

HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS 2019-20

A special section of The Columbian

Slam Dunk Talent

How Battle Ground's
Kaden Perry grew into
a once-in-a-generation
type of player

Page 2

Inside:

Preview stories for
each boys and girls
basketball team, league

Preview features,
storylines for all other
winter sports

HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS 2019-20

A Special Section
of The Columbian

■ Stories by Meg Wochnick,
Joshua Hart, Micah Rice,
Tim Martinez and Jeff Klein.

■ Cover photo
by Nathan Howard

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover story	2-3
4A GSHL Basketball	4-5
Battle Ground	6
Camas	8
Heritage	9
Skyview	10
Union	11
3A GSHL Basketball	12-13
Evergreen	14
Fort Vancouver	15
Hudson's Bay	16
Kelso	17
Mountain View	18
Prairie	19
2A GSHL Basketball	20-21
Columbia River	22
Hockinson	23
Mark Morris	24
R.A. Long	25
Ridgefield	26
Washougal	27
Woodland	28
1A Trico Basketball	29-30
Castle Rock	31
King's Way Christian	32
La Center	33
Seton Catholic	34
Stevenson	35
Columbia-White Salmon	35
Wrestling	36
Gymnastics	37
Bowling	38
Boys swimming	39

By **Meg Wochnick**
Columbian staff writer

The simplest of questions Manny Melo asked brought out the swiftest of answers.

Is Kaden Perry, Battle Ground High's 6-foot-9 junior who is committed to Gonzaga for the recruiting class of 2021, the most sought-after, highly-touted boys basketball player to come out of Southwest Washington?

Future NBA players Dan Dickau (Prairie High) and Richie Frahm (Battle Ground) played at Gonzaga. So did Mountain View's Derek Raivio. Most recently, Robert Franks (Evergreen), out of Washington State, got signed by the Charlotte Hornets and plays in the NBA G League.

At 16 years old, and in this new age of recruiting, Perry might already be. Melo, Battle Ground's third-year head coach, got his answer from his own staff. Gregg Kalian, a longtime Clark County basketball coach, one-time Battle Ground head coach, and around Clark County basketball since playing for Battle Ground in the 1970s, told him yes.

"It's crazy the amount of eyes that have been on (Perry) the last three years," Melo said.

Melo estimated he fielded calls from 20 college programs, and constantly had coaches sit in on practices and workouts.

What's not to like about Perry? In a growing time of positionless basketball, Perry is a traditional big man rooted in the basics of playing center and power forward. Yet his size, skill and athleticism allows him to dominate beyond the paint on both ends of the floor and stretch the defenses out with a blossoming mid-range and perimeter game. He's drawn comparisons to former Zags now in the NBA, most notably, Brandon Clarke, a first-round draft pick by Memphis in June's NBA Draft.

"He does stuff no other kid in this area does," Melo said. "The stuff almost looks so crazy that it can't be real."

A nightmare matchup

Last season, when Battle Ground reached the state

tournament for the first time since 2002, Perry averaged 16 points, 10 rebounds and four blocks per game. In its state-game loss to Kentridge in the Tacoma Dome, Perry scored 20 points, grabbed 17 rebounds and blocked seven shots.

Most game nights, the Tigers have a tactical advantage on every team by having their tallest player playing 12 feet and in from the basket, where Perry is the strongest.

This possesses an extra wrinkle in game playing for opposing coaches. Skyview's Matt Gruhler and Blake Conley of Union echo similar statements on what makes Perry a difficult matchup.

How do you game plan a player whose combined size, speed and athleticism makes

for a tall task?

"That's the challenge for the coaches in this league," Gruhler said. "A player like that, you have to gameplan for offensively and defensively, is pretty special."

Perry's already off to a big start. In Battle Ground's season opener this month, he posted 29 points, 26 rebounds and five blocks.

But Perry continues works on broadening his versatility. He understands the shift at his game's position, but also knows what's best for the Tigers. The junior doesn't face many opponents that can measure up to his size and skill level down low; BG's offense is generated a lot through Perry, and less of a pace-and-space offenses that take over today's positionless basketball.

There's still great value having a polished, traditional big-man skill set, and Perry appreciates his rooted style of

play in the paint.

"I feel like everyone is trying to be that point guard or that wing that shoots the lights out for outside," he said. "It's nice that I'm a big, strong dude in the middle of the key. I like that."

Gruhler points to analytics as to why Perry makes the traditional, low-post game goes against a dying trend: effectiveness.

"He breaks those mathematics," Gruhler said. "He makes the mathematics not look so good because the post-up isn't efficient if you're only scoring the ball 50 percent of the time, but it is efficient if you're shooting at the rim and scoring 80 percent of the time."

In two years, Perry's turned from tall, lengthy ninth grader, into a force on both ends of the floor with as much upside to match.

While his game continues to evolve, maturity came first.

A mother's helper

Melo returned to coach his alma mater at the same time Perry entered high school. He put one freshman on the varsity roster in 2017-18.

That season came with adjustments in basketball and away from it for Perry. In the midst of the season, Perry's mother, DeLena, was hospitalized and diagnosed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a condition in which the immune system attacks the nerves.

PERRY, Page 3

BIG BEYOND BATTLE GROUND

Gonzaga recruit Kaden Perry shows a classic post player can still dominate in high school basketball



Perry

From Page 2

Perry describes his relationship with his mother, a single mom, as very close. DeLena Perry is still recovering and has daily caregiving, but her eldest son assists with mom's needs at every opportunity, he said.

This experience changed him for the better, too.

"The person whose cared for me all my life," Perry said, "I'm needing to help her and she needs me. It's made me step up to the plate, and realize how I need to pick up stuff and mature more for her sake. I'm still trying to find that balance."

That also goes with basketball.

Over a four-week stretch this fall, Perry took his official Gonzaga visit and played in USA Basketball's Junior National Team's minicamp in Colorado Springs, Colo. It's a three-day, invite-only event showcasing 80 elite-level high school recruits and prospects nationwide.

Perry, accompanied by Melo, took more away from that camp than he ever imagined. Patience is one of them.

"The competition there is unbelievable," he said. "Seeing that high-level of basketball can change the way you look at things."

"Going there to have guys match or even surpass my ability, I learned I can't big-body them."

Better each season

By age 13, Perry stood 6-5 and played in the high school's summer league program. His parents never wanted their oldest son's size to go to waste. Younger brother, Kyren, is a freshman at Prairie.

Longtime friend and teammate Brendan Beall is Battle Ground's second-leading scorer returning off

last year's 18-10 team that reached the Tacoma Dome.

Beall said Perry's work ethic goes unmatched. While that's never changed, his game has.

"From season to season, he just grows and becomes a better player," said Beall, a senior guard. "You know he could be something, but it was a matter of him wanting to be good at basketball. I knew Kaden would want to put the time in; he's a hard worker like that."

That work ethic, motor and fundamentals are aspects of Perry's game that Melo, BG's head coach, had Gonzaga coaches high on the teen.

Perry has always called Gonzaga his dream school. Perry said Gonzaga's track record of developing big men, including many who have made the NBA, is a sticking point.

"I love how they develop their guys," he said.

Gonzaga had been in contact with Perry prior to the scholarship offer, so it didn't come out of the blue. But a talk with head coach Mark Few and assistant coaches Brian Michaelson and Tommy Lloyd following Battle Ground's team camp in June came as a surprise by Perry.

He committed on the spot.

"It was the first time I ever thought I was going to pass out," he said of the offer.

By verbally committing, Perry became the Zags' first verbal commit for the class of 2021 in a class statewide that features Olympia's Jackson Grant (UW commit) and O'Dea's Paolo Banchemo, a five-star recruit considered one of the nation's top prospects.

Leaving a legacy

If a future in basketball doesn't pan out, Perry has a back-up plan.

"If I can't be an NBA player," he said, "then I'm going to be a singer. I sing all the time."

Perry isn't fazed by



Photos by NATHAN HOWARD/The Columbian

Battle Ground High School junior Kaden Perry said he nearly passed out when Gonzaga offered him a scholarship last summer. Perry verbally committed on the spot to play at what he calls his dream school.

crowds of students' stares in the Battle Ground hallways by his stature or vocal chords.

Neither does drawing a crowd of defenders every game.

Perry walks the same Battle Ground hallways as ex-Tigers Mike Brotherton, the state player of the year on BG's 1990 state title team, and Frahm, who played at Gonzaga from 1996-00.

He also knows the storied past of John McKnight, the Greater St. Helens League's all-time leading scorer.

McKnight, a 6-2 guard, scored 1,572 career points in three seasons at Battle Ground from 1969-72 during a time when freshmen didn't play varsity, and the 3-point line was 16 years away from being adopted in the high school game. After graduation, McKnight



played at Washington.

Perry knows his legacy is far from over, but he wants it to begin by adding

to the boys basketball banner of team accomplishments that hangs in the gymnasium.






"Hopefully, we can put something up there," he said.

"That's the dream."

4A GREATER ST. HELENS LEAGUE BOYS

PROJECTED FINISH

Picks by Columbian sports staff

-  **UNION:** Titans have speed, athleticism, shooting — what's new?
-  **BATTLE GROUND:** Tigers poised to make another postseason run behind Gonzaga commit Kaden Perry.
-  **SKYVIEW:** Can Kyle Gruhler's veteran experience help lead Storm past bi-districts?
-  **CAMAS:** Will Papermakers' championship in football carry over to playoff success in basketball?
-  **HERITAGE:** Timberwolves continue to make upward strides under head coach Brian Childs.



Photos by ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Brad Lackey, left, and his teammates have kept the standards high at Union year after year.

Union sets sights on ninth straight league title

By **MEG WOCHNICK**
Columbian staff writer

There's a certain expectation to be had in a program that's won eight consecutive 4A Greater St. Helens League titles.

For the Union Titans, they've seen what it takes to be a league champion.

"Because of that," coach Blake Conley said, "they know the blueprint to follow in terms of chemistry and buy into what we're trying to do. It's harder when you haven't had success sometimes because if the kids are humble enough to learn from the groups before them, they have the blueprint. They look at it with that mindset not that we have to keep the streak alive, but they look at it what did the group before us do and let's build on that."

And the blueprint for Union is pretty hefty if the Titans are going to win their ninth league title — either shared or

outright — in a row. Three players with starting experience — Brad Lackey, Tanner Toolson, and Josh Reznick — are back off a Titans team that reached the Tacoma Dome.

The top three 4A GSHL teams advance to the bi-district tournament.

Skyview and Battle Ground, both playoff teams a season ago, each return three starters. The Storm, which shared the league title with Union two seasons ago when it last reached the 4A state tournament, is powered by all-leaguer Kyle Gruhler. Battle Ground is poised for another playoff run behind the size of 6-foot-9 Gonzaga commit Kaden Perry and guard Brendan Beall. Last season's run to the Tacoma Dome was the Tigers' first since 2002.

Camas has a wealth of championship experience on its roster — Jackson Clemmer, Blake Ascitutto — from its 4A title-winning football team. Heritage looks to gain more ground under second-year coach Brian Childs.



Squeaky Johnson and Skyview are hoping for a return to the postseason.

4A GREATER ST. HELENS LEAGUE GIRLS

PROJECTED FINISH

Picks by Columbian sports staff

- 1  **UNION:** With Mason Oberg back from injury, the Titans are Tacoma Dome contenders.
- 2  **CAMAS:** The Papermakers have their own version of the "Big 3" with Forner, Carlisle and Bergstrom.
- 3  **SKYVIEW:** Injuries derailed the Storm a season ago; this time around should go smoother.
- 4  **HERITAGE:** Katie Peneueta and a young group will surprise some teams this season.
- 5  **BATTLE GROUND:** Dave McIntosh is trying to reignite the Tigers.



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Union's Mason Oberg, right, missed last season with a knee injury. Now healthy, the point guard has the Titans playing the role of favorite in the 4A Greater St. Helens League.

Talent, parity highlight this year's league

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Is this the deepest the 4A Greater St. Helens League has been in recent memory? With a stacked top four, it certainly feels like it.

Union and Camas return some key pieces from a shared title a season ago; Skyview is again healthy after starting last season 11-0; and Heritage has possibly the most talented girls basketball player in Clark County.

"It's going to be a really special year for girls hoops down here," Camas coach Scott Thompson said.

Union, after finishing 17-6 last season, brings back Mason Oberg from a knee injury. She joins a loaded backcourt with all-league picks Mackenzie Lewis and Lolo Weatherspoon.

Camas' Faith Bergstrom is a must-see post player. Combined with Jalena Carlisle and Katelynn Forner, the Papermakers have a shot at returning to regionals for the fourth straight year.

Skyview's starting five impressed in the lead-up to the season and with Kazz Parks healthy again, the Storm could contend for a league title.

"I truly believe we have three teams who are legit top 20, if not top 15, in the state," Thompson said. "If we have some timely wins and don't play elimination games against each other, all three could make it to the dome."

Katie Peneueta is fresh off a gold medal in the Pacific Games and bolsters a young Heritage team that finished 6-13 last season.

Battle Ground, which finished 5-15 last season, will try to regain its toughness under coach Dave McIntosh.



Skyview's Kazz Parks is also back from injury.



Boys SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Fort Van.	W, 57-46
Dec. 7	vs. Crater, Ore*	W, 65-50
Dec. 9	Kentwood	W, 54-37
Dec. 10	at Mt. Rainier	W, 57-46
Dec. 12	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Dec. 14	at Olympia	6 p.m.
Dec. 16	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Dec. 26-30	^ Les Schwab Invitational	
Jan. 10	at Union	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Skyview	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Camas	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Union	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Skyview	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	Heritage	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Camas	7 p.m.

*-at Moda Center, Portland

^at Liberty HS, Hillsboro, Ore.

BOYS: Tigers schedule tough non-league opponents in quest for another state berth

By **MEG WOCHNICK**
Columbian staff writer

On the surface, six homes games pinned against 14 road or neutral contests isn't ideal.

But the Tigers' feel a tough schedule of games — including two showcase events against top-tier teams — can only be beneficial toward another playoff push.

Last season marked Battle Ground's first 4A state appearance in 18 seasons. The Tigers hope to be the first to reach state in back-to-back seasons since 1991-'92.

And the Tigers hope December opponents make a difference come late February. BG already took down Crater (Ore.) at the Moda Center's Border Battle on Dec. 7. Up next is the prestigious Les Schwab Invitational later this month. It's the second straight year a 4A Greater St. Helens League team is in the tournament.

2018-19: 18-10, 4-4. 3rd in 4A GSHL
BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 1990

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Brendan Beall	6-0	Sr.
P/C	Kaden Perry	6-9	Jr.
G	Nate Millspaugh	6-0	Jr.
G	Cole Billingsley	6-0	Jr.
G	Max Ramirez	6-0	Jr.

Coach: Manny Melo (3rd year)

"I'm a huge believer in that," said senior guard Brendan Beall said of the benefits of a tough schedule. "Looking back at previous parts of our season, it gives us more experience on what to expect and how to prepare for traveling. That really helps us and playing in a playoff-type of stage helps us."

The Tigers have a wealth of experience in the frontcourt and backcourt behind Beall, junior

guard Nate Millspaugh and 6-foot-9 forward Kaden Perry, a Gonzaga commit. That trio was instrumental getting the Tigers to state by winning a number of loser-out bi-district contests after placing third in league.

That has Battle Ground's confidence high, Beall said, for another state berth.

"Knowing a team from Battle Ground can do it," he said, "that breakthrough is big for us."



KEN NOWACZYK/for The Columbian

Brendan Beall helped Battle Ground reach the state tournament for the first time since 2002.

GIRLS: First-year coach has Battle Ground focusing on what it can control



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Senior Megan Geiger will run the point for Battle Ground.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

New coach Dave McIntosh knows plenty will the 4A Greater St. Helens League isn't going to be a picnic for the Battle Ground Tigers. The league is a gauntlet and the Tigers have an "uphill battle."

Instead, McIntosh is focusing on what the Tigers can control. First and foremost, their attitude and work ethic. From there, it's about establishing an identity.

"We want to bring back that toughness that Battle Ground has always been known for," McIntosh said. "We want to be that tough team, that mentally tough team that can fight through adversity."

The Tigers finished 5-15 a season ago and have lost 14 straight league games. McIntosh comes over from Mountain

2018-19: 5-15, 0-8. 5th in 4A GSHL
BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 1991

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Megan Geiger	5-8	Sr.
F	Mallory Meyer	5-10	Jr.
P	Elizabeth Miller	5-7	Jr.

Coach: Dave McIntosh (1st year)

View, which finished 5-14 last season.

"We're going to be fighters," McIntosh said. "We're going to battle everybody."

On the court, senior point guard Megan Geiger will guide the ship. She'll have softball standout Mallory Meyer, a 5-10 junior, to help her.

"A lot of people, if they don't know those two girls, they're going to know them by the end of the season," McIntosh said.

Undersized post Elizabeth Miller, a junior, is also expected to be a key player for the Tigers.

Battle Ground's nonleague schedule includes some potential confidence-builders in Fort Vancouver, Class 2B Mossyrock, Mark Morris and Evergreen. That quartet finished last season with a combined record of 11-66.

GIRLS SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 6	at Fort Vanc.	W, 55-31
Dec. 9	Mossyrock	L, 45-31
Dec. 10	at Mark Morris	L, 48-20
Dec. 12	at Hud. Bay	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	Evergreen	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	King's Way	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Prairie	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	* Nike Shootout	
Jan. 4	at Napavine	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Union	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Skyview	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Heritage	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Camas	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Union	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Skyview	6 p.m.
Feb. 3	Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Camas	5:30 p.m.

* - at Lake Oswego, Ore.

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Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 5	Prairie	L, 75-51
Dec. 7	Sumner*	L, 65-52
Dec. 10	Evergreen	L, 76-53
Dec. 13	Washougal	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Olympia	6 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	Bend Tourney	
Jan. 3	at Mtnside, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 4	West Salem, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 7	Union	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 9	at Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	S. Eugene, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Skyview	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	B. Ground	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Union	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Heritage	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Skyview	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	at B. Ground	7 p.m.

*at Fife High School

BOYS: Fresh off football title, team's leaders bring championship mentality into gym

By **MEG WOCHNICK**
Columbian staff writer

Less than 24 hours after winning the Class 4A football state championship, five members of the Papermakers' title-winning team were back practicing.

Not in football. It came on the hardwood. On a Sunday.

Third-year coach Ryan Josephson posed the question to the players turning out for basketball if they wanted to have their first practice begin Sunday so they could be eligible to play by the end of the week.

He got a unanimous yes from Jackson Clemmer, Blake Ascitutto, Titan Phillips, Kenny Wright and Charlie Bump.

"That speaks to why we're a winning team," Josephson said.

Josephson noted a higher energy

2018-19: 12-8, 2-6. 4th in 4A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Eighth in 1962

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
F	Jackson Clemmer	6-6	Sr.
G	Blake Ascitutto	6-3	Sr.
F	Titan Phillips	6-5	Sr.
G	Christian Lenard	6-0	Jr.
G	Armand Nunez	5-11	Jr.
G	Caleb Shira	6-0	Jr.

