finish. The team members were Brittany Boothe, Lynelle Bowie, Nikki Fritz, Mercedes Garrett, Brandi Hong, Jessica Hughes, Torri Lovgren, Brynna Rust, Kathryn Strouse and Emily Thompson. The Ponies were coached by Keith Price and Melissa Coiner.

The Ponies started the season with a victory over the Umatilla Vikings, 21-18. The score was tied through three quarters, but the Ponies' inside game with Garrett, Boothe and Lovgren took over and sealed the win.

The Ponies then

posted a victory over the Irrigon Knights, 31-10. The tough Ponies defense allowed Irrigon only two points in the first half. Hughes led the scoring attack with eight points.

The girls then suffered their first loss to a tough Mt. Vernon team, 24-18. Mt. Vernon led by eight points early in the third quarter, but the Ponies defense, sparked by Hong's and Fritz's rebounding from the wing, stiffened and allowed the team to cut the deficit to two points before finally falling to Mt. Vernon.

The Ponies followed up the tough loss with a strong effort on both ends of the court with a 26-6 win over Pilot Rock. The Ponies scoring attack was led by Hughes and Fritz. Hong chipped in four key assists. Thompson led the team in rebounding, helping to key the Ponies defense that only

allowed two points in the first half.

The team kept up their strong defensive play with a 20-8 victory at Riverside. Garret led a balanced scoring attack with six points, with Boothe and Rust chipping in four points each.

The Ponies moved their record to 6-1 with another solid defensive effort by beating the Stanfield Tigers 23-14. The Ponies held the Tigers to just eight points through three quarters. The Ponies' offensive attack was balanced as eight different players scored. Hughes, Rust and Lovgren chipped in four points each to lead the attack.

The Ponies then suffered their second loss of the season, falling to Mt. Vernon 41-26. The defense kept the game within reach as Mt. Vernon's lead had been cut to four at the

beginning of the fourth quarter. But turnovers plagued the Ponies offense and Mt. Vernon sealed the victory shooting 80 percent from the free throw line. Garrett benefited from five assists from Lovgren to lead all scorers with 14 points. Hughes chipped in 10 points.

The girls moved back to their winning ways with a 14-13 defensive brawl at Umatilla. The hard fought game was tied 11-11 through three quarters, but a key free throw late in the game by Strouse provided the margin of victory. Solid defensive efforts by Bowie and Hong helped to keep the Viking offense in check.

The Ponies used a total team effort as they pushed their season record to 8-2 with hard fought, 20-13 victory in Pilot Rock. The Rockets jumped out to 7-0 lead early in the second quarter before a Ponies defensive adjustment stopped the Rockets offense. Rust shut down the Rocket's top scorer the rest of the game and was helped with solid defensive efforts by Bowie, Hong and Strouse. The scoring attack was led by the Ponies interior of Garrett, Boothe, Lovgren and Thompson with some key assists from Hughes.

The girls then lost their only league contest at Irrigon, 20-19. The score was tied at the start of the fourth quarter. The Ponies forged ahead and were clinging to a one-point lead when Irrigon scored with less than 10 seconds remaining. Fritz led the Ponies attack with nine points.

The team then traveled to Athena-Weston and posted a convincing 26-11 win over the Huskies. The Ponies defense was spearheaded by Hong's five steals and Thompson, who led the team in rebounding. A balanced Ponies attack pushed the lead to 20-4 at the end of the third quarter. Seven different Ponies scored with Hughes and Rust each chipping in six points, Garrett and Boothe adding four each and Lovgren, Strouse and Bowie adding two each.

The Ponies finished the regular season at home with a 25-13 victory over Riverside. The victory moved their regular season record to 9-3 (9-1 CBC). Heppner only led by five at the half before their trademark defense held their opponents scoreless in the third quarter and only allowed three points in the fourth. Hong and Bowie helped key the defensive stance, leading the team in defensive rebounds from the wings. The offensive attack was balanced as seven different Ponies scored. Garrett led all scorers with eight. Boothe chipped in six, Strouse added three and Hughes, Rust, Thompson and Fritz all had two each.

