

Lady Cards enter districts as number three seed Cards advance to post-season as number two seed

The Lady Cardinals found positives in their two losses this past weekend, mainly that they played the number one seed from the Big Sky West and the number two seed from the East close the whole game.

Playing shorthanded with a couple players out with injuries, the Cards fell to Helix on Friday and Dufur on Saturday but had already locked their spot in the Big Sky District Tournament. The Lady Cards are the number three seed from the Big Sky East and will play on Thursday, February 18, against Horizon Christian. Game time is 6 p.m. at Umatilla High School.

Playing in Ione on Friday, February 12, Helix pounced early and led by 12 points late in the first quarter. Beth Morter hit four points in the last two minutes and the Lady Cards trailed 15-7 at the end of the quarter. In the second, two Helix three-pointers were hard to overcome but Shadow Kendrick canned three jump shots throughout the quarter and when Stefanie Archer completed a three point play with 39 seconds left in the half, the Lady Cardinals were down by nine at halftime, 28-19. The Ione girls pulled within four points with three minutes gone in the third with a Shadow Kendrick jumper and Beth Morter three-pointer. But Helix came back to life with eight unanswered points, started off with another three-pointer. Freshman Stacey Halvorsen hit a nice shot with 1:13 to go in the third and the Cards trailed by 10 entering the final quarter. The Grizzlies built their fourth quarter lead to 12 with 3:02 remaining in the game but the Lady Cards were not done yet. A tough press led to a number of steals and with 2:27 left,



#32 Beth Morter shoots against Helix. -Photo by Theresa Crawford

the Ione ladies were down by just six points, 43-37. From there on out, though, it was all Helix. They made a shot then visited the free throw line five times in the last minute and a half, making three to make the final margin of victory 48-37.

Beth Morter led team in scoring with 13 points and Shadow Kendrick added 10. Coach Mike Garrett was happy with what he saw on the court Friday night, especially remembering the 76-30 drubbing at the hands of the Lady Grizzlies last year. "Our focus all year has been to close the gap on Helix and Nixyaawii. This game was a great step. We've closed the gap and shown that we are legit contenders in the Big Sky East."

With several players out with injuries, Coach Garrett didn't really know what to expect. "We were asking kids to play out of their usual positions and they responded very well. I was happy with our defensive intensity."

On Saturday, February 13, the Lady Cards traveled to Dufur for the final game of the regular season. It was a physical game from the start. Ione was down 8-10 after one and took the lead briefly early in the second, scoring five unanswered points.

Dufur roared back and built a five point lead before Ione scored the last four points of the quarter to trail just 19-20 at the half. Dufur looked like they were getting the upper hand when they were up 32-26 with 17 seconds left in the third quarter but Collette Cason came through with a big three-pointer at the buzzer to put the Lady Cards back within three, 32-29. Holding Dufur scoreless for the first three minutes of the fourth and scoring twice themselves, Ione led 33-32 before Dufur went on a 11-1 run. Collette Cason hit another bucket with five seconds left but it was too little, too late and the Lady Rangers took the win 43-36.

"The girls played hard and rebounded well," said Coach Garrett. "It was a really physical game and we knew it was going to be." He noted that since the Lady Cards' district tourney opponent was in the crowd scouting, the team played their basic sets in preparation for the tourney.

"Overall, this weekend was a good check to see how we will do at the district tournament. Even though we lost both games over the weekend, they were good confidence building games," said Coach Garrett. "We are pretty primed for district."

With their District Tourney spot locked up, the Ione Cardinals split their games during the last weekend of the regular season, easily dispatching Helix on Friday night in Ione and falling just short of a tremendous comeback on the road in Dufur on Saturday. The Cards advance to the post-season as the number two seed from the Big Sky East. They kick off tournament play on Thursday, February 18, at Umatilla High School. Game time is 4:30 p.m.

Friday night a good sized crowd said farewell to the four seniors, Matt Hams, Alex Fetterhoff, Gunner Jessen, and RJ Ramos. The outcome of the game versus Helix was never in doubt as the struggling Grizzlies quickly fell far behind. The Cards led 22-4 after one and despite spreading the playing time to the end of the bench and back, cruised to a 74-28 win.

Matt Hams led the team in scoring with 24 points. Adam Collin and Tanner Rietmann added 10 each. Christian Cederquist, the football-playing exchange student from Denmark, made eight points in the game, shooting a perfect 4-4. The Cards shot 51% from the field. The Grizzlies shot a respectable 39% but got off less than half the number of shots of the Cards.

Tanner Rietmann led the team with eight rebounds while Matt Hams six steals and Zac Orem led with four assists.

"This was a game where everyone got to see a lot of playing time," said Coach Dennis Stefani. "I was very pleased how the bench came in and played."



#20 Alex Fetterhoff shoots and scores against Helix. -Photo by Theresa Crawford

Traveling to Dufur on Saturday, February 13, the Cards struggled in the early going and Steven Begay, Dufur's sharp-shooter seemingly couldn't miss. Down 16-28 after one quarter, things didn't improve any in the second and the Cards found themselves in an ugly situation, down 49-27 at halftime. A half-time gut check sent the Cardinals on a mission in the second half. They outscored the Rangers 44-26 in the second half but they flat ran out of time to capture the win and fell 75-71.

The Rangers shot 56% from the floor compared to Ione's 43% and the Rangers canned a mind-boggling 12 3-pointers.

The Cardinals had zero. Matt Hams led the team in scoring with 33 points and Tanner Rietmann added 20 in the effort. Zac Orem and RJ Ramos had five assists each and Ramos also led the team with three steals. The Cardinals were badly out-rebounded 34-20. Gunner Jessen had the best effort on the boards with eight.

"We were aware that we had second place wrapped up for district but I never dreamed we would come out so flat and be down 22 at halftime," said Coach Dennis Stefani. "The positive was the way we came back. It showed our character and proved we can come back from a large deficit."



Back Row-Asst. Coach Jim Swanson, Kevin LaRue, Alex Fetterhoff, Zac Orem, Adam Collin, Christian Cederquist, Tanner Rietmann, Matt Hams, Evan Rietmann, R.J. Ramos, Head Coach Dennis Stefani Front Row-Alex Rietmann, Micah Stillman, Marco Juarez. Not Pictured-Gunner Jessen

GOOD LUCK CARDINALS!

Ione boys play on Thursday, Feb.18, in Umatilla, at the Big Sky District Tournament against Horizon Christian at 4:30 PM.



Left to right- Asst. Coach Dale Holland, manager Mariah Bradfield, Makenna Ramos, Tyree Svetich, Shadow Kendrick, Beth Morter, Stefanie Archer, Lacey Thompson, Vanessa Ziliani, Brianna Peterson, Jordan Peterson, Collette Cason, Stacey Halvorsen, Sarah Stillman, Head Coach Mike Garrett. Not pictured-Mary Rietmann



Ione girls play on Thursday, Feb.18 at the Big Sky District Tournament in Umatilla against Horizon Christian at 6:00 PM.

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