Coach: Ryan Josephson (3rd year)

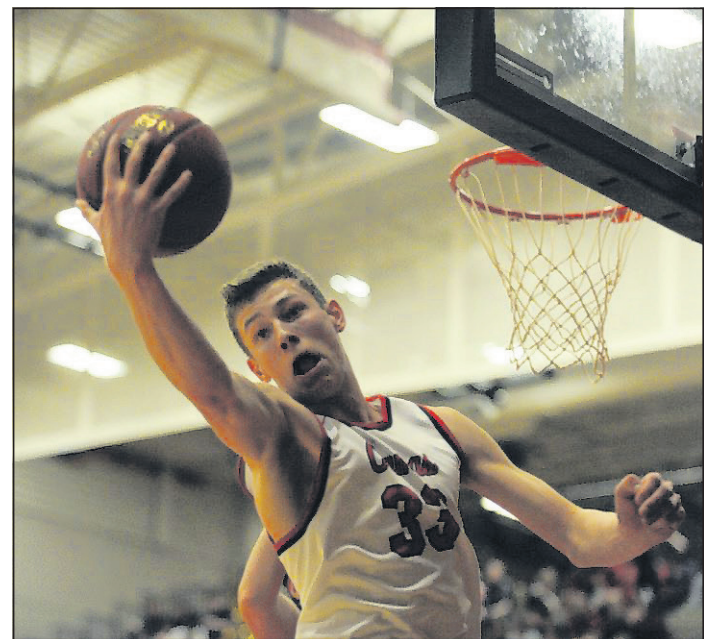
and Phillips saw minutes from last year's team that just missed out on a postseason berth in the final regular-season week.

"They've got a winning tradition established in football and hopefully they can take some of those lessons learned and apply it to basketball," Josephson said.

level now that the varsity team is at full strength. Camas began the season with losses to Prairie and Sumner, and faced Evergreen last week before hosting Washougal with a full roster.

And that championship culture is what Josephson hopes rubs off in basketball.

Clemmer, at 6-foot-6, is a returning starter and Ascitutto



WAYNE HAVRELLY/Post-Record

One day after winning the 4A state football championship, Jackson Clemmer was at basketball practice for Camas.

GIRLS: With plenty of returning talent, Papermakers look to step up to next level



ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Camas' Katelynn Forner, right, earned all-league honors last season as a sophomore.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Faith Bergstrom's 29-point outing in Camas' season-opening loss to Kelso is a good indicator of what the junior post has in store this season.

With multiple NCAA Division I offers, the 6-foot-2 Bergstrom is part of the "heart and soul" of a Papermakers team coming off a shared league title and regional berth a season ago.

Returning all-league juniors Katelynn Forner and Jalena Carlisle have even loftier goals this season.

"Last year, we made state but didn't make the dome," coach Scott Thompson said. "That took a chunk out of our soul."

The Papermakers lost 48-34 to Chiawana in the regional round. While league

2018-19: 15-10, 7-1. T-1st in 4A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Q' Finals in 2017

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Katelynn Forner	5-6	Jr.
P	Ashley Bauer	6-1	So.
P	Faith Bergstrom	6-2	Jr.
P	Jalena Carlisle	5-11	Jr.

Coach: Scott Thompson (2nd year)

player of the year Haley Hanson and her 13 points per game are gone, Bergstrom is expected to take on a bigger scoring load this season and fellow post Ashley Bauer, a sophomore, is poised for a breakout season.

But more than the individual talent, the Papermakers feel different as a unit. Thompson's first year was transitional. He wanted Camas to

press more and build a style around that. With that philosophy established, it's a "totally different vibe," Thompson said.

"You need buy-in and it took a bit of time before they really understood the commitment it takes to be pressure-oriented," Thompson said. "Now that we've been through those hurdles and come out the other side, it just feels like it's so fun. ... The team is fun to be around."

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Kelso	L, 59-49
Dec. 6	Silverton, Ore.	W, 61-54
Dec. 10	at W.Linn, Ore.	L, 55-52
Dec. 13	Washougal	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 3	Sheldon, Ore.	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Union	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Heritage	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at McMinnville, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Skyview	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Union	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Skyview	6 p.m.
Feb. 5	at B. Ground	5:30 p.m.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Evergreen	L, 84-59
Dec. 6	Hockinson	W, 54-49
Dec. 9	R.A. Long	W, 79-52
Dec. 11	at W. Albany	L, 80-64
Dec. 13	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Dec. 28	Capital	6 p.m.
Jan. 2-4	Couer d'Alene Tourney	
Jan. 7	at Skyview	6 p.m.
Jan. 9	Camas	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Union	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	B. Ground	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Skyview	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Camas	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Union	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at B. Ground	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Washougal	7 p.m.

BOYS: Timberwolves build with eye on long-term success of the program

By MEG WOCHNICK
Columbian staff writer

Like putting together a puzzle, coach Brian Childs is trying to fit all the Timberwolves' pieces into place.

It's coming together, the coach said, and knows the program will benefit long-term.

"Our guys understand where we're at and where we want to go," Childs said.

"The biggest thing for us is taking a step forward. "... We're setting ourselves up to continue to build this thing."

That's why Childs, now in his second season, isn't measuring this season's success off wins and losses playing in a tough 4A Greater St. Helens League. What Heritage lacks in size (its tallest player is 6-foot-3), it makes up for in spot-up shooting.

"The look we get is probably our best

2018-19: 5-15, 0-8. 5th in 4A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Never qualified

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Capone Johnson	6-0	Sr.
G	Conner Childs	6-2	Jr.
G	Jared Padley	6-0	Sr.
G	Marcos Diaz	5-9	Jr.
P	Drew Gray	6-2	Jr.

Coach: Brian Childs (2nd year)

look," Childs said. "We need to handle it well and make sure we get good shots. We'll get what we can in transition and utilize our skill and some of that speed and quickness."

Heritage's guard-heavy lineup features a veteran backcourt of senior point guard Capone Johnson and junior 2-guard Conner Childs. It's their third season starting together, and second at Heritage.

Coach Childs said he already likes the team

chemistry and camaraderie and he hopes the backcourt duo's chemistry and play rubs off on teammates. Johnson and Conner Childs combined for 35 points in Heritage's first win of the season, a 54-49 win over 2A Hockinson.

"They've taken that upon themselves to take what they have together and try to bring the other guys on board," Coach Childs said.



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Heritage returns leading scorer Capone Johnson.

GIRLS: Standout junior Katie Peneueta helps lead Heritage in the right direction



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

At 6-foot-2, Katie Peneueta can score inside and out.

By JOSHUA HART
Columbian staff writer

There's no one player that can do everything herself, but junior Katie Peneueta can come awfully close.

At 6-foot-2, the Heritage standout is strong enough to score inside with crafty post moves or by backing down her opponent. She's also a great shooter and can handle the ball when asked, making her near impossible to guard.

Coming off a gold medal with American Samoa in the Pacific Games this summer, Peneueta also brings something else to Heritage.

"First and foremost, it's her leadership and attitude on the floor," second-year coach Jacob Kaler said. "She's always keeping players accountable."

After a 6-13 campaign a season ago, Pe-

2018-19: 6-13, 2-6. 4th in 4A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Never qualified

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Mariah Bibens	5-8	Fr.
G	Keanna Salavea	5-11	Fr.
F	Katie Peneueta	6-2	Jr.
F	Sarah Rosenbaum	5-10	Sr.

Coach: Jacob Kaler (2nd year)

neueta and the Timberwolves get some needed reinforcement this season. Freshmen Mariah Bibens, a 5-8 guard, and Keanna Salavea, a 5-11 guard, make this a new-look Heritage side ready to shock teams.

With Salavea and Peneueta boasting both size and ballhandling ability, the pressure defenses of the 4A GSHL won't impact Heritage as

much as it did in years past.

"Just being able to pivot and step through a double team and see over people," Kaler said. "And then on defense using that length, whether in zone or man, to contest shooters."

Senior Sarah Rosenbaum adds some needed experience for a program headed in the right direction.

"I'm really excited with the group we have going forward," Kaler said.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Evergreen	W, 57-19
Dec. 6	at Hockinson	L, 51-42
Dec. 9	at R.A. Long	L, 49-33
Dec. 11	Kelso	L, 39-33
Dec. 13	at Hud. Bay	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	Mtn. View	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Fort Van.	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	Astoria Tourney	
Jan. 3	Seton Catholic	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Skyview	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Camas	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Union	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Skyview	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Camas	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Union	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	at B. Ground	5:30 p.m.

Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 5	at Evergreen	L, 67-56
Dec. 7	at Jackson	W, 65-58
Dec. 11	Prairie	W, 61-48
Dec. 13	Col. River	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Wilson*	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Timberline*	8:15 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	^ Cactus Jam	
Jan. 2	Federal Way	7 p.m.
Jan. 4	at Capital	6 p.m.
Jan. 7	Heritage	6 p.m.
Jan. 14	at B. Ground	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Camas	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Union	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Heritage	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	B. Ground	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	Camas	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Union	7:30 p.m.

*Saint Martin's Showcase, Lacey
^at Phoenix, Ariz.

BOYS: Using the 2017-18 season as a blueprint, Storm will bank on veteran leadership

By MEG WOCHNICK
Columbian staff writer

Coach Matt Gruhler doesn't need to look too far back in the rearview mirror to see a team with this much experience returning.

Two years ago was an experienced squad, coming off a sooner-than-anticipated playoff loss the previous season, that went onto bring home a state trophy at its first-ever 4A state tournament

appearance in the Tacoma Dome.

Will this season follow suit? "I'm hoping it's the same thing," the coach said.

Skyview went 16-7 last season with two losses coming in consecutive games at the bi-district tournament to end its season.

One player — Kyle Gruhler — saw big minutes in the Tacoma Dome in 2018 when

2018-19: 16-7, 6-2. 2nd in 4A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: 6th in 2018

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Squeeky Johnson	6-0	Jr.
G	Alec Marshall	6-0	Sr.
P	Cody McKinney	6-4	Sr.
P	Jace Chatman	6-4	Jr.
F	Kyle Gruhler	6-5	Sr.

Coach: Matt Gruhler (7th year)

the Storm placed fifth. He's a veteran starter expected to shoulder a bigger offensive load as the team's returning leading scorer. From a sharpshooter sophomore year to a more low-post presence as a junior, the senior is expected to generate offense in new ways. He poured in 27 points in the team's season opener against Evergreen.

"If we're going to be good as we want to be," Coach Gruhler said, "he's going to have to put the ball on the floor."

Jace Chatman and Squeeky Johnson joined Gruhler as the Storm's returning starters as a core group that's playing with a new level of confidence. If Sean Boss (knee) is cleared to return this season, the veteran adds depth at the guard position.

The key for Skyview, Coach Gruhler said, is "what we get from guys who weren't starters last year and guys off the bench."



ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Skyview's Kyle Gruhler, right, is an all-league returner.

GIRLS: With key players back from injury, Skyview has multiple options at the ready

By JOSHUA HART
Columbian staff writer

Skyview felt it had something going last season. The Storm started 11-0 with wins over eventual 2A champion Washougal, Oregon 5A semifinalist Wilsonville and California Division III champion Oakland.

And then came the injuries. All-league selections Remingtin Riley and Kazz Parks both went down and the Storm sputtered to a 17-7 finish.

This year, the Storm are again healthy. Riley graduated, but Parks returns for her senior season as the

team leader and a hungry group around her.

"We're trying to go to state," coach Brett Johnson said. "We shouldn't settle for anything less."

Skyview last qualified for the state regionals in 2016.

Joining the 5-foot-8 Parks in an impressive starting rotation is all-league returner 5-foot-11 Maddie Hendricks and softball standout Mikelle Anthony. Senior Emily Norton is a sharpshooter and sophomore Skylar Groesbeck is a rebounding machine.

Junior wing Addison MacPherson missed last season with a knee injury but is expected to contribute in a big way. The Storm

2018-19: 17-7, 4-4. 3rd in 4A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 2012

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Kazz Parks	5-8	Sr.
G	Emily Norton	5-8	Sr.
W	Addi MacPherson	5-10	Jr.
W	Skylar Groesbeck	5-10	So.
P	Mikelle Anthony	5-10	Sr.
P	Maddie Hendricks	5-11	Jr.

Coach: Brett Johnson (3rd year)

are still searching for a little more depth to bolster their run for a league title, but Johnson looks forward to the different lineup combinations.

"We can go fast or go tall or go shooting," he said. Plus, with the length the starting lineup boasts, the Skyview can press a little differently this season.

GIRLS SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Mtn. View	W, 69-23
Dec. 5	at Evergreen	W, 74-16
Dec. 10	Washougal	L, 60-52
Dec. 13	Columbia River	6 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Milwaukie, Ore.	7:15 p.m.
Dec. 19	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Dec. 27-29	Holiday Classic Tournament*	
Jan. 2	at Olympia	5:45 p.m.
Jan. 4	Sheldon, Ore.	3:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Heritage	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Wilsonville, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Camas	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Union	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Battle Ground	6 p.m.
Feb. 3	Camas	6 p.m.
Feb. 5	Union	6 p.m.

*at Grant HS, Ore.

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Thanks to all our SKYVIEW neighbors for their continued support.



Boys SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 5	Spanaway Lake	W, 98-69
Dec. 6	Mountain View	W, 94-34
Dec. 7	Enumclaw	W, 82-26
Dec. 10	at Peninsula	W, 72-30
Dec. 12	at Ft. Vancouver	7 p.m.
Dec. 14	at Mount Si	6 p.m.
Dec. 18	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	North Kitsap *	5 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	Surf N' Slam Tourney	
	San Diego	
Jan. 4	Gonzaga Prep	2 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Camas	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Battle Ground	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Skyview	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Camas	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Heritage	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Skyview	7:30 p.m.

*at Highline College

BOYS: Of all the talented Titans teams in recent years, this might be the most athletic

By MEG WOCHNICK
Columbian staff writer

Now in his seventh season at Union, coach Blake Conley's Titans have never finished a season without a 4A Greater St. Helens League title and has seven state appearances.

What makes this team special, the coach said? He calls it his most athletic, and potentially, he's best defensive team, too.

That's quite the compliment for a program that's won or shared a league title in each of Conley's six seasons, including going 20-0 in the regular-season last year. Union has now won eight straight 4A GSHL titles — outright or shared — dating back to the 2011-'12 season.

"We're fast, we're long and we can really have constant chaos on defense," Conley said. "Our goal is to be hard to score on and create some havoc out there."

They've already caused havoc offensively,

2018-19: 24-3, 8-0. 1st in 4A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champions in 2010

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Brad Lackey	6-2	Sr.
G	Tanner Toolson	6-5	Sr.
G/F	Josh Reznick	6-3	Sr.
G	Kaden Horn	6-1	Jr.
F	Mason Hill	6-5	Sr.

Coach: Blake Conley (7th year)

too. Union scored 90 or more points its first two games. Union features a guard-heavy roster — a different look from last season when it had two post players 6-5 or taller — with a number of interchangeable guards and wings. Two of them are returning all-leaguers Brad Lackey and Tanner Toolson on an experienced varsity roster. A new addition is Mountain View transfer Kaden Horn, the Thunder's leading scorer and all-3A GSHL

player last season.

The addition of Horn adds to the versatile, dynamic offense with as many as five shooters on the floor at all times, Conley said, allowing the Titans to use that to their advantage.

"If we're using that speed and using that athleticism," he said, "that's what makes us tough."



NATHAN HOWARD/The Columbian

Union's Tanner Toolson is one of several Titans with state tournament experience.

GIRLS: Talent-filled roster has Titans looking toward a breakthrough season



ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Union's Mackenzie Lewis, left, plays wing for the Titans.

By JOSHUA HART
Columbian staff writer

Second-year Union coach Gary Mills felt last year's team was good, but not great. He feels the same entering this season.

"We're trying to raise our standards a bit to get to the next level," Mills said.

After sharing a league title with Camas last season, the only place to go up is to state. And this year's Titans squad has the talent to break through for just the third time in program history.

The Titans return all-league selections Lolo Weatherspoon, a 5-foot-10 guard, and Mackenzie Lewis, a 5-11 senior. They also bring back Mason Oberg, who missed last season with a knee injury.

"She's 100 percent. There's no ill effects from that injury," Mills said. "Most of the

2018-19: 17-6, 7-1. T-1st in 4A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Round of 12, 2018

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Mason Oberg	5-5	Sr.
W	Lolo Weatherspoon	5-10	Jr.
W	Mackenzie Lewis	5-11	Sr.
W	Lexi Raymore	5-3	Sr.
P	Sarah Litchford	6-1	Jr.

Coach: Gary Mills (2nd year)

time with knee injuries, there's the mental scars. I don't see any of that. She just wants to compete."

Five-foot-3 winger Lexi Raymore will come off the bench for the Titans, who also bring in Sarah Litchford, a 6-1 post from Utah.

"I don't think we're going to do very many things similar to last year," Mills said. "It's more 'what do we have this year?' Let's try to make something of that. That's the fun of coaching."

With a bevy of talented guards that means Union will look to utilize its team speed. Mills also wants the players to use their high basketball IQs to make adjustments on the fly.

"In our minds, we just want to go further than last year," Mills said.

Union made the state regionals in 2018 before falling in bi-districts last season.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Nov. 30	Kentwood	W, 50-41
Dec. 4	Prairie	W, 61-37
Dec. 6	Mountain View	W, 53-24
Dec. 9	Hudson's Bay	W, 76-38
Dec. 13	Glacier Peak	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Snohomish	3 p.m.
Dec. 18	at Evergreen	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Bellarmino Prep	3 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	Surf N' Slam Tourney	
	San Diego	
Jan. 7	at Camas	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	at Wilson	4 p.m.
Jan. 14	Heritage	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Skyview	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Camas	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	at B. Ground	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Skyview	6 p.m.

3A GREATER ST. HELENS LEAGUE BOYS

PROJECTED FINISH

Picks by Columbian sports staff

- 1  **PRAIRIE:** Defensively, this team is going to be mighty tough.
- 2  **EVERGREEN:** The Plainsmen clearly have the most talent in the league.
- 3  **KELSO:** Joe Kinch's squad will have to find a new identity with Shaw Anderson's departure.
- 4  **FORT VANCOUVER:** The Trappers aren't going to be an easy out.
- 5  **MOUNTAIN VIEW:** Kaden Horn's transfer leaves a scoring hole for the Thunder to fill.
- 6  **HUDSON'S BAY:** With only one returning starter, the Eagles are going to take their lumps.



Photos by ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Evergreen's Mario Herring (24) and Kelso's Josh Webb (2) are two of the top returners in the 3A Greater St. Helens League.

Stars have graduated, leaving race wide open

By **JOSHUA HART**

Columbian staff writer

Who is the face of the 3A Greater St. Helens League? For the past several years, that answer has been easy. Prairie's Kam Osborn and Kelso's Shaw Anderson. With both graduated, the elite individual talent that drew fans from around Southwest Washington to watch the best of the league may make way for balanced scoring loads and more team-oriented basketball.