The team finished the season with a third place finish at the CBC "B" tournament in Umatilla. The Ponies entered the "short game" format tournament as the #1 seed and posted a 14-0 victory over Stanfield in the opening round. In the second round, the team fell to the #2 seed and eventual tournament champion, Irrigon Knights 17-10. Defense was again the foundation as key rebounds by Thompson and Bowie helped pace another victory over Stanfield, 14-8. The Ponies then advanced to face



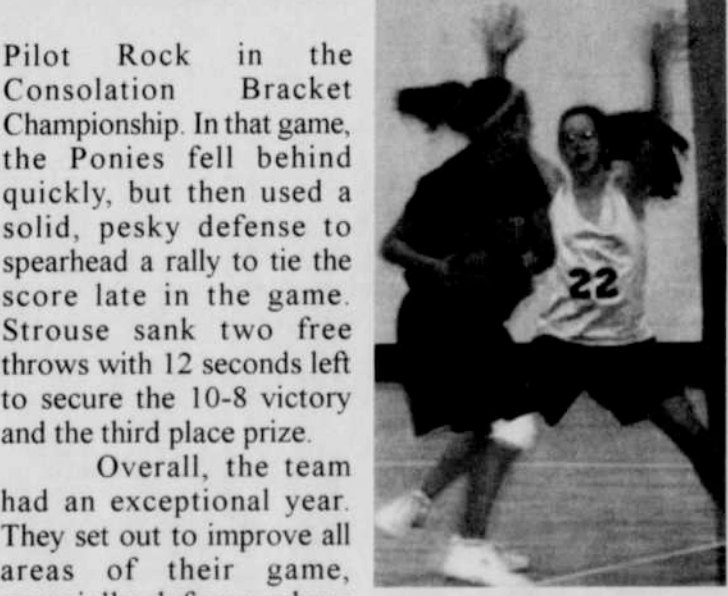
Lynelle Bowie and Jessica Hughes set a trap en route to a 14-0 victory over Stanfield at the "B" tournament.



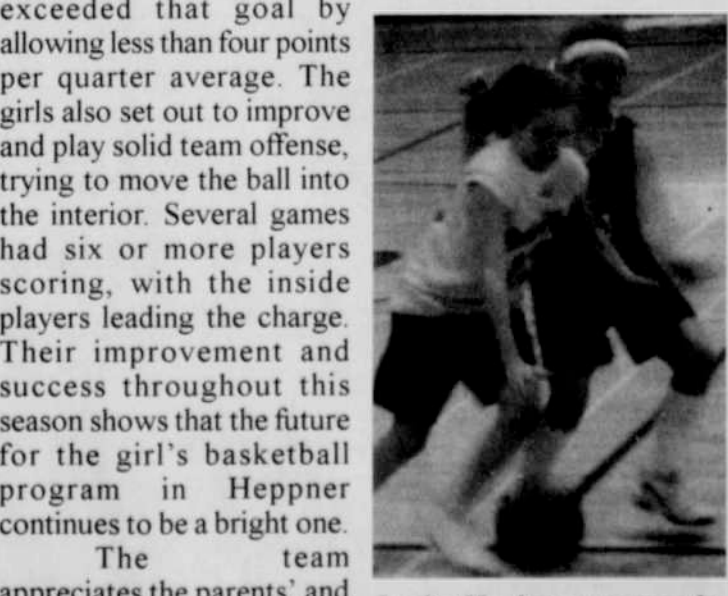
Ponies Kathryn Strouse, Torri Lovgren, Lynelle Bowie and Emily Thompson secure a rebound versus Stanfield in the "B" tournament.



Lynelle Bowie and Brandi Hong hit the floor after a loose ball at the "B" tournament.



Brynna Rust stops the Riverside advance en route to a 25-13 victory over Riverside.



Jessica Hughes pressures the Pilot Rock ball handler as the Ponies win 20-13. Their efforts, week in and week out, were very much appreciated by the team.