That is, of course, if Evergreen's supreme athleticism doesn't steal the show first. Led by 6-foot-5 Mario Herring, the Plainsmen's starting five is the most talented in the league. Carter Monda and Zyell Griffin are matchup problems.

"They have every piece they need," Kelso coach Joe Kinch said.

Still, several coaches eyed Prairie as the league

favorite. With Aidan Fraly as the primary scorer, and Zeke Dixon due back from injury for league season, the Falcons are experienced and defensive-minded.

"(Kyle) Brooks is so good," Fort Vancouver coach James Ensley said. "He just gets amazing things out of his kids by the end of the season."

Kinch, too, earned fellow coaches' praise as many believe the Hilanders will quickly reload. They'll lean more on the group's athleticism, including from football standouts Dillon Davis and Josh Webb.

Fort Vancouver has guards Kahlil Singleton and Tre Cannon ready to make some noise and Hudson's Bay features talented seniors Trenton Jackson and Tony King.

Mountain View, with Kaden Horn transferring out of the program, will rely on a trio of guards (Austin Lee, Colby Smith and Mason Wulf) to handle the scoring load for a Thunder team that finished 11-12 last season.









Prairie's Zeke Dixon.

3A GREATER ST. HELENS LEAGUE GIRLS

PROJECTED FINISH

Picks by Columbian sports staff

- 1  **PRAIRIE:** Until someone dethrones the Falcons, the top spot is rightfully theirs.
- 2  **HUDSON'S BAY:** The Eagles will pose the biggest threat to Prairie's title in years.
- 3  **KELSO:** Natalie Fraley is going to become a household name for the Hilanders this year.
- 4  **MOUNTAIN VIEW:** New coach and plenty of turnover leaves many question marks.
- 5  **EVERGREEN:** Caleb Dressler's top priority is making the game enjoyable again for the Plainsmen.
- 6  **FORT VANCOUVER:** The Trappers are improving, and that's the exciting part for Arlisa Hinton.



Photos by NATHAN HOWARD/The Columbian

Prairie's Allison Corral is one of the few Falcons back from last season's state championship team.

Could this be the year for new champ?

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The Prairie Falcons have been synonymous with 3A Greater St. Helens League champions the past 22 years. For the first time in a long time, that has a chance to change.

Prairie graduated most of its roster and then saw Kendyl Carson return to Alaska over the offseason. That means point guard Alli Corral is left to carry the

torch, along with returners Meri Dunford and Claire Heitschmidt. But the Falcons have reloaded quickly before, so what makes this year different?

Hudson's Bay. The Eagles are one of Clark County's most talented teams. With Jaydia Martin and Kamelai Powell returning off of impressive sophomore campaigns, and Aniyah Hampton expected to return from injury by January, Hudson's Bay is the

biggest threat to Prairie in years. Paytin Ballard joins the team from Mountain View and a pair of freshmen are expected to contribute in big ways.

"It's fun to have competition," Prairie coach Hala Corral said. "Sometimes you get complacent when you don't have competition."

Kelso, too, thinks it might factor into the conversation at some point with Natalie Fraley and Alexis Kleven

guiding the ship.

"We're just a one-school town and we're trying to go up against the big dogs," coach Jen Hamilton said.

Mountain View, without Ballard and Dejah Wilson, will look different this season under first-year coach Dan Larson. Evergreen, coming off a 2-16 year, will focus on stability. Fort Vancouver, with Kailey Gonzales and Corah Williams, are much improved from seasons past.



Hudson's Bay's Aniyah Hampton.

Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Heritage	W, 84-59
Dec. 5	Skyview	W, 67-56
Dec. 10	at Camas	W, 76-53
Dec. 12	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	at Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Dec. 18	Union	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Lakeridge Tourney	
Jan. 3	LaSalle, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.

BOYS: With talent and experience, Evergreen expects to contend for GSHL title

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Talent and athleticism can only take a basketball team so far. The challenge for the highly skilled Evergreen Plainsmen this season will be translating that into wins.

"Having good athletes helps but it's how we play together and how we stay together as a unit," third-year coach Brett Henry said. "That's the biggest challenge."

The injury-riddled Plainsmen struggled through an 8-12 campaign last season. They finished fourth in the 3A Greater St. Helens League. But many are looking at Evergreen as potential league favorites.

The biggest reason why is 6-foot-6 Mario Herring. He can shoot, he can score inside and he can go up and snag

2018-19: 8-12, 4-6. 4th in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champions in 1995

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Jaden Stanley	5-9	Jr.
G	Izaak Romero	6-0	Sr.
W	Tyler Ricketts	6-1	Sr.
F	Carter Monda	6-4	Sr.
F	Zyell Griffin	6-2	Sr.
F	Mario Herring	6-6	Sr.

Coach: Brett Henry (3rd year)

rebounds or handle the ball. He's one of the few basketball-first impact players for the Plainsmen.

Carter Monda, the 6-foot-4 baseball star turned starting football quarterback, returns for his final campaign and top football prospect Zyell Griffin gives the Plainsmen some intriguing options all around.

"We expect to compete for a league championship," Henry said. "First, we need to get ourselves into the playoffs; we have the talent to make a run."

Also in the starting rotation is 5-foot-9 junior Jaden Stanley and 6-foot-1 senior wing Tyler Ricketts, who Henry described as the team's "emotional leader." Six-foot senior guard Izaak Romero will be a scorer off the bench.



ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Also a baseball and football star, Evergreen's Carter Monda, one of the best all-around athletes in the league.

GIRLS: After season of turmoil, Plainsmen embrace fresh start, positive attitude



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Evergreen's Hilary Yoon is a sophomore guard.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

After a year of "coaching drama," as Caleb Dressler put it, the 6-foot-10 Evergreen High alumna is hoping to bring some stability to the Evergreen girls.

Dressler served as a junior varsity coach last season and helped out with the varsity team. He was tabbed for the head coaching job this season.

"We struggled last year going through some coaching changes," Dressler said. "So I want to be better, but I just want to have these girls be happy to be here every day. If that translates to wins, great."

The Plainsmen finished 2-16 last year and fifth in the 3A Greater St. Helens League. This year's team is a little lon-

2018-19: 2-16, 1-8. 5th in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: First round 1989

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Arrianna Walker	5-3	Jr.
G	Uriah Gipson	5-3	Sr.

Coach: Caleb Dressler (first year)

ger inside, so Dressler hopes the team can find their post players. But he also wants his team to run the floor.

Guards Arrianna Walker, a 5-3 junior, and Uriah Gipson, a 5-3 senior, provide the opportunity to do so. "Those two are key to keeping this unit and everyone going," Dressler said.

That senior leadership will also be tasked with keeping everyone on track to meet the team's goals.

"We're starting with a new program here," said Dressler, who played collegiate ball for Central Washington. "I want everyone positive and on the same page."

The Plainsmen have three seniors on the team, four juniors and four sophomores.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Heritage	L, 57-19
Dec. 5	Skyview	L, 74-16
Dec. 6	Mark Morris	W, 44-36
Dec. 12	Woodland	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	at B. Ground	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	Union	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Sunset, Ore.	7 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	Evergreen Tourney	
Jan. 7	Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Kelso	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Battle Ground	L, 57-46
Dec. 9	Mark Morris	W, 78-72
Dec. 11	Woodland	L, 57-49
Dec. 12	Union	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	Skyview	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Heritage	7 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	Fort Vancouver Tournament	
Jan. 3	Capital	7 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	Kelso	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Evergreen	7 p.m.

BOYS: Trappers not taking the easy route through non-league part of schedule

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Fort Vancouver's non-league schedule is a coach's nightmare. Sixth-year coach James Ensley prefers it that way.

The Trappers opened with 4A Battle Ground and perennial 2A contender Mark Morris.

They continue with Union, a 4A title contender, Skyview and 3A Capital.

"Our non-league is not fun," Ensley said. "But if we ever want to get to that level, we have to play those schools to see how they do it."

Teams like Mark Morris show what a disciplined defense can do to a free-wheeling offense like Fort Vancouver's. Union and Skyview are consistent contenders and have cultures that get the best out of their players. Battle Ground boasts one of the top players

2018-19: 3-17, 3-7. 5th in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 1938

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Kahlil Singleton	6-0	So.
G	Tre Cannon	5-9	Jr.

Coach: James Ensley (6th year)

in the state.

"We use that film all year," Ensley said. "Not because we want to play like that, but we want to know what they do so well."

The Trappers try to take those lessons and apply it to their style of play, which Ensley described as

"getting after it having a lot of fun."

Kahlil Singleton, a 6-foot sophomore guard, will spearhead the attack. "He's special," Ensley said.

Tre Cannon, a 5-9 junior, returns from a broken foot that kept him out of last season.

"They've come a long way," Ensley said of his young team. "There's just a different energy level."

The Trappers went 3-17 last year. All three of their wins came during league play.



FILES/The Columbian

Fort Vancouver's Kahlil Singleton (4) made an impact last season as a freshman. "He's special," Trappers coach James Ensley said.

GIRLS: Tight-knit core grows into varsity roles, aims to inspire future Trappers



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Fort Vancouver's Leticia Arceo is among a large group of juniors.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Rather than throw freshmen into the fire of a full season of varsity action two years ago, Fort Vancouver seventh-year coach Arlisa Hinton tried a different approach. She kept a core group together on the sub-varsity teams so they could grow as a unit.

The Trappers are now reaping the rewards.

"This feels more like a team than I've had in the seven years of being here," Hinton said. "I have a core group of juniors. They've played together and learned about each other a little bit more. They've just become better friends."

For a program that's had its fair share of struggles, that camaraderie

2018-19: 1-16, 0-9. 6th in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Fifth in 1987, 82

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
F	Kailey Gonzalez	5-8	Sr.
F	Corah Williams	5-8	Sr.

Coach: Arlisa Hinton (7th year)

will help keep the team moving forward even when the going gets tough.

"They're so close-knit in that way," Hinton said.

The group of juniors is led by 5-8 senior forward Kailey Gonzalez. Also expected to be a leader is senior Corah Williams. "She's the

energy of the team," Hinton said.

Goals and expectations are a little different for the Trappers. It doesn't mean wins or losses, rather limiting turnovers is a high priority. This year's team will also look different than years past in that "we're finally going to play basketball," Hinton said. "In all aspects of the game."

There's now a sense of hope and excitement around the program, and for the competitive Hinton, that's a fun thing to watch.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 4	Seton Catholic	L, 50-31
Dec. 6	Battle Ground	L, 55-31
Dec. 9	at Castle Rock	L, 58-32
Dec. 16	Columbia	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 27-29	Fort Vancouver Tournament	
Jan. 4	at Columbia	2:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Prairie	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Evergreen	7 p.m.



BOYS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Ridgefield	L, 69-27
Dec. 5	at Seton Cath.	W, 54-53
Dec. 7	Team Australia	L, 48-39
Dec. 10	Hockinson	L, 64-49
Dec. 12	Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Dec. 13	Heritage	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Dec. 19-21	Grizzly Classic	
Jan. 3	at Stevenson	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Prairie	7 p.m.

BOYS: With just one returning starter, Eagles work through kinks to get better

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Sixth-year coach Theo Mikaele called his Hudson's Bay squad "a brand-new team." The Eagles have just one returning starter and a bevy of freshmen looking to make their names.

That means Hudson's Bay could take some lumps early. A 69-27 season-opening loss to Ridgefield made that abundantly clear. But it also means the Eagles will have equally impressive outings too. A 54-53 comeback win over Seton Catholic two days later showed that.

"We have to work through the kinks and get the chemistry down," Mikaele said. "We're just trying to get some kids up to speed at the varsity level."

To help anchor the squad are 6-foot-

2018-19: 3-15, 1-9. 6th in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champions in 1964

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.	Ht.	Year
G	Emmanuel Minnieweather	
	5-10	Fr.
W	Deandre Hite	6-0 Sr.
F	Trenton Jackson	6-4 Sr.
P	Tony King	6-4 Sr.

Coach: Theo Mikaele (6th year)

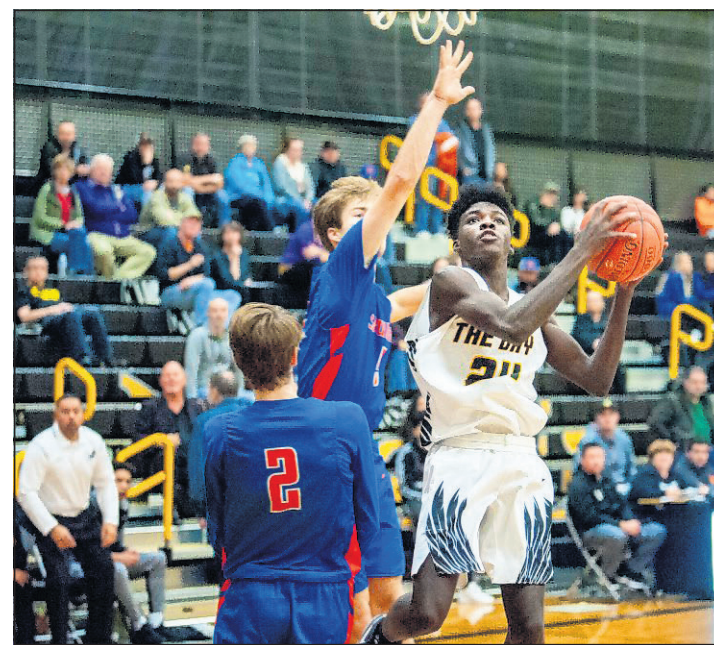
4 senior bigs Trenton Jackson and Tony King. The Eagles want to press and run, though, to take advantage of the athleticism they have elsewhere on the court.

Leading in that regard might be 5-10 freshman Emmanuel Minnieweather, who drew plenty of praise from his coach after his first varsity action.

"I'm excited to see him learn and grow," Mikaele said.

After finishing 3-15 last season, and sixth place in the 3A Greater St. Helens League, Mikaele is hoping the fresh faces can bring new life to his program.

"When people come to play Hudson's Bay, I want them to know it's going to be a dogfight," the coach said.



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Hudson's Bay's Emmanuel Minnieweather is among the freshmen hoping to seize an opportunity to make a varsity impact.

GIRLS: Once all are healthy, talented trio will make Eagles a dangerous team to face



NATHAN HOWARD/The Columbian

Jaydia Martin, one of three returning all-leaguers, has Hudson's Bay aiming for its first state trophy.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

There's an air of excitement around the Hudson's Bay girls basketball program. And for good reason: this could be Hudson's Bay's most talented team in a decade, if not in program history.

Fresh off a 19-7 season, the Eagles return their stars, a sophomore all-league transfer, and pair of freshmen to a team ready to dominate.

"They have very high goals," fourth-year coach Michael Rainville said. "They're really looking forward to this year."

It all starts with all-league players Jaydia Martin, a 5-foot-11 junior guard, and Kamelai Powell, a 5-10 junior forward. Aniyah Hampton, a 5-9 sophomore, is recovering from a torn Achilles but is due

2018-19: 19-7, 8-2. 2nd in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Q'finals in 2007

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.	Ht.	Year
G	Aniyah Hampton	5-9 So.
G	Jaydia Martin	5-11 Jr.
G	Devon Johnson-Brown	5-4 Fr.
G	Paytin Ballard	5-9 So.
F	Mahaila Harrison	5-10 Fr.
F	Kamelai Powell	5-10 Jr.

Coach: Michael Rainville (4th year)

back by January. That three-pronged attack was good enough to send the Eagles to their first regional appearance since 2007.

This offseason, they only got better. Mountain View transfer Paytin Ballard, an all-league pick last year, joined the team for her sophomore campaign.

Freshmen Devon Johnson-Brown and Mahaila Harrison are also expected to immediately

be impact players.

"We've got more talent than we've ever had," Rainville said.

The scarier part, perhaps, is that none of their key players are seniors. It means the Eagles will get at least two good runs at a state trophy, something the program has never accomplished. They made the quarterfinals in 2007.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 4	at Stevenson	W, 58-29
Dec. 7	Team Australia	W, 49-38
Dec. 9	at Union	L, 76-38
Dec. 11	at Woodland	W, 67-65, OT
Dec. 12	B. Ground	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 13	Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Camas	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	Skyview	7 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	Evergreen	Tourney
Jan. 7	Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Prairie	7 p.m.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 4	at Tumwater	W, 49-48
Dec. 6	at R.A. Long	W, 60-24
Dec. 10	at W.F. West	L, 53-35
Dec. 13	at Mark Morris	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	Timberline	7 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	Surf N' Slam Tourney	San Diego
Jan. 3	Gonzaga Prep	7 p.m.
Jan. 7	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	at Clover Park*	4:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Mountain View	7 p.m.

*at Lower Columbia College

BOYS: With star Shaw Anderson graduated, Hilanders have big shoes to fill

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Kelso basketball is going to look different this year. It has to.

Shaw Anderson, the 6-foot-6 post who has dominated the league the past three seasons, is now at Seattle Pacific University. Sharpshooting Riley Noah is playing football at Central Washington.

The class before them, which helped shape the Hilanders into state contenders — Kelso earned fifth- and sixth-place trophies the past two seasons — is long gone.

“Obviously there are some pretty big shoes to fill,” 20th-year coach Joe Kinch said. “This is the first group to play without those two classes. A lot has rubbed off on the way they practiced. It’s just

2018-19: 22-6, 9-1. 1st in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Fifth in 2019

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Dillon Davis	5-9	Sr.
G	Wyatt Brown	5-11	Sr.
G	Rees Hall	5-9	Sr.
W	Gage Tippery	5-10	Sr.
W	Josh Webb	6-0	Sr.
P	Drew Tack	6-4	Sr.
P	Tanner Davis	6-3	Sr.
Coach: Joe Kinch (20th year)			

matter of finding our way and identity.”

The defense should still be a strong suit, as it often is under Kinch-led squads. Guards Dillon Davis, Wyatt Brown and Josh Webb are all 6-foot or smaller but their work rate is unparalleled. Six-foot-4 post Drew Tack provides some length inside.

What Kelso is missing is a go-to scorer. “Offensively, we’ll be a work in progress,” Kinch said. “We have to

figure out where the points are going to come from.”

Seniors Gage Tippery and Rees Hall are strong perimeter shooters. Senior Tanner Davis provides depth in the post.

Said Kinch: “I think we have enough competitive kids to have a successful season if everyone buys in.”



Courtesy of LONGVIEW DAILY NEWS

Drew Tack is among a large core of seniors aiming to keep Kelso near the top of the 3A Greater St. Helens League.

GIRLS: With a strong backcourt tandem, Kelso is looking to climb into contention



Courtesy of LONGVIEW DAILY NEWS

Kelso guard Alexis Kleven earned all-league honors last season as a junior.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Sophomore Natalie Fraley looks different. She’s slightly taller; she’s definitely stronger; and she commands attention as she dribbles up the floor.

Fraley, a 5-foot-8 guard, knows she’ll have to play an even bigger part for the Hilanders after a strong freshman campaign.

“She’s just a whole different player, a whole different person,” coach Jen Hamilton said. “What she wants out of the season, she knows she has to motivate others to get there.”

Alexis Kleven needs no motivation. The 5-3 crafty guard continues to fine-tune her game. She will play the point or off the ball depending on the situation.

And then there’s a group of athletic players ready to follow the lead of the two dynamic guards.

2018-19: 13-10, 6-4. 3rd in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Eighth in 2002

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Alexis Kleven	5-3	Sr.
G	Natalie Fraley	5-8	So.
W	Cooper Joy	5-9	Sr.
F	Erin Tack	6-0	So.
F	Evermore Kaiser	5-10	So.
P	KK Perez	5-9	So.
Coach: Jennifer Hamilton (third year)			

Cooper Joy, a rangy defensive specialist, is back and healthy for the Hilanders. Erin Tack, a 6-foot forward, and Evermore Kaiser, a 5-10 forward, return for their sophomore seasons. KK Perez, a 5-9 post, will add much-needed depth.

“They have so many more facets to their game than they did a year ago,” Hamilton said. “They’ve added more height and muscle into their game, but they can also shoot the ball really well.”

Still, it’s going to be a tough task to break into the upper echelon of the 3A Greater St. Helens League with Prairie and Hudson’s Bay at the top. That’s not deterring Hamilton in her third year as head coach.

“I hope we’re at the top looking down rather than the bottom looking up,” she said. “I think we can get there.”

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Camas	W, 59-49
Dec. 6	at R.A. Long	W, 54-23
Dec. 11	at Heritage	W, 39-33
Dec. 13	at Mark Morris	6 p.m.
Dec. 17	La Center	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	Woodland	7 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	Surf N' Slam Tourney	
Jan. 7	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	W.F. West*	6 p.m.
Jan. 21	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.

*at Lower Columbia College

Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 6	at Union	L, 94-34
Dec. 9	at Washougal	L, 88-58
Dec. 11	Hockinson	L, 58-47
Dec. 13	Sandy, Ore.	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	at Heritage	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	Camas	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Jan. 7	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Kelso	7 p.m.

*at Lower Columbia College

BOYS: Lessons of last season offer building blocks for defensive-minded Thunder

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Mountain View's impact players might be different, but nothing changes as far as style goes for the Thunder.

The Thunder finished third in the 3A Greater St. Helens League last season and went 11-12 overall. Since then, leading scorer Kaden Horn transferred to Union and all-league pick Sam Frosh graduated.

"We're still going to play D; we're still going to run," third-year coach JC Alexander said. "We're still going to have good quality basketball."

Without a go-to scorer, the Thunder will place a bigger emphasis on defense. The early results have been positive.

2018-19: 11-12, 5-5. 3rd in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Third in 1986

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Austin Lee	6-1	Jr.
G	Colby Smith	6-0	Sr.
G	Mason Wulf	6-3	Sr.

Coach: JC Alexander (third year)

"The guys are buying in," Alexander said.

Senior guards Colby Smith (6-foot) and Mason Wulf (6-3), along with junior guard Austin Lee (6-1) will be asked to step into bigger roles this season.

"It's a great group of kids to coach and be around," Alexander said. "It will be a lot of fun."

The Thunder still expect to compete for a playoff spot, and that means trusting everyone to take the process seriously.

"If any coach enters the season and says playoffs aren't the goal, they're lying," Alexander said. "We want to build on what we established last year and keep Mountain View at the top of postseason talks."



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Mountain View senior Mason Wulf brings experience to the backcourt.

GIRLS: From coaching staff to roster, new faces abound for scrappy squad



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Mountain View's Ella Schoene, right, will have an opportunity to contribute on varsity as a freshman.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

For the past nine years, Dan Larson has coached boys. As a varsity assistant at Hudson's Bay, Fort Vancouver and Mountain View, Larson learned the ropes.

His first year as head coach, though, is with the Thunder girls.

"It's been a transition," Larson said. "There's lots of positive to coaching the girls. This is the most coachable team I've been around. You tell them what to do and they'll do it."

That's a good thing for the Thunder, who bring a fresh-faced group into a jam-packed league. All-league pick Paytin Ballard transferred to Hudson's Bay. Dejah Wilson transferred to Columbia River.

That leaves Jenna Carlson, a 5-foot-8 senior guard, as the lone all-league returner. "She's going to provide big minutes for

2018-19: 5-14, 4-6. 4th in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Second in 1995

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Jenna Carlson	5-8	Sr.
G	Ari Pizone	5-5	Sr.
G	Katelyn Henderson	5-2	Fr.
P	Ella Schoene	6-0	Fr.

Coach: Dan Larson (first year)

us and be a senior leader and voice of the team," Larson said.

Senior guard Ari Pizone is coming off surgery but is expected to contribute. Freshmen Katelyn Henderson (5-2) and Ella Schoene (6-0) are also anticipating big roles.

"It's starting to come together," Larson said. "It's still a little clunky, but it's starting to look

functional."

The road ahead is a tough one, though. Prairie, Hudson's Bay and Kelso are clear favorites atop the 3A Greater St. Helens League.

"We want to scrap, claw, be physical and push the tempo. Do all the things that make those other teams uncomfortable," Larson said. "Hopefully in two months, we're the team that people don't want to play."

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Skyview	L, 69-23
Dec. 4	Hockinson	L, 59-38
Dec. 6	at Union	L, 53-24
Dec. 9	at Col. River	L, 52-34
Dec. 16	at Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	at Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	Prairie	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Kelso	7 p.m.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 2	at King's Way	W, 65-55
Dec. 5	at Camas	W, 75-51
Dec. 7	Lincoln*	L, 54-50
Dec. 11	at Skyview	L, 61-48
Dec. 13	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Battle Ground	7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Lynden^	9 p.m.
Dec. 28	Eisenhower^	10:30 a.m.
Jan. 3	Timberline	7 p.m.
Jan. 7	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Mtn.View	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.

*at Fife; ^at Yakima SunDome

BOYS: Experienced Falcons focus on balance in quest for return to state playoffs

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

With eight returning seniors, the Prairie Falcons have no shortage of experience.

However, there's still a giant question mark entering the year after the graduation of Kameron Osborn and his 19 points per game: Where does the scoring come from?

"The other guys are going to have to pick up the slack," said coach Kyle Brooks, entering his 24th season. "We definitely need to rely on a more balanced scoring attack."

The offense is led by returning first-team all-league guard Aidan Fraly, who blossomed as last year's season progressed. The Falcons won a bi-district title in large part thanks to Fraly's efforts.

Also returning are Zeke and AJ Dixon.

2018-19: 17-10, 8-2. 2nd in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Sixth in '97, '01, '03

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Aidan Fraly	6-0	Sr.
G	Zeke Dixon	6-0	Sr.
G	AJ Dixon	6-1	Sr.
G	Treyce Teague	5-8	Sr.
G	Jimmie Barton	5-9	Sr.
F	Reece Walling	6-5	So.
P	Mark Frazier	6-6	Sr.

Coach: Kyle Brooks (24th year)

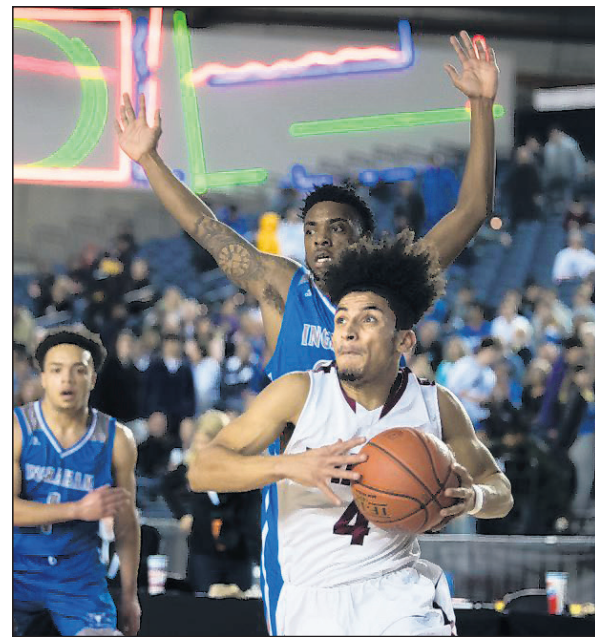
Zeke Dixon is expected back from a broken arm by January.

"Defensively, they're going to spearhead us and get us going," Brooks said.

Six-foot-6 senior Mark Frazier and 6-5 sophomore Reece Walling provide the Falcons plenty of length inside. Transfers Treyce Teague and Jimmie Barton are athletic additions. Brady Gagnon and Hayden Rose provide shooting off the bench.

The Falcons qualified for the Tacoma Dome last season before being eliminated on the first day in the round of 12. They finished the year 17-10.

"We're so quick and athletic, the defense will fuel the offense to get easy baskets," Brooks said. "We'll be able to play at a pretty quick pace and hopefully that will ease the burden of scoring points."



NATHAN HOWARD/The Columbian

Senior guard AJ Dixon brings quickness, defensive intensity and experience to Prairie.

GIRLS: New faces come with big expectations for defending state champions

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

If history is any indication, the Prairie Falcons will have no trouble reloading. Winners of 22 straight league titles, the defending 3A champions may have their stiffest challenge yet: getting another league crown out of a mostly new group.

Brooke Walling, Cassidy Gardner and Mallory Williams all graduated.

Kendyl Carson moved back to Alaska.

"It's going to be a different team than last year," fourth-year coach Hala Corral said. "We did lose four starters, but we had three kids on the bench that would have started on any other team in Clark County."

Prairie's lone all-league returner is Alli Corral, who has led the team in assists each of the past three seasons. This year, she'll be tasked with carrying a heavier scoring load.

2018-19: 25-2, 10-0. 1st in 3A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in '93, '94, '98, '99, '03, '12, '19

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Alli Corral	5-4	Sr.
G	Meri Dunford	5-6	Sr.
G	Claire Heitschmidt	6-0	Jr.

Coach: Hala Corral (fourth year)

"She'll probably still lead the team in assists, but she'll shoot a lot more," coach Corral said.

Other expected contributors are senior guard Meri Dunford, who Corral described as a "freak of nature" athlete, and junior guard Claire Heitschmidt, who stands 6-feet but can handle the ball. The quick guards will allow Prairie to press more, something they haven't done the past few years due to

personnel.

Despite the roster churn, expectations haven't changed for Prairie.

"Any time you put on a Prairie jersey there's expectations, whether you win a state title or not," Corral said. "We expect to be in the Tacoma Dome defending our state title. I don't think anybody expects us to be there but our kids expect us to be there."



NATHAN HOWARD/The Columbian

Senior guard Meri Dunford brings state championship experience as she moves into a starting role.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 4	at Union	L, 61-37
Dec. 7	at Roosevelt	L, 35-31
Dec. 13	Snohomish	7 p.m.
Dec. 14	Glacier Peak*	1 p.m.
Dec. 19	Camas	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Battle Ground	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	West Coast Tournament	

Jan. 7	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Fort Vancouver	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	Evergreen	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Miramonte, Cal.	6 p.m.
Jan. 28	Kelso	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Mtn. View	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.

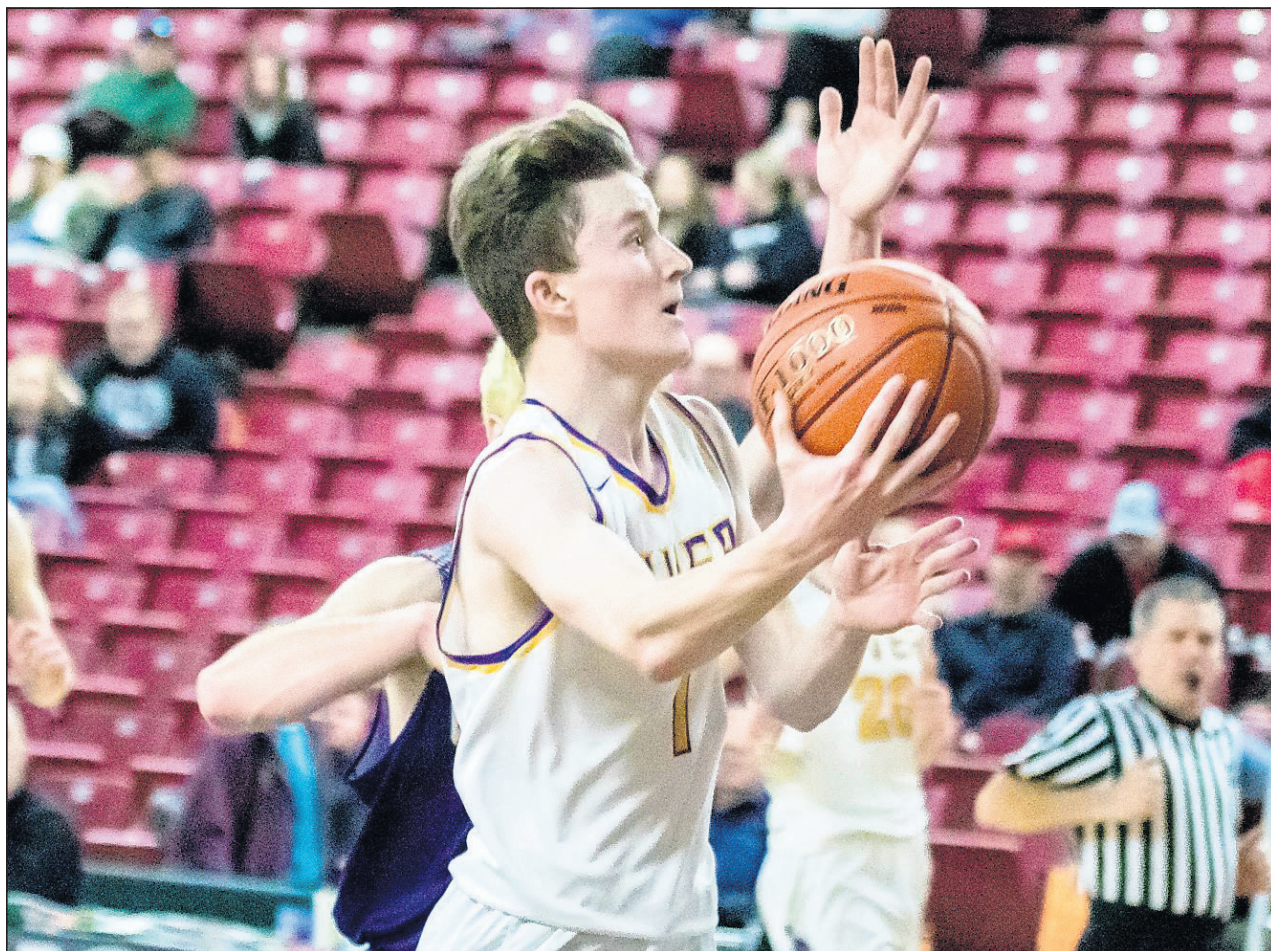
*at Union High School

2A GREATER ST. HELENS LEAGUE BOYS

PROJECTED FINISH

Picks by Columbian sports staff

- 1  **COLUMBIA RIVER:** They won't be as dominant as last year, but the Chieftains are still really good.
- 2  **RIDGEFIELD:** Keep an eye on Jason Buffum's Spudders; this team has the depth to make a run.
- 3  **MARK MORRIS:** Despite the massive turnover, coach Bill Bakamus always keeps his squad competitive.
- 4  **WASHOUGAL:** The athleticism and size of this group will keep AJ Labree's side competitive.
- 5  **HOCKINSON:** Despite the injuries to Peyton Brammer and Sawyer Racanelli, Hawks will compete for a playoff spot.
- 6  **R.A. LONG:** Most coaches around the league say the 'Jacks are on the rise.
- 7  **WOODLAND:** New coach Jesse Buck might need a year to get Beavers back on track.



TJ MULLINAX/for The Columbian

Led by league co-MVP Nate Snook, Columbia River is aiming to stay on top after ending the title reign of Mark Morris.

Chieftains will be hard-pressed to keep title

By **JOSHUA HART**

Columbian staff writer

For the first time in 18 seasons, the 2A Greater St. Helens League did not feature Mark Morris at the top. Columbia River, instead, was perfect in league play to dethrone the Monarchs a season ago and are now the sole defenders of the league title.

The Chieftains return as the favorites, but this time it won't be as easy.

"I don't think we're going to run the table like we did last year," coach David Long said. "That was a special group."

Co-player of the year Nate Snook is back for Columbia River, and poised to give opposing coaches nightmares.

Mark Morris, on the other hand, graduates nine seniors and has coach Bill Bakamus' greenest squad in 28 years. Jack Shipley is the lone all-league returner, but coaches around the league know better than to discount the Mon-

archs just yet.

"Bill will find a way," Long said. "This isn't one of his stronger teams but he'll coach them up, they'll run his stuff and they'll be hard to beat."

Ridgefield, too, will be a stiff challenge. With three all-league selections back and a pair of key transfers, the Spudders could make their first regional appearance since 2012.

Hockinson lost two of its top players to injury in Peyton Brammer and Sawyer Racanelli, which "changes the landscape," Ridgefield coach Jason Buffum said.

Washougal, coming off an historic football run, has the leadership and athleticism needed to be competitive. R.A. Long is undersized but several coaches noted the Lumberjacks' improvement this offseason. Woodland enters a new era with Jesse Buck as coach and Tyler Flanagan no longer running the point for the Beavers.



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Ridgefield, including Josh Mansur, brings back plenty of talent. That has the Spudders shooting for a playoff berth.

2A GREATER ST. HELENS LEAGUE GIRLS

PROJECTED FINISH

Picks by Columbian sports staff

- 1  **WASHOUGAL:** The defending 2A champs are still loaded with talent.
- 2  **COLUMBIA RIVER:** Led by Jordan Ryan, the Chieftains will be near the top.
- 3  **WOODLAND:** Multi-sport athletes with experience winning dot this roster.
- 4  **HOCKINSON:** The defense will keep Hawks in playoff contention.
- 5  **R.A. LONG:** This Lumberjills team will look a little different than years past.
- 6  **RIDGEFIELD:** The Spudders might struggle in a transitional year for the program.
- 7  **MARK MORRIS:** After a winless year, the Monarchs get an influx of young talent.



WAYNE HAVRELLY/Post-Record

Jaiden Bea helped Washougal win the 2A state title as a freshman. With three all-league returners, the Panthers believe they have enough talent to stay among the state's best.

Rivals step up to challenge Washougal

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Most might think Washougal might need to reload after winning the program's first state championship and graduating dominant post Beyonce Bea. The Panthers say not so fast.

Washougal again enters the season as the league favorites, even if they're slightly more vulnerable than years past. With three all-league returners (Skylar and Jaiden Bea and McKinley Stotts), the Panthers believe another state-title run could be in the cards.

"We are definitely setting our goals high," coach Britney Ervin (formerly Knotts) said.

Among the teams chasing the Panthers are Woodland and Columbia River.

The Chieftains have potentially the league's top player in 6-foot senior Jordan Ryan. With all-league pick Sydney

Flores-Tucker expected to return for league play, Columbia River becomes a big threat to Washougal.

Woodland is packed full of athletes, even if they aren't basketball players by trade. Kaily Christensen and Kelly Sweyer are college softball commits and Nicole Guthrie and Lucy George are future collegiate track athletes. Payten Foster, the team's basketball-first star, will lead the way.