## HJHS "A" team finishes season on top



The HJHS "A" team - (Back Row L-R): Coach Melissa Coiner, Kristen Van Cleave, Maggie Armato, Kassey Wilson, Sherilyn Peck, Melissa Robbins-West, Chelsey Hedman, Stephanie Cutsforth, Kaylee Helfrecht; (Front Row L-R): Erin Price and Catherine McElligott.

The Heppner Junior High girls' "A" team capped a successful season by winning their season ending tournament on Saturday, Feb. 12. The Ponies finished the season with an 11-2 record.

The girls began the season on a winning note, getting wins in their first three games. The Ponies beat Umatilla 31-28. Stephanie Cutsforth led the Ponies with 11 points, followed by Sherilyn Peck with nine.

In their second game, the Ponies beat Irrigon 32-17. Eight Ponies scored, led by Peck with 13 points. Catherine McElligott led a strong effort on the boards with 10 rebounds. Erin Price added four assists.

The girls faced tough competition in their third game of the season. They were up to the challenge. They beat the Mustangs from Mt. Vernon 38-26. Peck led the Ponies with 11 points, followed by Cutsforth with nine. Melissa Robbins-West had a strong game leading the Ponies in assists with four while chipping in six points.

The Ponies next faced a tough Pilot Rock team. Turnovers hurt the Ponies as they lost their first game of the season 24-15. Peck led the scoring with five points and Price added four points in the effort.

The Ponies returned to their winning ways with a dominating performance in their next game against Riverside. They came out running and won the game 38-20. The Ponies dominated underneath with McElligott grabbing 12 rebounds and putting up 11 points. Cutsforth led the

team with 15 points. Kaylee Helfrecht and Kristen Van Cleave led a strong defensive effort with two steals apiece.

In their next game, the Ponies came out flat against Stanfield. Despite a great defensive effort by Chelsey Hedman, the Ponies could not pull the game out in the end. They lost 16-14. Hedman led the team with six points.

The Ponies then traveled to Mt. Vernon and dominated the Mustangs with a 33-18 win. McElligott led a balanced Ponies attack with 10 points. Peck added seven points in the win.

The Ponies next needed a strong fourth quarter to overcome a pesky Umatilla team. The Ponies prevailed 21-15. Kassey Wilson led the Ponies with six points.

In their next game, the Ponies avenged an earlier loss to the Pilot Rock Pilots with a 28-24 victory. The Ponies were led by Maggie Armato with seven points and McElligott with six.

The Ponies came out strong against Irrigon in their next game winning 44-12. Peck led a balanced Ponies attack with 12 points. Price had eight points to go along with her five assists. Van Cleave added six points.

The Ponies had their best offensive output of the season against the Athena-Weston Panthers with a 54-29 victory. Armato led the Ponies with six rebounds and 12 points. Robbins-West collected six steals to go along with her eight points. Peck had a great all around game with eight points, six assists and eight rebounds.

In their final game of the season, the Ponies

defeated Riverside 25-12. Eight Ponies scored in the game. Peck led with five while Cutsforth, Wilson and Armato added four apiece.

The Ponies finished their season in Riverside with seven other teams in their season ending tournament. The tournament games consisted of two 10-minute running halves.

The Ponies faced Riverside in their first game and came out with a dominating defensive performance winning 18-3. Hedman and Helfrecht helped keep the strong Riverside guards in check.

In their next game, the Ponies faced a strong Helix team. The Ponies and Grizzlies traded leads throughout but the Ponies prevailed 14-12. Van Cleave helped shut down the Grizzlies leading scorer in the second half. McElligott led the team with eight rebounds.

In the championship game, the Ponies faced the Pilot Rock Pilots yet again. The game was close throughout, but the Ponies would not be denied. The Ponies defense helped them to a 14-12 victory. Peck led the team with eight points and Armato added four big points in the second half.

"I was pleased with the way the girls improved as the season progressed," said Coach Melissa Coiner. "We had a very balanced team and everyone had an opportunity to contribute. Our team stepped up defensively at the tournament and willed their way to the championship. It was a great end to a successful season. I was very happy for the girls."