Beyond the top three, things are wide open. R.A. Long no longer has Eastyn Reeves leading the show, but 5-foot-3 Miranda Lomax is a more than competent point guard. Hockinson lost its best player, sharpshooter Jasmine Shigeno, to injury, but has some young girls eager to compete.

Mark Morris, coming off a winless year, brings in some impressive freshmen. Ridgefield, with Allie Andrew opting to focus on volleyball, will search for its identity under new coach Billy McKinney.



STEVE DIPAOLOA/for The Columbian

Senior Jordan Ryan is an MVP candidate for Columbia River.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 10	King's Way	L, 59-56, OT
Dec. 13	at Skyview	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	at Prairie	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	Mountain View	7 p.m.
Jan. 6	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 13	Woodland	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	Seaside, Ore.*	TBD
Jan. 24	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	at Washougal	7 p.m.

*at Forest Grove HS

BOYS: Stopping Nate Snook presents a tough challenge to River's opponents

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The first player most coaches mention when asked to talk about the 2A Greater St. Helens League is Columbia River's 6-foot senior guard Nate Snook. The reigning co-player of the year returns for his final season, and every team is planning to stop him.

That's still a hard feat to accomplish.

"You think you can bottle him up, but he's going to get out on breaks, make steals and he can create his own offense," said coach David Long, entering his 27th season. "Hell, he might get half of his 20 off of steals. He just has a knack for finding the basketball."

Long also knows Snook is comfortable playing within the system. If the shot isn't there, he's more than willing to give it to someone else. The Chieftains have plenty

2018-19: 22-5, 12-0. 1st in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Second in 2009

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Alex Miller	6-2	Sr.
G	Nate Snook	6-0	Sr.
F	Marc Miranda	6-2	Sr.
P	Dylan Valdez	6-4	Sr.

Coach: David Long (27th year)

of weapons around him.

Alex Miller, a 6-2 senior guard, returns after an all-league season. Six-foot-2 senior post Marc Miranda is "a hell of a scorer" and Dylan Valdez, a 6-4 senior post, is a bruiser down low.

"We do have to find a new identity, a new leader, a new way to score points," Long said. "We took a few things out

and added a few things to highlight some good players."

The Chieftains will be a little more up-tempo this season after running the league table last season before finishing the year 22-5 and just shy of a state trophy.

"That was a special group," Long said. "I don't think we're quite at that level yet. I don't know if we have the pieces to be at that level. But I think we can come close."



ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ/for The Columbian

Columbia River senior Marc Miranda will be counted on to shoulder some of the scoring load for the Chieftains.

GIRLS: Led by league MVP candidate Jordan Ryan, River is setting its sights high

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Columbia River is picking up right where it left off. The Chieftains went 13-10 last season and tied for second in the 2A Greater St.

Helens League. With seven varsity returners, including the favorite to win league player of the year in Jordan Ryan, Columbia River is dreaming big.

"We've been able to tweak a few things, but we're going

to double down on our style of play and what we've been doing," third-year coach Will Jones said. "We're not having to teach a lot of new things. That's been the best part: being able to just keep going with where we were

at."

Ryan, a 6-foot senior guard, is the most electric player in the league. She averaged 14 points per game last season and has the opportunity to increase that load even more this season.

She's joined by all-league returners Ellie Christian, a 6-foot senior post, and Sydney Flores-Tucker, a 5-7 senior guard. Flores-Tucker is still rehabbing from a torn ACL but is expected back in January.

"They've been able to be a voice, a second coach out there," Jones said of his seniors.

Mountain View transfer Dejah Wilson, a 5-9 senior guard, and Lily Jonas, a 5-5

2018-19: 13-10, 7-5. T-2nd in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Second in 1976

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Sydney Flores-Tucker	5-7	Sr.
G	Jordan Ryan	6-0	Sr.
G	Dejah Wilson	5-9	Sr.
G	Lily Jonas	5-5	Jr.
P	Ellie Christian	6-0	Sr.

Coach: Will Jones (3rd year)

junior guard, are also poised for big seasons.

"We want to be able to walk into games with the expectation that we're able to compete at a high level," Jones said.

The Chieftains last made the state regionals in 2016, their only regional appearance in the 21st century.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 4	La Center	W, 63-34
Dec. 9	Mountain View	W, 52-34
Dec. 10	at King's Way	W, 56-32
Dec. 13	at Skyview	6 p.m.
Dec. 17	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	T-Town Throwdown*	
Jan. 7	Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 27	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	Woodland	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	Washougal	7 p.m.

*at Wilson HS, Tacoma

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Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 6	at Heritage	L, 54-49
Dec. 10	at Hud. Bay	W, 64-49
Dec. 11	at Mtn. View	W, 58-47
Dec. 12	Evergreen	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14	Tumwater	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 19	R.A. Long	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 27-29	Fort Vancouver	Tourney
Jan. 8	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Ridgefield	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 13	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 22	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	Col. River	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	Washougal	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 11	Mark Morris	7:30 p.m.

BOYS: Loss of key players tests Hawks, who will use adversity to grow as a team

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The Hockinson Hawks expected to come into the season with four all-league returners and high hopes to make a deep run.

That took a sudden turn when star basketball player Peyton Brammer went down with a knee injury in Week 8 of football season. He will miss the entire year. Sawyer Racanelli, too, will miss the year rehabbing from his own knee injury sustained in the offseason.

"We just can't give the ball to Peyton in important situations and say 'go get us a bucket,'" third-year coach Jon Warner said. "We would also say, 'Hey we don't have to block out. Sawyer will go get the ball.'"

"It's going to help us grow as a team." Micah Paulsen, a 6-1 senior, and Dakota

2018-19: 11-13, 5-7. T-3rd in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Seventh in 2009

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Micah Paulsen	6-1	Sr.
F	Dakota Souders	5-10	Sr.
F	Carson Yinger	6-0	Sr.
F	Jeremiah Faulstick	6-4	Sr.

Coach: Jon Warner (third year)

Souders, a 5-10 senior, return as all-league selections and will guide the Hawks' ship.

"We're going to have to push the ball opportunistically," Warner said. "We have experience. They're court savvy and they're a smart group. We're hoping to use that to our advantage."

Six-foot forward Carson Yinger and 6-4

forward Jeremiah Faulstick have to take on bigger roles as well.

"Jeremiah Faulstick is set up to have a really good year. He's a jack of all trades," Warner said. "Carson is kind of the gritty guy, relentless on defense. He's going to set the tone for us."

The Hawks came within a game of qualifying for regionals last season, finishing the year 11-13. They last advanced past districts in 2014.



FILES/The Columbian

Hockinson third-year coach Jon Warner had his team within a game of qualifying for regionals last season.

GIRLS: Young, athletic Hawks will again bank on pressure defense, intensity



STEVE DIPAOLOA/for the Columbian

Gracie Brammer, right, will be one of four sophomores slated to start this season for Hockinson.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Hockinson is young. It's inexperienced. And that might not be the worst thing for the Hawks.

"I wonder if what they don't know might not hurt them," sixth-year coach Damon Roche said. "They've got a lot of grit, a lot of juice and a lot of positive energy."

The Hawks will start four sophomores and a junior. Sharpshooting Jasmine Shigeno tore her ACL in June. She will miss the season. First-off-the-bench Molly Romanchok, too, is no longer with the team.

Still, Roche is excited for the young group.

"This is the most athletic group I've ever had," he said. "We want to get out and run. We'll press and trap. We have to do what we can do."

2018-19: 10-10, 5-7. T-5th in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Q'Finals in 2009

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Gracie Brammer	5-7	So.
G	Kylie Ritter	5-8	So.
W	Addie Chappelle	5-6	So.
F	Lillie Mueller	5-11	Jr.

Coach: Damon Roche (sixth year)

Sophomore Gracie Brammer will take over point-guard duties. Sophomores Kylie Ritter and Addie Chappelle, too, add speed and a defensive focus to the team. Junior Lillie Mueller is the veteran among the starting five.

"We're probably going to run the ball through her," Roche said. "She sees the floor well and has the experience to

take control and keep calm on the floor." Hockinson also boasts two sets of twins: Addie and Delaney Chappelle and Kylie and Ellie Ritter.

"Maybe there's something there I can tap into," said Roche, who is looking toward the future. "Even if we just limp into the playoffs, that would help experience-wise. If we can brew up some confidence with these young girls, who knows?"

GIRLS

Dec. 2	at La Center	W, 64-27
Dec. 4	at Mtn. View	W, 59-38
Dec. 6	Heritage	W, 51-42
Dec. 12	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Dec. 13	Tumwater	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	Surf N' Slam	Tourney
Jan. 9	Col. River	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Washougal	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Mark Morris	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 23	R.A. Long	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 29	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Ridgefield	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 10	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Timberline	W, 65-62
Dec. 9	at Fort Van.	L, 78-72
Dec. 13	Kelso	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	St. Helens, Ore.	7 p.m.
Dec. 18	Washougal	7 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	Astoria Tourney	
Jan. 6	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 13	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	W.F. West*	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 22	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Feb. 1	Woodland	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Feb. 11	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.

*at Lower Columbia College

BOYS: Without returning star power, coach Bakamus' system will get a major test

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

It's been awhile since the Mark Morris Monarchs didn't enter a season defending a league title. Eighteen years to be precise.

After graduating nine seniors, the Monarchs don't have an easy path to reclaim the title that was theirs for so long. "We never said we have to win a league title. There was some hard work and some great pride," said coach Bill Bakamus, entering his 28th season. "I don't think we're a team everyone is predicting to win league. But I think we're going to be in the conversation if we play good, solid basketball."

This is Bakamus' greenest team he's ever had at Mark Morris. But he also has players who have grown up in the Monarch program and know the discipline and work

2018-19: 16-9, 9-3. 2nd in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 1978, '85, '87

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold			
Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Cole Busch	6-1	Sr.
G	Garrett Ness	5-9	Sr.
G	Deacon Dietz	5-11	Fr.
F	Jack Shipley	6-4	Sr.
P	Ashton Harvey	6-5	Jr.

Coach: Bill Bakamus (28th year)

ethic Bakamus requires of his players. There isn't a star, at least not yet, and so Bakamus' will have a true test of the system he's ran for so many years.

"It's amazing how really good players make you look like you're a good energy," Bakamus said. "It's going to take a lot of energy, but as long we're all rowing the boat with both oars in the water, we're making progress."

Jack Shipley, a rangy 6-4 senior, is the long all-league returner. He averaged 10 points and five rebounds last year. Ashton Harvey, a 6-5 junior forward, will command attention inside. Cole Busch, a 6-1 senior guard, and Garrett Ness, a 5-9 senior guard, will contribute on the perimeter. Freshman Deacon Dietz is the son of Monarch alumnus Doug Dietz, who was part of the Monarchs' third-place team in 2002.



Courtesy of LONGVIEW DAILY NEWS

After graduating nine players, Mark Morris will look to players such as all-league senior Jack Shipley.

GIRLS: To bounce back from winless season, Monarchs focus on the little details



Courtesy of LONGVIEW DAILY NEWS

Jacie Rismoen is one of two Mark Morris seniors to earn all-league nods last season.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Mark Morris coach Sean Atkins learned some things during a winless season last year. The biggest lesson? There are no shortcuts.

"Last year I felt like I tried to take some shortcuts to expedite things," Atkins said. "That didn't do the kids any service."

This year, Atkins is taking a more hard-line approach to the little things. "I'm being a stickler for details," he said.

The fifth-year coach doesn't expect another winless campaign from his team. The Monarchs return two all-league mentions in senior guard Katie Troy and senior post Jacie Rismoen.

Lily Koski-Haase improved over the offseason and freshmen Brooklyn

2018-19: 0-19, 0-12. 7th in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 2013, '15

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold			
Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Katie Troy	5-8	Sr.
G	Brooklyn Schlecht	5-8	Fr.
W	Lily Koski-Haase	5-8	Jr.
P	Emma Fisher	5-9	Fr.
P	Jacie Rismoen	6-0	Sr.

Coach: Sean Atkins (fifth year)

Schlecht, a 5-8 guard, and Emma Fisher, a 5-9 post, are going to immediately contribute.

"This team is much more athletic," Atkins said. "We're going to try to press a little more and push the ball up the floor."

The elevated talent pool has Atkins thinking playoffs — "our goal is to try to sneak into that fifth spot" —

but he also knows the mindset has to be different coming off a winless season. The Monarchs were outscored by an average of 40 points per game last season. It was Atkins' first losing season as head coach.

"They don't take any game for granted," Atkins said. "They're excited to get back out and change their name."

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 6	at Evergreen	L, 44-38
Dec. 10	Battle Ground	W, 48-20
Dec. 13	Kelso	6 p.m.
Dec. 17	Toledo	7 p.m.
Dec. 18	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Dec. 27-29	Fort Vancouver Tourney	
Jan. 7	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	Woodland	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	Kalama*	10:30 a.m.
Jan. 21	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 23	Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 27	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Feb. 10	Hockinson	7 p.m.

*at Lower Columbia College



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 6	Kelso	L, 60-24
Dec. 9	at Heritage	L, 79-52
Dec. 10	Aberdeen	W, 57-46
Dec. 12	Rochester	7 p.m.
Dec. 13	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	W.F. West	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 6	Woodland	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Jan. 13	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	MLK Tourney*	TBD
Jan. 21	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 30	Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Feb. 1	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Feb. 11	Washougal	7 p.m.

*at Lower Columbia College

BOYS: Lumberjacks take steps to grow into team that competes for playoff berths

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The foundation has been laid. Now it's time for R.A. Long to build.

Coach Jeray Key enters his second season as the lone head coach, after sharing the duties with Rally Wallace for three years, and he's expecting big things from his program.

"We're returning almost everybody so they know what the expectations are," Key said. "They know exactly what our system is so the transition has been going pretty good."

The Lumberjacks are undersized and still young — they will start just one senior and just one player above 6 feet tall.

Ryan Plampin is the lone starting senior. The 5-10 guard averaged 6.5 points per game last season and was dubbed the "team MVP." Junior Cameron Holden

2018-19: 5-15, 3-9. 7th in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Third in 1939

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Cameron Holden	6-0	Jr.
G	Ryan Plampin	5-10	Sr.
G	Jamond Harris	5-6	So.
G	Cavin Holden	5-7	Fr.
P	Aaron Ofstun	6-5	So.

Coach: Jeray Key (fifth year)

returns after an all-league campaign. His younger brother, Cavin, will start at shooting guard.

"He's going to be a really big impact player for us," Key said of the 5-7 freshman.

Five-foot-6 sophomore Jamond Harris will handle point-guard duties. Inside, it's 6-foot-5 sophomore Aaron Ofstun as the primary presence.

"He really took strides this summer," Key said of

the big man.

Now that the core of the team has had a season to get a feel for the varsity level — they finished 5-15 last season — R.A. Long is looking toward a bright future.

"We're still young but once you went through a season, you can't use that as an excuse," Key said. "We should finish near toward the top of the league. We're definitely a playoff team."



Courtesy of LONGVIEW DAILY NEWS
Ryan Plampin is R.A. Long's lone starting senior.

GIRLS: Lumberjills build new identity after most of its offensive firepower graduated



Courtesy of LONGVIEW DAILY NEWS

While R.A. Long must replace its top players, returners such as Bobbi Clark, left, give the Lumberjills hope.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The past four seasons at R.A. Long have been highlighted by bulldog guard Eastyn Reeves.

With the second player ever to surpass 1,000 points as a Lumberjill now at Oregon Institute of Technology, Jan Karnoski's squad will need a new identity.

The Jills also graduated Rayanna Randall and Ari Maryott, making it 35 points and 15 rebounds a game to replace.

"It's going to be tough," said Karnoski, who rejoined the program two years ago. He also compiled a 54-32 record in four seasons in the early 1990s. "But we've got quite a few good ballplayers."

Miranda Lomax, a 5-foot-4 sophomore guard, may be similar in stature to her predecessor, but her style of play lends itself to a new-look R.A. Long.

2018-19: 11-9, 5-7. 5th in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 1980, '81

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Miranda Lomax	5-4	So.
G	Myah Bodily	5-6	Jr.
W	Makayla Jenkins	5-10	Jr.
W	Bobbi Clark	6-0	Jr.

Coach: Jan Karnoski (seventh year)

"Miranda is maybe more talented in certain areas than Eastyn," Karnoski said. "But we will have to be more rounded in scoring. Most of the teams I've coached usually have nine, 10, 11 points but nobody that goes for 18 or 20."

Lomax will have plenty of options on offense to orchestrate with. Six-foot junior post Bobbi Clark returns after an all-league season. Myah

Bodily, a 5-6 junior, provides some shooting help on the perimeter. Makayla Jenkins, a 5-10 transfer from North Carolina, will add some athleticism to the squad.

"She runs the court faster than anybody," Karnoski said. "She's just a super athlete."

The Jills are hoping to break a lengthy playoff drought and Karnoski doesn't hesitate to say that's the expectation: "We're going to the playoffs."

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Rochester	L, 50-39
Dec. 6	Kelso	L, 54-23
Dec. 9	Heritage	W, 49-33
Dec. 12	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	at W.F. West	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	Evergreen Tourney	
Jan. 7	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 9	Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 27	Woodland	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Feb. 10	at Washougal	7 p.m.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Hud. Bay	W, 69-27
Dec. 6	Seton Catholic	W, 68-57
Dec. 10	at Castle Rock	W, 63-42
Dec. 13	La Center	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Centralia	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Dec. 27-30	Surf N' Slam Tourney	
Jan. 6	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Hockinson 7:30 p.m.	
Jan. 16	Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Woodland 7:30 p.m.	
Jan. 24	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Feb. 1	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Feb. 11	Woodland	7 p.m.

BOYS: Year-over-year improvement has Spudders poised to make run at postseason

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Ridgefield is growing. The boys basketball team hopes to grow with it. Not just for one season, but sustained success is fourth-year coach Jason Buffum's hope.

"We're a quickly growing community and we should be successful year after year," Buffum said. "We've made baby steps. We feel like we're taking steps forward but we don't want to settle for a .500 record and the playoffs."

Buffum knows the feeling of breakthrough. In 2016, he led Woodland to its first state quarterfinal in 32 years. Ridgefield hasn't made the state quarterfinals since 1981.

This year's squad could make a giant leap toward that goal. The Spudders return three all-league picks: scoring guard Josh Mansur, natural wing Steven Vossenkuhl and double-double machine James Corey.

2018-19: 12-11, 5-7. T-3rd in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Third in 1981

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Josh Mansur	6-1	Sr.
G	Steven Vossenkuhl	6-3	Sr.
G	Brandon Kent	6-0	Sr.
F	Luke Price	6-2	Jr.
F	Carson Knight	6-4	So.
F	James Corey	6-5	Sr.

Coach: Jason Buffum (fourth year)

Battle Ground transfer Brandon Kent is a dynamic point guard, Seton Catholic transfer Luke Price adds some toughness inside and sophomore Carson Knight continues to mature.

"I think this team has a high ceiling," Buffum said. "But we're still trying to figure things out. We feel a little like a junior college right now where guys are coming in and figuring things out on the fly."

The biggest strength for the Spudders is perhaps their versatility. Vossenkuhl played guard last year but is moving to a more natural wing position. Price and Mansur can slot almost anywhere. The team has also responded to Buffum's coaching.

"Sometimes my style can be a bit abrasive and if you can't handle that, it's hard," Buffum said. "We have guys who accept that. When the going gets tough and you challenge them, they respond."



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian
Ridgefield coach Jason Buffum has his most talented group in his four seasons at Ridgefield.

GIRLS: First-year coach McKinney embraces challenge of building a program anew



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Sophomore Annika Hill has a chance to step into a key role for Ridgefield, which lost most of last year's offense.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

It's easy to hear the excitement in Ridgefield first-year coach Billy McKinney's voice.

The former junior varsity coach for the Spudders isn't worried about seeing 37 points per game graduate or depart from last year's 12-10 squad. He experienced firsthand a budding group of young players on his JV team, and he's ready to see them take on varsity competition.

"If we can put this together, we're going to be phenomenal," McKinney said. "We're still a little behind, but once we catch up, we should be rockin' and rollin'."

Karli Oliver and Devi Dugan graduated from last year's team and Morgan Harter and Allie Andrew opted to focus on volleyball. It leaves the door open for plenty of

2018-19: 12-10, 6-6. 4th in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Fourth in 1978

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Grace Goode	5-6	Jr.
G	Courtney Beyer	5-6	Jr.
G	Annika Hill	5-4	So.
F	Audrienne Chapman	5-8	So.
F	Emma Thulin	5-8	Sr.
F	Mackenzie Dewey	6-0	Jr.

Coach: Billy McKinney (first year)

fresh faces to take on big roles.

Juniors Mackenzie Dewey and Grace Goode are expected to be top contributors. Senior Emma Thulin adds some experience and junior Courtney Beyer will get heavy minutes. Sophomores Audrienne Chapman and Annika Hill could be difference-makers as well.

"Once we implement an identity, you'll see it," McKinney said. "We have kids who can shoot, kids who can run the floor. ...

Our transition game is going to be ridiculous."

McKinney is also looking forward to a nonleague slate that includes Tumwater, King's Way Christian, La Center and 2B power Wahkiakum.

"That'll toughen us up for league," McKinney said. "It's real exciting."

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Tumwater	L, 69-29
Dec. 11	at La Center	L, 50-38
Dec. 13	King's Way	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	at Wahkiakum	7 p.m.
Dec. 18	Heritage	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Dec. 28-30	Nike Interstate Tournament*	
Jan. 7	Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	Woodland	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Jan. 27	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Hockinson 7:30 p.m.	
Feb. 6	Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Feb. 10	at Woodland 7:30 p.m.	

*at Lake Oswego HS



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 5	at Stevenson	W, 86-50
Dec. 9	Mtn. View	W, 88-58
Dec. 13	at Camas	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	Hudson's Bay	7 p.m.
Dec. 18	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	W.F. West	7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Sequim*	3:15 p.m.
Dec. 28	Ferndale^	12:30 p.m.
Jan. 6	Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 13	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	Woodland	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Heritage	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Feb. 11	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.

*at Lynden

BOYS: Panthers hope to follow football team's lead, make extended playoff run

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The Washougal Panthers are hoping an extended postseason football run translates to basketball success.

On the gridiron, the Panthers advanced to the state quarterfinals for the first time since 1974. While it delayed the beginning of basketball season for several players, it proved Washougal has the athletes to compete.

"The football players were a little in shock of being here," third-year coach AJ Labree said on the second day the players returned to the hardwood. "But I heard good things about what they did on the football field. I expect them to pick it up and take on some leadership roles."

Among the football standouts turning out for hoops are 6-foot guard Brevan Bea, 6-1

2018-19: 8-12, 4-8. T-5th in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Fourth in 1992

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Brevan Bea	6-0	Sr.
G	Julien Jones	6-1	Sr.
F	Jakob Davis	6-3	Sr.
F	Gabe Kent	6-5	Jr.
P	Yanni Fassilis	6-3	Fr.

Coach: AJ Labree (third year)

guard Julien Jones and 6-3 forward Jakob Davis.

Davis missed all of last season after injuring his knee during the first game of last year's basketball season. He is fully healthy and gives the Panthers a big body on the interior. He joins 6-5 junior Gabe Kent and 6-3 freshman Yanni Fassilis in the post.

"Traditionally my teams have been guard-oriented and shoot a lot

of 3s," Labree said. "This year we have a lot more size so we'll have to look inside a little more."

The Panthers, who haven't won a playoff game since 2016, are aiming for a leap forward this season.

"We're still waiting to take that next step as a program where we're competing with the top teams in the league," Labree said. "But playoffs is the goal and we'll go from there."



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Washougal senior Julien Jones is among the football players who bring a physical mentality to basketball.

GIRLS: Reigning state champion Panthers have no intention of taking a step backward



WAYNE HAVRELLY/Post-Record

McKinley Stotts (11) is the only senior on this season's Washougal roster. But the Panthers are loaded with young talent that played key roles in last year's state championship run.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Basketball is fun in Washougal. A state championship, the program's first, has a way of making it so.

"There's a lot of good energy and a lot of the girls are willing to sell out for each other," said third-year coach Britney Ervin (formerly Knotts).

The Panthers still have to deal with the loss of the skillset of Beyonce Bea and leadership of Kiara Cross. That doesn't mean they're setting their sights lower than a gold ball.

Washougal will tailor its style to its personnel, which is still loaded with talent.

"We're smaller and we're faster," Ervin said. "It's going to be fun to see who is going off for 20 each night and watch each

2018-19: 23-4, 12-0. 1st in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 2019

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Savea Mansfield	5-9	So.
G	McKenna Jackson	5-7	Jr.
F	Skylar Bea	5-11	Jr.
F	McKinley Stotts	5-10	Sr.
F	Jaiden Bea	5-10	So.

Coach: Britney Ervin (third year)

other grow."

All-league returners include 5-11 forward Skylar Bea, 5-10 forward McKinley Stotts and 5-10 forward Jaiden Bea. Five-foot-9 guard Savea Mansfield and 5-7 guard McKenna Jackson are stepping into heavier leadership roles in the backcourt.

All five of those players can slide to almost any position on the court, giving Ervin plenty of options as she crafts

her rotations. Defense is the strength, as the Panthers are longer and faster than a season ago.

"This group feels like my group; we've all been here about the same amount of time," Ervin said. "The long state run made these girls more experienced, more confident about what we're doing and wanting to make another run."

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 5	at W.F. West	L, 52-28
Dec. 10	at Skyview	W, 60-52
Dec. 11	Black Hills	W, 49-46
Dec. 13	at Camas	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Dec. 19-21	Seaside Holiday	Tourney
Jan. 7	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	Woodland	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Columbia River	7 p.m.
Jan. 18	Port Angeles	2 p.m.
Jan. 20	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 27	Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	at Woodland	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Feb. 10	R.A. Long	7 p.m.

Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 6	La Center	L, 72-36
Dec. 10	at Seton Cath.	L, 78-40
Dec. 11	at Fort Van.	W, 57-49
Dec. 13	Prairie	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Kalama	7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Cle Elum*	1:30 p.m.
Dec. 28	Morton-WP	1:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	Centralia	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 6	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	Washougal	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Mark Morris	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 13	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Ridgefield	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	R.A. Long	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 30	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Feb. 1	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	Col. River	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Feb. 11	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.

*at Kittitas HS

BOYS: First-year coach wants his guard-heavy team to be 'gritty and tough'

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

First-year coach Jesse Buck couldn't have asked for a better first week at Woodland.

"Everyone is coachable and they work hard," Buck said after a preseason practice. "There are no egos and everyone gets along really well."

It makes for a welcome transition into the head-coaching ranks for Buck, who was the junior varsity coach at Washougal the past three seasons.

Buck hopes to implement a defense-first mentality at Woodland, one that is known for being "gritty and tough."

"We want to hang our hat on the defensive end and make teams earn points in the half-court," he said.

On the offensive end, the Beavers are

2018-19: 8-12, 4-8. 5th in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Second in 1984

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Isaiah Flanagan	6-2	Sr.
G	Brady Burns	6-0	Jr.
F	Trey Hanson	5-10	Sr.

Coach: Jesse Buck (first year)

guard-heavy but lack size. They'll have to play small ball and get out in transition to score consistently.

Isaiah Flanagan returns after earning all-league honors a season ago. The 6-foot-2 senior guard will be counted on to handle the bulk of scoring. Trey Hanson will also take on a scoring role as a 5-foot-10

interior presence.

"He's just a mismatch problem," Buck said. "He's very strong inside but can also step out and shoot when we need him to."

Brady Burns, a 6-foot junior guard, will run the point for the Beavers.

"All three of those guys are two-way players, great leaders and work exceptionally hard," Buck said.

The Beavers are seeking a return to the postseason after a two-year absence following a 2017 regional appearance.



FILES/The Columbian

Woodland senior forward Trey Hanson (33) is a strong presence in the paint, but can also score from outside.

GIRLS: Multi-sport athletes stack the roster for Beavers, who will push the tempo



SAMUEL WILSON/for The Columbian

Payten Foster led Woodland in scoring last season.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

An abundance of athletes is always a good thing. Even if those players' primary sports aren't basketball.

Woodland has at least five future collegiate athletes, only one of which is a basketball-first player.

"They're a little rusty basketball-wise," said coach Glen Flanagan as he enters his 23rd season. "But they know what it takes to be a good athlete."

Payten Foster will lead the show for the Beavers. She averaged 14 points per game last year.

Softball standouts Kaily Christensen, a College of Idaho commit, and Kelly Sweyer, a University of Montana commit, are savvy ballhandlers. University of Idaho track signee Nicole Guthrie can haul in

2018-19: 14-9, 7-5. T-2nd in 2A GSHL

BEST STATE FINISH: Fourth in 2001

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Kaily Christensen	5-5	Sr.
G	Lucy George	5-10	Jr.
G	Kelly Sweyer	5-5	Sr.
F	Payten Foster	5-9	Sr.
F	Kaija Olson	5-6	Sr.
P	Kennedy Huesties	5-11	Jr.
P	Nicole Guthrie	6-0	Sr.

Coach: Glen Flanagan (23rd year)

double-digit rebounds.

Fellow track standout and Camas transfer Lucy George will provide athleticism off the bench.

"We're going to be a little more athletic and probably push the tempo," Flanagan said.

Senior Kaija Olson and junior Kennedy Huesties add program experience and depth to make the Beavers league-title contenders.

In 23 years at the helm, Flanagan knows better than to put too much stock into wins and

losses, though.

"My first 10 years, I stayed up all night and wanted to quit after every loss," Flanagan said. "I still don't like to lose but I understand more the value in being able to appreciate other moments. Now after a loss, I only fall asleep at 4 a.m. so it's getting better."

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 5	Rochester	W, 61-51
Dec. 9	at La Center	W, 53-41
Dec. 11	Hud. Bay	L, 67-65, OT
Dec. 12	at Evergreen	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	Kalama	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 19	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Highland*	3:30 p.m.
Dec. 28	Cle Elum*	11 a.m.
Jan. 7	R.A. Long	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 9	at Washougal	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	at Mark Morris	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Col. River	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 17	Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 20	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Jan. 27	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	Washougal	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	Mark Morris	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	at Hockinson	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 10	Ridgefield	7:30 p.m.

*at Kittitas HS

1A TRICO LEAGUE BOYS

PROJECTED FINISH

Picks by Columbian sports staff

- 1  **LA CENTER:** This senior class is a favorite for fourth straight Trico title.
- 2  **KING'S WAY CHRISTIAN:** There's few teams in the state with as much depth as Knights.
- 3  **SETON CATHOLIC:** The Cougars are going to stun a few teams this year.
- 4  **CASTLE ROCK:** Very athletic with a coach who preaches discipline: a good combo.
- 5  **COLUMBIA - WHITE SALMON:** Bruins still have work to do to break into top tier.
- 6  **STEVENSON:** New coach Robert Waymire has work cut out with overhauled roster.



MICAH RICE/The Columbian

King's Way Christian coach Daven Harmeling, center, gathers his team after a 49-39 win over Seattle Academy in the 2019 1A basketball state quarterfinals in Yakima. King's Way finished as runner-up to Zillah.

Trico boys will be a tough league

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The 1A Trico League gauntlet may be one of the toughest in the state this season. With three teams all boasting rosters equipped to make state and beyond, coaches won't have any rest game planning.

Three-time league champion La Center Wildcats bring back player of the year Hunter Ecklund and a core group of seniors looking to make it a career sweep atop the league.

"As long as Ecklund is at La Center, they're always going to be a threat," King's Way Christian coach Daven

Harmeling said. "We're down to one year left, so I'm looking forward to that."

King's Way Christian is coming off a miraculous run to the state title game a season ago, and boasts a deep roster, including stars Bryson and Brady Metz and Kobi Cason.

Then there's Seton Catholic, which returns a trio of all-league picks (Xavian Rushing, Gabe Anderson and Andy Olson) looking to make it to the Yakima SunDome for the first time in program history.

"It might be the most talented team they've had," Harmeling said of the Cougars. "They're going to be very

good."

That leaves the rest of the pack fighting for the final playoff spot. "Luckily we have four playoff spots," Castle Rock coach Hayden Tilton said.

Tilton's Rockets are extremely athletic with Landon Gardner leading the charge. Wyatt and Adam Partridge are forces in their own rights and former all-league pick Jonny Boissonault returns to the program after a year away.

Columbia-White Salmon and Stevenson have the pieces to be competitive.



SAMUEL WILSON for The Columbian

The La Center has plenty to be excited about this season as the Wildcats go for a fourth Trico League title.

1A TRICO LEAGUE GIRLS

PROJECTED FINISH

Picks by Columbian sports staff

- 1  **KING'S WAY CHRISTIAN:** Abby Cummins will star as the Knights seek a repeat run through league.
- 2  **STEVENSON:** The Bulldogs have the talent to compete for a league crown.
- 3  **LA CENTER:** One of Herm VanWeerdhuizen's youngest teams ever has plenty of work to do.
- 4  **SETON CATHOLIC:** Defense-first squad is long enough to give teams trouble.
- 5  **COLUMBIA - WHITE SALMON:** The Bruins are young but impressed this offseason.
- 6  **CASTLE ROCK:** Brooke Wirkkala is a star, but it takes more than one.



ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Laurel Quinn, left, and King's Way Christian are seeking their second consecutive postseason berth. With one fewer District 4 berth to the regional round of the state playoffs, that will be tougher than last season.

Teams face big task to reach postseason

By **JOSHUA HART**

Columbian staff writer

With only two regional spots coming out of District 4 this season, the 1A Trico League will become mighty important for the six teams that compose it. Seeding, with Elma and Montesano lurking from the Evergreen Conference, could play a big part in determining whether an extended postseason run is in the works.

That will particularly be the case for King's Way Christian, which has the pieces to qualify for regionals for the second straight season. Abby Cummins, coming off a stellar volleyball season, is the favorite for league MVP. Combined with Laurel Quinn and a pair of transfers, the Knights will have no problems reloading.

"We believe we can be the No. 1 in league," King's Way coach Randy Graves said. "But it's going to be really tough getting out of districts."

Behind the Knights, things get a little more interesting.

Stevenson returns a pair of all-league picks from a second-place finish last season and has a chance to challenge King's Way atop the league.

La Center, which is possibly the youngest team coach Herm VanWeerdhuizen has ever had, can't be counted out yet. The Wildcats frequently find ways to rebuild but with Taylor Stephens departed, La Center might take some early lumps before finding its way.

"I hope we're ready to go against league," VanWeerdhuizen said. "The league is wide open this year."

La Center's rebuild could open the door for a team like Seton Catholic, which has several rangy defenders in first-year coach Phil Kent's defense-first system. With all-league point guard Jasmine Morgan returning before league play begins, the Cougars could be dangerous. A youthful Columbia-White Salmon squad impressed coaches this offseason and Castle Rock is led by talented point guard Brooke Wirkkala.



ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Behind returning all-leaguer Katie Rathgeber, Stevenson has its eyes on challenging for a league title.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Hoquiam	W, 49-34
Dec. 7	at Montesano	W, 42-39
Dec. 10	Ridgefield	L, 63-42
Dec. 11	Hoquiam	W, 53-50
Dec. 16	Napavine	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	Mossyrock	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	at Tenino	7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Toledo	7 p.m.
Jan. 3	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 15	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Jan. 20	Kalama*	TBD
Jan. 21	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	Columbia	7 p.m.

*at Lower Columbia College

BOYS: Castle Rock hopes to take roster of pure athletes as far as they can go

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Winning is in the works for the Castle Rock boys. It started on the football field; it's long taken place on the wrestling mats; and now, the basketball team is hoping to translate it to the hardwood.

The football team competed for a league title this fall, and Wyatt Partridge, a 5-foot-9 junior, and Landon Gardner, a 6-3 sophomore, played big roles. They'll do the same this winter.

"Landon is becoming a young man. He's a big guy, incredibly athletic," coach Hayden Tilton said. "Wyatt is as fast as anybody I've seen out there. He's tough, brave and defends like crazy."

But the Rockets' talents goes beyond their top athletes. Post Adam Partridge

2018-19: 8-13, 3-8. 5th in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 1932, '69

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Wyatt Partridge	5-9	Jr.
G	Jayce Womack	5-7	So.
F	Landon Gardner	6-3	So.
F	Jonny Boissonault	6-4	Sr.
P	Adam Partridge	6-5	So.

Coach: Hayden Tilton (second year)

(6-4) returns for his sophomore season and 6-4 forward Jonny Boissonault returns after a year away from the school.

Jayce Womack, a 5-7 sophomore guard, will add depth.

"I don't know if I want to put this expectation on him but he's a Jamal Crawford-esque player," Tilton said of Womack. "He can get in and light it up quickly."

Tilton comes from the Mark Morris' Bill Bakamus coaching tree, meaning he wants his team to be disciplined and tough on defense. Those expectations are starting to sink in during Tilton's second year.

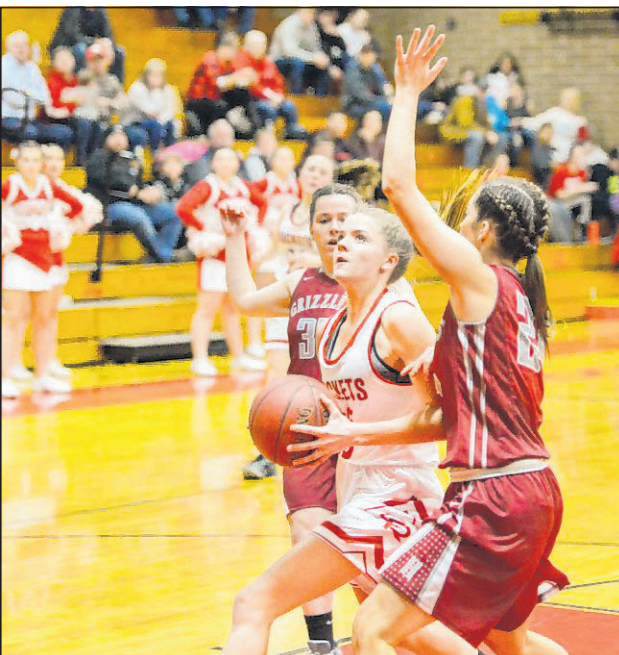
"My voice is a little raspy now, but two days ago I could barely speak," Tilton said after an early-season practice. "They're really picking it up well."



Longview Daily News

Castle Rock sophomore Landon Gardner

GIRLS: Behind sophomore star, Rockets in good shape to compete in Trico League



Longview Daily News

Castle Rock's sophomore Brooke Wirkkala

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Brooke Wirkkala averaged just under nine points per game as a freshman. It's not immediately an eye-popping figure for the 5-foot-7 point guard.

But when you look closer into the stats, you see her ceiling is one few around the Trico League parallel. She dropped 31 points in a 64-60 loss to Seton Catholic last year.

"She has matured physically and athletically," said coach Kim Karnofski, who rejoined the program last year. She previously coached the Rockets for 14 years. "She's an amazing kid."

Wirkkala will guide a new-look Rockets this season, who will be without now-graduated all-league players Megan Keeling and Zoe Naugle.

2018-19: 10-13, 4-6. 4th in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Second in 2013

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Brooke Wirkkala	5-6	So.
W	Payton Kessler	5-7	So.
P	Veda Frost	5-6	Jr.
P	Ella Anderson	5-7	Fr.
P	Grace Pelletier	5-10	Sr.

Coach: Kim Karnofski (16th year)

"We're not as big physically, but I definitely would say we're quicker," Karnofski said. "The tempo of the game is going to look a little different."

It helps that the soccer and volleyball teams both made the postseason.

"They came in far better shape than last year," Karnofski said. "This was the first time for the soccer kids getting an extra week of conditioning."

Grace Pelletier, a 5-foot-10 senior, will take over the rebounding role of Naugle. Payton Kessler, a 5-7 sophomore, is expected to score more.

Also in the rotation is senior Avere Perdue (5-4), junior Veda Frost (5-6), sophomore Jenna Lee (5-8) and freshman Ella Anderson (5-7).

"Our goal is to compete in the playoffs and not just show up," Karnofski said.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Winlock	W, 68-45
Dec. 6	at Morton-WP	W, 43-20
Dec. 7	Toutle Lake	W, 52-34
Dec. 9	Fort Vancouver	W, 58-32
Dec. 12	R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Dec. 13	Montesano	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Winlock	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	at Mossyrock	12:30 p.m.
Dec. 28	Morton-WP	1 p.m.
Jan. 7	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	at La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	Hoquiam	2:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Jan. 22	Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	at Columbia	7 p.m.

Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 2	Prairie	L, 65-55
Dec. 10	at Col. River W, 59-56	OT
Dec. 13	Seattle Academy	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Black Hills	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Cascade Chr.	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	King's	5 p.m.
Jan. 8	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 15	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Seton Catholic	8 p.m.
Feb. 4	Columbia	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	at La Center	7 p.m.

BOYS: King's Way Christian builds, not dwells, on last season's state tournament run

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Last season was a special one for the King's Way Christian Knights. After finishing second in the Trico League and Southwest District tournament, the Knights rattled off four straight wins to earn the program's first-ever spot in the 1A state championship game. They lost to Zillah 90-68 in that contest.

"We were close enough to know how far away we were," said coach Daven Harmeling, repeating a quote he heard that stuck out to him. "We were tied at halftime, but lost by (22) points. There's a lot of work to do in the program to legitimately compete for a title like that."

So Harmeling won't dwell on last year's

2018-19: 19-9, 8-2. 2nd in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Second in 2019

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Brady Metz	5-10	Sr.
G	Bryson Metz	5-9	So.
G	Kobi Cason	6-0	Sr.
G	Gage Koenders	6-0	Sr.
G	Kai Butterworth	6-3	So.
F	Bryce Dodge	6-2	Jr.
P	Bailey Meek	6-3	Jr.

Coach: Daven Harmeling (7th year)

magic with this year's group, even if they are largely the same squad.

Brady Metz, a 5-foot-10 senior, Bryson Metz, a 5-8 sophomore, Kobi Cason, a 6-0 senior and Gage Koenders, a 6-0 senior all earned all-league selections a season ago. Kai Butterworth, a 6-3 sophomore, Bryce Dodge, a 6-2 junior, and Bailey Meek, a 6-3 junior, add plenty of returning size for the Knights.

"Every team in the county talks about what they want to do, but few teams are willing to put in the work required to reach those goals," Harmeling said. "Just rolling the ball out and relying on what we did last year is going to get us beat and beat badly."

The Knights will also enjoy the efforts of 6-3 freshman guard Giovanny Evanson.



TJ MULLINAX for The Columbian

King's Way Christian's Bryson Metz (55) is one of several players the Knights will depend on.

GIRLS: Knights have the talent to compete with best Trico League has to offer



ALISHA JUCEVIC/The Columbian

Kinsey Tindoll, center, is the lone senior on this year's King's Way Christian roster. But that doesn't mean the Knights are short of talent.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

King's Way Christian may be young — the Knights graduated six, including three all-league players — but there's still plenty of talent to compete for a league crown.

Abby Cummins is the preseason frontrunner for league player of the year. The 5-foot-8 junior guard joins 5-8 sophomore Laurel Quinn as the Knights' all-league returners.

"Abby can take over a game," third-year coach Randy Graves said. "They all believe, and I do too, that if we play up to our capability, we can easily be the one or two seed out of our league."

The Knights won't start a senior. Camas transfer Camille Vaughan, a 5-6 junior guard, returns to the court after missing her sopho-

2018-19: 16-8, 10-0. 1st in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Regionals in 2019

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Abby Cummins	5-8	Jr.
G	Laurel Quinn	5-8	So.
G	Annabelle Atwood	5-7	So.
G	Camille Vaughan	5-6	Jr.
P	Riley Philbrook	6-0	So.
P	Piper Meeks	5-8	So.

Coach: Randy Graves (third year)

more season. Washougal transfer Piper Meeks, a 5-8 sophomore post, will also join the Knights' rotation.

"She really knows how to use her strength around the hoop," Graves said of Meeks.

Also in the rotation are 6-0 post Riley Philbrook and 5-7 guard Annabelle Atwood.

"We're going to be really scrappy," Graves said. "We have a rough preseason and some of my youth will have to grow up real quick. I think we're going to do fine in league."

King's Way's preseason slate includes 2B power Napavine, King's of Shoreline and Columbia River. The Knights lost in last year's regional round, but with only two spots coming out of District 4 this season, Elma and Montesano become difficult hurdles to repeat the performance.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	Napavine	W, 50-40
Dec. 7	King's	L, 60-42
Dec. 10	Col. River	L, 56-32
Dec. 12	Hockinson	7 p.m.
Dec. 13	at Ridgefield	5:30 p.m.
Dec. 18	at B. Ground	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Cascade Chr.	5 p.m.
Dec. 28	at Forks	TBD
Jan. 3	Montesano	7 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 22	La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Seton Cath.	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	at La Center	7 p.m.



Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Toutle Lake	W, 74-62
Dec. 6	at Woodland	W, 72-36
Dec. 13	at Ridgefield	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	Kalama	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at King's	6:45 p.m.
Dec. 21	Morton-WP	7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Zillah*	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 28	White River*	12 p.m.
Jan. 3	at Port Angeles	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 15	Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 18	Lynden Chr.	3 p.m.
Jan. 21	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.

*at Yakima Valley SunDome

BOYS: Senior-led Wildcats look to keep hold of their Trico League crown

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

La Center's talented senior class doesn't know what a basketball season is like without a Trico League title. The Wildcats are hoping that doesn't change.

Led by coach's kid and returning all-league player of the year Hunter Ecklund, the Wildcats will start an all senior lineup.

"Several of those kids started in third or fourth grade with my son," coach Jeremy Ecklund said. "They've been around me a lot. They know how I like to play."

La Center's style is scoring a bunch of points. They averaged nearly 79 points per game in a 23-4 season a year ago. Hunter Ecklund led the area with 21 points per game.

Joining him in the starting lineup is

2018-19: 23-4, 9-1. 1st in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Champs in 1996, '97

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Hunter Ecklund	6-0	Sr.
G	Hunter Ball	5-11	Sr.
G	Parker Ball	5-10	Sr.
G	Tobey Deemer	5-10	Sr.
F	Evan Norris	6-4	Sr.

Coach: Jeremy Ecklund (fifth year)

all-league returner Evan Norris, a 6-4 forward.

"He's kind of our big kid in the middle that can step outside and hit the 3 as well," coach Ecklund said of Norris. "We're also really pretty good on the press. We've got some length."

The Ball twins, Hunter and Parker, check in at just under 6-feet tall and bring some scrappiness to the backcourt. Tobey Deemer, a 5-10 guard,

rounds out the starting five.

"We believe we can compete with anybody in our area," Ecklund said.

Despite winning the Trico last season, the Wildcats watched league second-place King's Way Christian make a run to the state championship game. La Center finished fifth after falling to eventual champion Zillah in the semifinals.



SAMUEL WILSON for The Columbian

La Center's Hunter Ecklund is the reigning Trico MVP.

GIRLS: Wildcats face the great unknown as they rebuild to get back to postseason



TJ MULLINAX for The Columbian

La Center coach Herm VanWeerdhuizen enters his 14th season with the Wildcats.

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Head coach Herm VanWeerdhuizen has no idea what to expect from this year's La Center team.

"This is the first time I really don't know," said the coach, who is entering his 14th season with the Wildcats. "We're really young. It's going to be interesting."

While La Center has long been a Trico power, the Wildcats have work to do to catch up to defending champion King's Way Christian. The area's leading scorer, Taylor Stephens, has graduated and with her 23 points per game.

"We have to do a whole lot differently," VanWeerdhuizen said. "But the girls, they're working hard. I don't have to teach that, which is good. I don't think you can ever teach a kid that."

The Wildcats are fully prepared to take

2018-19: 12-12, 7-3. T-2nd in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Sixth in 2004

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Mia Edwards	5-7	Sr.
G	Lauren Fox	5-4	So.
G	Kylee Stephens	5-9	So.
G	Gianna D'Emilio	5-7	Fr.
F	Alyse Webberley	6-1	Fr.

Coach: Herm VanWeerdhuizen (14th year)

their lumps in a tough non-league schedule that includes Columbia River, King's of Shoreline and Kelso. They only hope it readies them for the league opener against Seton Catholic on Jan. 7.

"Hopefully, it doesn't break them too bad," VanWeerdhuizen said. "I really think the league is wide open this year."

Taking on bigger roles this season will be all-league returners Mia Edwards, a 5-7 senior, and Lauren Fox, a 5-4

sophomore.

Sophomore Kylee Stephens will be a difference-maker at 5-9. Freshmen Alyse Webberley, a 6-1 forward, and Gianna D'Emilio, a 5-7 guard, will slot into the rotation immediately.

La Center missed state for the first time in five years last season.

GIRLS SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 2	Hockinson	L, 64-27
Dec. 4	at Col. River	L, 63-34
Dec. 6	King's*	L, 61-29
Dec. 9	Woodland	L, 53-41
Dec. 11	Ridgefield	W, 50-38
Dec. 17	at Kelso	7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Centralia^	4 p.m.
Dec. 28	R.A. Long^	4 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	at Kalama	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 22	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Columbia	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.

*at King's Way; ^at Evergreen HS

Boys

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 5	Hudson's Bay	L, 54-53
Dec. 6	at Ridgefield	L, 68-57
Dec. 10	Woodland	W, 78-40
Dec. 13	at R.A. Long	7 p.m.
Dec. 14	Seattle Acad.	3:30 p.m.
Dec. 16	at La Salle, Ore.	7 p.m.
Dec. 18	Kalama	7 p.m.
Dec. 27	Royal*	12 p.m.
Dec. 28	W.F. West	10:30 a.m.
Jan. 4	at Tumwater	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	at La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 15	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at King's Way	8 p.m.
Feb. 4	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	at Stevenson	7 p.m.

*at Yakima Valley SunDome

BOYS: Talented Seton Catholic squad wants to be in the chase for a league title

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

It's immediately clear when watching Seton Catholic warm up that their length will trouble opponents. When the Cougars lock down in their 2-3 zone, the spaces to exploit are small, if there are any.

"We're really fortunate to have the length and athleticism we have," second-year coach Kris Small said. "We're really a team that is built off the run game. That's going to be our bread and butter."

Xavian Rushing is the tallest of the bunch. The 6-foot-4 senior is long, can run the floor and is a knockdown shooter when he has to be.

He's joined by returning all-league players Gabe Anderson, a 6-2 senior, and Andrew Olson, a 6-3 senior.

2018-19: 18-7, 7-3. 3rd in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Regionals 2019

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Gabe Anderson	6-1	Sr.
G	Xavian Rushing	6-4	Sr.
F	Andrew Olson	6-2	Sr.
G	Kellen Ball	6-3	Sr.
G	Luke Pitzer	5-9	Sr.

Coach: Kris Small (second year)

"I really like what we have," Small said. "Everybody has an opportunity on any given night to step up and contribute."

In Seton's season-opener against Hudson's Bay, it was Mountain View transfer Eba Abu, a 5-10 senior, who hit the game-tying shot.

Luke Pitzer, a 5-9 senior guard, is an adept distributor and 6-3 senior Kellen Ball gives the Cougars a strong perimeter threat.

Asked if this is the most talented Seton Catholic team in recent memory, Small replied: "That's true. Yeah."

"We would like to be a team that challenges for a league championship," he said.

The Cougars would have to knock off defending league champion La Center and last year's 1A runner-up King's Way Christian to do so.



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Seton Catholic's Gabe Anderson

GIRLS: Cougars plan to be ferocious on defense with a deep rotation of 12 players



JOSHUA HART/The Columbian

Seton Catholic's Hanna Jo Hammerstrom

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

In Phil Kent's first year with the Seton Catholic girls, the school's athletic director is hoping the Cougars quickly form an identity. For Kent, that starts with character.

"We are a first-class team and we treat our opponents like brothers and sisters," Kent said.

From there, the Cougars will pride themselves on defense. With a rotation that goes 12 deep, Seton will press, trap and contest every opportunity. There are no easy buckets when playing the Cougars.

"If we don't play defense, we're going to have a tough time in our league," Kent said. "My goal is that we are the most ferocious defense in the league."

2018-19: 6-14, 2-8. 5th in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Never qualified

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Jasmine Morgan	5-10	Sr.
G	Emma Watkins	5-4	Sr.
G	Michaela Ephraim	5-5	Sr.
G	Maddie Willis	5-6	So.
G	Hanna Jo Hammerstrom	5-8	Fr.

Coach: Phil Kent (first year)

The Cougars certainly have some weapons to make that happen. Everything starts with all-league returners Jamine Morgan, a 5-10 senior, and Emma Watkins, a 5-4 senior.

Fellow seniors Michaela Ephraim (5-5), Katie Willis (5-9) and Jerrica Pacht (6-0) will set the standard.

"Our seniors are a first-class group of girls," Kent said. "Their job is to teach the juniors, sophomores and freshmen what it means to be a varsity high school basketball player."

Sophomore Maddie Willis (5-6) and freshman Hanna Jo Hammerstrom (5-8) should also factor into the rotation heavily.

The Cougars finished 6-14 last year and placed fifth in the Trico League. They have not made the playoffs since 2017.

GIRLS

SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 4	at Fort Van.	W, 50-31
Dec. 13	Winlock	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	at Toutle Lake	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Col. River	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	Estacada, Ore.	7 p.m.
Dec. 26-28	Evergreen Tourney	
Jan. 3	at Heritage	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 22	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at King's Way	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	Stevenson	7 p.m.



Boys SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 5	Washougal	L, 86-50
Dec. 7	Lyle-Wishram	W, 74-13
Dec. 10	at Estacada	L, 50-47
Dec. 12	Trout Lake	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Corbett, Ore.	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Trout Lake	7 p.m.
Dec. 28	at Napavine	4:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	Hudson's Bay	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 6	The Dalles, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Jan. 15	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	at La Center	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.

BOYS: Team builds upon seniors

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The Stevenson Bulldogs are adjusting to basketball without a decorated senior without a decorated senior Hoidal and Lincoln Krog.

First-year coach Robert Waymire is learning the difference in the boys' game compared to the girls, where he assisted the Bulldogs the past four seasons.

"It's a change for me, for sure," Waymire said. "We were able to run some 1-3-1 zones that the boys are having a little more difficulty with because the offenses are a little more athletic."

Waymire is quick

to notice and make changes where needed.

Jonathan Blackledge, a 5-foot-7 senior guard, is the team's emotional leader and floor general. Bennett Wright, a 5-11 forward, is a vocal leader on the court as well. Jesse Miller, a 6-3 guard, has the ability to take games over.

2018-19: 9-14, 4-7. 4th in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Fifth in 1981

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Jonathan Blackledge	5-7	Sr.
G	Jesse Miller	6-3	Sr.
F	Bennett Wright	5-11	Sr.

Coach: Robert Waymire (first year)

GIRLS: Hopes remain high

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Is this the year the Stevenson Bulldogs make a run at a league title? On paper, it certainly looks possible.

The Bulldogs return all-league guards Katie Rathgeber, a 5-foot-5 senior, and Cassie MacNab, a 5-5 junior. With so much turnover in the Trico League, Stevenson has high hopes with those two running the show.

"We should have enough players back that we contend pretty well," fourth-year coach Bob McCrum said. "It's exciting and we're looking

forward to the challenge."

Jazmine Morat, a 6-foot post, is poised for a breakout year and Ashley Brannan, a 5-9 forward, will start for Stevenson.

"We're going to try to put on pressure and push the pace at all costs," McCrum said.

2018-19: 15-8, 7-3. T-2nd in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Round of 16, 1980

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Katie Rathgeber	5-6	Sr.
G	Cassie MacNab	5-6	Jr.
F	Ashley Brannan	5-9	Sr.
P	Jazmine Morat	6-0	Sr.

Coach: Bob McCrum (fourth year)

GIRLS SCHEDULE

League games in bold

Dec. 3	at Kalama	W, 61-25
Dec. 4	Hudson's Bay	L, 58-29
Dec. 7	Lyle-Wishram	W, 67-23
Dec. 11	at Col. Advent.	W, 73-43
Dec. 12	at Trout Lake	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	Corbett, Ore.	7 p.m.
Dec. 19	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	Trout Lake	7 p.m.
Dec. 28	at H.River, Ore.	6:30 p.m.
Jan. 4	Tenino	4:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	at La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 22	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Columbia	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	La Center	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.



Boys

League games in bold

Dec. 4	Trout Lake	W, 61-38
Dec. 7	at Riverside	L, 60-37
Dec. 9	Goldendale	L, 52-50
Dec. 10	at Col. Adv.	L, 39-30
Dec. 13	Hoquiam	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	Goldendale	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	at H. River, Ore.	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	Riverside, Ore.	4:30 p.m.
Dec. 23	Highland	5 p.m.
Jan. 3	Corbett, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Jan. 15	at La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 23	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 28	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	La Center	7 p.m.
Feb. 4	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Feb. 6	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.

BOYS: Bruins set to run hard

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

The Columbia-White Salmon Bruins will look a little faster this season. For the first time in third-year coach Evan Wiley's tenure, the Bruins have the personnel to dictate a change.

"This is the first time we've had a group of guys that are athletic enough and have enough understanding of the game to play a little more up-tempo," Wiley said. "In years past, we really emphasized slowing down and not getting caught running with teams that are stronger and

faster. We're going to cut them loose."

Jacob Lockman is the lone all-league returner for a rather young Bruins squad. The 6-foot junior guard "stands out in his growth this offseason," Wiley said.

2018-19: 3-17, 0-10. 6th in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Seventh in 1953

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Jacob Lockman	6-0	Jr.
W	Austin Charters	5-10	Jr.
P	Chase Colloton	6-2	So.
P	Isaac Wang	6-3	Jr.

Coach: Evan Wiley (third year)

GIRLS: Varsity led by freshmen

By **JOSHUA HART**
Columbian staff writer

Don Struck has been coaching basketball 42 years. He's never called up so many freshmen.

"We have six freshmen on varsity," Struck said. "That group is really hungry, they're good athletes and they've played together since they were very young."

That doesn't mean it will be an entirely seamless transition to the varsity game. The Bruins are still a little undersized. Junior Keri Hylton is Columbia's

only post player at 6-foot-0. Guard Mya Aman (5-5) and guard Chloe Clifford (5-4) return after all-league seasons. Freshmen Sydney Aman (5-4) and Maggie Bryan (5-4) look "very promising."

2018-19: 5-15, 0-10. 6th in 1A Trico

BEST STATE FINISH: Fifth in 1976, '77

KEY PLAYERS

Returning All-Leaguers in bold

Pos.		Ht.	Year
G	Chloe Clifford	5-2	So.
G	Mya Aman	5-5	Jr.
G	Sydney Aman	5-4	Fr.
G	Teagan Blankenship	5-3	Fr.
F	Maggie Bryan	5-4	Fr.

Coach: Don Struck (fourth year)

GIRLS

League games in bold

Dec. 4	Trout Lake	W, 57-47
Dec. 7	at Riverside	W, 42-21
Dec. 9	Goldendale	W, 60-55
Dec. 13	at Hoquiam	7 p.m.
Dec. 16	at Fort Van.	7 p.m.
Dec. 17	at Goldendale	6 p.m.
Dec. 21	Riverside, Ore.	3 p.m.
Dec. 23	Highland	3 p.m.
Jan. 3	at Corbett, Ore.	7 p.m.
Jan. 4	Fort Van.	2:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	at Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 9	Seton Catholic	7 p.m.
Jan. 14	La Center	7 p.m.
Jan. 16	at King's Way	7 p.m.
Jan. 22	at Castle Rock	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Stevenson	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	at Seton Cath.	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	at La Center	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	King's Way Chr.	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	Castle Rock	7 p.m.

WRESTLING

WRESTLERS TO WATCH

ALLISON BLAINE, HUDSON'S BAY: The senior is seeking her third state title after second undefeated season.

KYLE BROSIUS, UNION: The senior is among the top ranked 170-pounders in the state. Clark County champ.

ISRAEL GONZALEZ, HERITAGE: The sophomore placed sixth in state last year at 106 pounds.

CJ HAMBLIN, SETON CATHOLIC The sophomore won Seton's first state title in wrestling, taking 145-lb. crown.

SCOTT LEES, WASHOUGAL The junior placed second in state at 138 pounds.

GIDEON MALYCHEWSKI, CAMAS: The senior is coming off a state championship at 170 pounds.

BRACEN NASH, RIDGEFIELD: The sophomore placed third in state at 106 pounds. Also won Clark County title.

COLBY STOLLER, CAMAS: The senior caught fire at Mat Classic, reaching the 195-pound championship match.

KEY DATES

DEC. 28 PACIFIC COAST CHAMPIONSHIPS: Top wrestlers from Washington and Oregon converge at Mountain View for annual tournament.

JAN. 18 CLARK COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS: Wrestlers from all classifications clash at Skyview for countywide bragging rights.

FEB. 15 REGIONAL MEETS: 4A is in Spokane, 3A in Kelso, 2A in Tumwater, 1A in Hoquiam and girls meet is in Kalama.

FEB. 21-22 MAT CLASSIC XXXII: The season culminates in the state championship event at the Tacoma Dome.

Union girls enter season with title, respect

By **MICAH RICE**
Columbian Sports Editor

For Nevaeh Cassidy, the change in the Union wrestling room was subtle but noticeable.

To be clear, the girls on the Titans team had always felt welcomed by their male counterparts.

But after earning the first team state championship in Union wrestling history, Cassidy and her teammates felt a new level of respect.

It's the kind of respect that has nothing to do with gender. It's the type that is only earned by rising to excellence among your peers.

"We've definitely had to earn our place," Cassidy said. "We're the first champions overall, so the boys have a lot of respect for us. But we've definitely had to earn that."

Girls wrestling has grown rapidly since becoming a WIAA sanctioned sport.

At Mat Classic in 2007, the first girls tournament had 72 wrestlers across nine weight classes. This year's Mat Classic state championships will involve 224 athletes across 14 classes.

That has mirrored growth in girls wrestling nationally. According to USA Wrestling, the number of girls competing in high school has grown from 804 in 1994 to 16,562 in 2018. Fifteen states now sponsor girls championships.

There are currently 46 collegiate women's wrestling programs in the nation with another 14 to be added within the next two years.

Girls wrestling has been



SAMUEL WILSON/for the Columbian

Union's Riley Aamold rebounded from a loss to place third at last year's Mat Classic. Her pin in her final match clinched the state title for the Titans.

vibrant in South-west Washington with four individuals winning state titles last year. But no local girls team had won the state title, though Washougal, Kelso and the previous year's Union team had all placed second.

So when Riley Aamold was told Union would clinch the state title if she won her 125-pound third-place match, she got a surge of adrenaline.

"I went out there and just focused on doing it for the team," she said.

Aamold won that match by pin. It was part of a



Nevaeh Cassidy

Union senior placed third at Mat Classic

stellar tournament for the Titans that saw two wrestlers win state titles, two finish third and one place sixth.

Now Cassidy, a senior, and Aamold, a junior, are aiming to keep Union among the state's elite girls programs.

That starts with supporting each of the 14 girls on Union's roster.

"On the first day this year, I told all the new girls that we're a family here," said Cassidy, who placed third in the state at 155 pounds. "We're going to take care of you like you're

my little sisters."

That support involves encouragement when a workout is tough or a task becomes intimidating.

It extends off the mat, as well. The team often attends school functions together. Many of Cassidy's teammates gathered at her house for "Friendsgiving" last month.

"We're going to stick together and have each other's backs," Cassidy said. "Being in a male-dominated sport, it can be threatening. But that's what I'm trying to teach these girls. We're just as strong. We're just as good. And I'm going to be here to support you."

GYMNASTICS

GYMNASTS TO WATCH

SHEA MCGEE, CAMAS: The junior is a two-time All-Region gymnast of the year; defending 4A state all-around champion.

ALYSSA SHIBATA, CAMAS: The junior placed sixth in the all-around at state and was the state runner-up on beam.

LILI FORD, CAMAS: The junior was 11th at state in the all-around, placed third on vault and fourth on beam.

PEYTON CODY, CAMAS: The sophomore placed eighth in the all-around at state and fourth on bars.

KATIE STEVENS, WASHOUGAL: The junior was a district runner-up on vault, and also placed fifth at state in track and field in the pole vault.

SKYVIEW GYMNASTS: The Storm return state qualifiers Olivia Chou and Riley Lecocq, and expect contributions from Allison Yajko and Kaitlyn Epperly.

KEY DATES

JAN. 11 WOWI MEET: Camas hosts Washougal, Columbia River, Evergreen, Heritage, Mountain View, Ridgefield and Union at Naydenov

JAN. 18 WINTERFEST: Columbia River hosts the annual event at Naydenov, featuring Camas, Washougal, Ridgefield, Skyview and Union

FEB. 15 DISTRICT MEETS: Class 4A and 3A/2A district meet will be held at sites TBA

FEB. 20-22 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS: After years at the Tacoma Dome Exhibition Hall, state returns to Sammamish High School for a three-day meet.

Camas gymnasts have big expectations

Two-time state champs have depth to go for third title

By **TIM MARTINEZ**
Columbian staff writer

When Camas gymnastics won its first state team title in school history in 2018, it was cause for excitement.

When the Papermakers followed that up with a second consecutive state championship last February, it was cause for validation. Camas showed it belonged among the elite programs in the state.

Now as another loaded Camas team prepares for the 2019-20 season, it is cause for something new — expectation.

“I’ve had people come up to me and say ‘You guys going to get the three-peat?’” Camas coach Carol Willson said. “It’s like now we’re expected to win. But I was looking at scores from around the state, and Woodinville scored like a 173. They are going to be right on us.”

That has prompted Willson to find new ways to keep her crew of 40 gymnasts motivated to improve during the season.

“Before our first meet, I gave the girls a number I wanted to them to hit,” Willson said. “Get that score, and they could get a day off from practice. Carol needs a day off, too. And they went out and got that number with plenty to spare.”

And the Papermakers achieved their first goal with their top gymnasts watching from the sideline. Junior Shea McGee, the



ANDY BUHLER/The Columbian files

Camas gymnastics team members hoist the state championship trophy on the podium at the 2019 state meet.

2019 4A all-around state champion, did not compete in Camas’ first meet of the season while she dealt with a minor hand injury. But the Papermakers didn’t miss a beat.

“That’s where our strength is going to be this year — our depth,” Willson said.

Camas returns four gymnasts who competed in the all-around final at state last year. In addition to McGee, Alyssa Shibata placed sixth at state, Peyton Cody tied for eighth and Lili Ford was 11th.

This season, McGee, Shibata and Ford are juniors; Cody is a sophomore.

Also, seniors Lizzy Wing

and Morgan MacIntyre return from last year’s state champion team, in addition to sophomore Olivia Bane, who qualified for the state finals on the bars.

And the talent pool gets even deeper this year with the addition of freshman Emma Crawford and junior Katerina Baden, a high-level club gymnast competing for the high school team for the first time.

“I think with our success, we’re finding more kids who want to come out and be part of the team,” Willson said.

It provides the coach with an enviable problem, trying to find places in the lineup for all of those lineups.

“We’ve got kids on our program who would be on varsity at other schools, and I’m just trying to find a spot to get them into a meet,” Willson said.

Willson said she’s seen the program grow from five gymnastics in her first year at Camas. And she’s also noticed a growth in numbers in other programs around Clark County.

“I think you look at the teams we had at our first meet, and it’s great to see so many kids out for gymnastics,” Willson said. “I’d like to think our success had a little something to do with that. It’s great for gymnastics in the area.”

GIRLS BOWLING

REGION'S TOP BOWLERS OF 2019-20

EMILY STREHLE, KELSO: 191.8 average (based on results reported to The Columbian this season through Dec. 9)

HALIE MARTIN, HUDSON'S BAY: 185.6 average

SIERRAH KIENTIZ, MOUNTAIN VIEW: 183.6 average

ROSE UGBINADA, FORT VANCOUVER: 182.8 average

KAILEE WILCOX, EVERGREEN: 177.6 average

MADDY FLATIN, FORT VANCOUVER: 176.6 average

ANNA GATLIN, PRAIRIE: 176.5 average

HAILEE REYNOLDS, MARK MORRIS: 175.6 average

KYLEE NEWMAN, R.A. LONG: 174.6 average

KARINA JOHNSEN, EVERGREEN: 174.0 average

NICOLE HAYES, SKYVIEW: 173.0 average

ELISSA ST. JULIAN, PRAIRIE: 173.0 average

McKENZIE SPARANO, SKYVIEW: 172.1 average

KIMMIE BOONE, CAMAS: 170.7 average

LILLY BASH, PRAIRIE: 168.3 average

KEY DATES

JAN. 31 DISTRICT MEETS: State berths are on the line for 4A, 3A, 2A

FEB. 6-8 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS: Narrows Plaza Bowl at University Place is the host

Sparano helps Skyview make some noise

By **TIM MARTINEZ**

Columbian staff writer

For as long as she can remember, McKenzie Sparano has been bowling. "I've been bowling for as long as I can walk," Sparano said.

The Skyview junior's grandmother, Kelly Sparano, was a professional bowler and operated Interstate Bowl in Portland for many years. McKenzie Sparano spent a lot of time there growing up.

And even though she's been bowling so long, and so often — she says she bowls six days a week — the sport never gets old for her.

"It's a really good stress reliever for me," Sparano said. "I go bowling all the time, even on Sundays sometimes. It's fun, even if I go with my family. It's fun, but it's also competitive. And I am a competitive bowler."

A two-time all-league bowler, Sparano had her big moment in high school bowling last January when she won the 4A district individual title, helping Skyview take the team title. Her 637 series (224-181-232) was the best of the day, beating out even the 3A district champion.

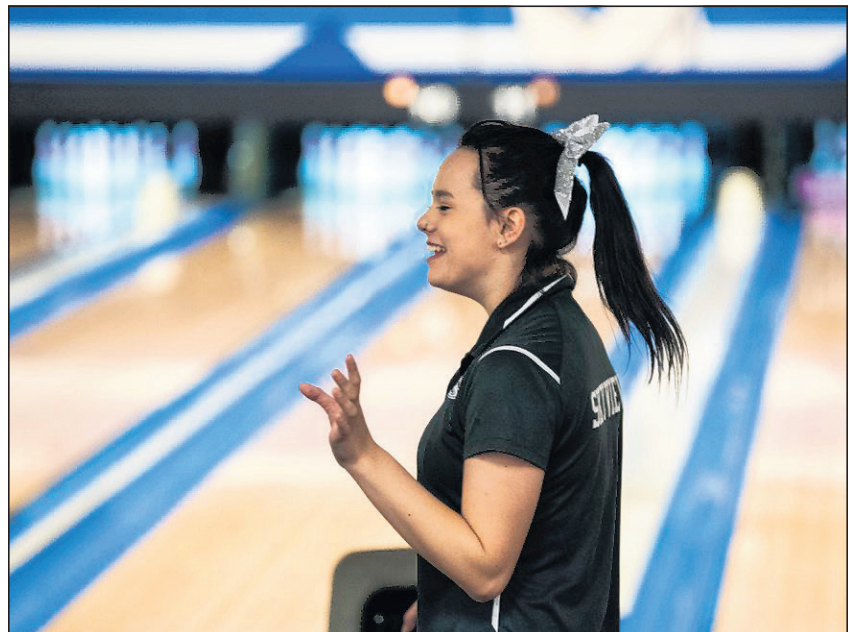
The team aspect is what Sparano enjoys most about high school bowling.

"In high school bowling, you get really close to your team, especially when you're on varsity," Sparano said. "You spend so much time together, you become like a family. You are with each other every day, you go to districts, you go to state, and you just bond. When you bowl in a league, even though you're still part of a team, to me it's more individual, individual, individual."

A bout with tendinitis sidelined Sparano for a week this season. When she returned to bowling, she bowled a match with the junior varsity team to get back into form.

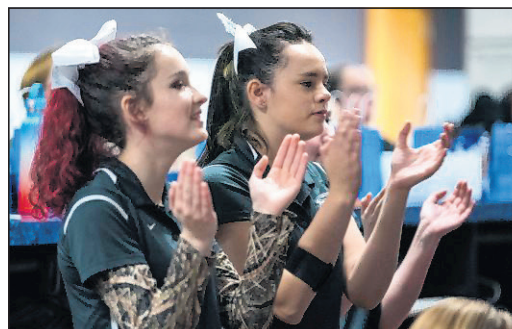
While there, Sparano tried to instill a little varsity spirit into her JV teammates by being especially loud with her in-match team cheers.

"I was trying to get the JV hyped," Sparano said. "There are a couple of



Photos by **ALISHA JUCEVIC**/The Columbian

For Skyview junior McKenzie Sparano, bowling has always been a family affair.



Skyview senior Nicole Hayes, left, and junior McKenzie Sparano, right, cheer on their teammates during a match against Ridgefield at Hazel Dell Lanes.

girls on the JV team who are neck-and-neck to be on varsity. I was telling them 'Varsity is loud. When you're on varsity, you have to be really loud, like really vocal.' I was just trying to hype them up."

The Skyview varsity team has been making noise of its own this season. Sparano is one of four returning all-league bowlers, along with Kira Glass, Athena Mantalas and Jaelyn Soto.

But this season, the bowler with the highest average is senior Nicole Hayes at 173.

"Nicole was on varsity her freshman year, but she wasn't (her sophomore year) because she got bumped to JV," Sparano said. "But now she's back on varsity, and bowling really well. ... I think our team will be really strong. Our goal is to win district again, and maybe win state."

That's a tall order, after the Storm finished sixth and seventh at state the past two years. But Sparano believes the Storm have the depth to compete.

But the biggest thing is just getting to experience state again with her Skyview family.

"Going to state together is so much fun," Sparano said. "It was a really good experience. I think everyone should have the experience of going up to state with their team at least once in their high school career."

Boys Swimming

SWIMMERS TO WATCH

JACE CREECH, SKYVIEW: The junior placed third in the 100 backstroke of the 'B' final at the state meet.

FRED GRIMSHAW, MOUNTAIN VIEW: A multiple district champion, the senior reached state in 50 & 100 free.

JADEN KIM, CAMAS: The senior has placed no worse than third in three state meets in the 100 butterfly.

LIAM NOFTSKER, COLUMBIA RIVER: Placed eighth in state in the 100 freestyle as a freshman last season.

SIMON PARISH, COLUMBIA RIVER: The senior is coming off a seventh-place state finish in the 200 individual medley.

DAVID PEDDIE, CAMAS: The junior placed fifth in state in the 500 freestyle.

VAL TIKHOMIROV, UNION: The senior placed seventh in state in the 100 breaststroke.



MICAH RICE/The Columbian

Camas swimmers Jaden Kim, left, and Luke Bales are part of the Papermakers' senior leadership in the pool.

KEY DATES

JAN. 18 **KELSO INVITE:** Fifteen teams from across Southwest Washington will compete at the annual mid-season meet at Kelso.

FEB. 1 **SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON INVITE:** Mark Morris High in Longview plays host to this important postseason tuneup.

FEB. 14-15 **DISTRICT MEETS:** State berths are on the line as 4A and 3A compete at Kelso, 2A competes at Mark Morris.

FEB. 21-22 **STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Titles will be won at the annual swim extravaganza in Federal Way.

Jaden Kim enters senior year on the fly

Luke Bales also key part of Camas swim leadership

By MICAH RICE
Columbian Sports Editor

If there's anything Jaden Kim prides in his swimming career, it's consistency.

That's why the Camas senior, when asked what advice he'd give to his freshman self, focused on the basics.

"Go to bed early," Kim said, with a chuckle. "Those are the things we overlook, but they matter the most."

Kim has been consistent-

ly among the top swimmers in the state his entire high school career. He placed third in the 100-yard butterfly as a freshman, then second as a sophomore.

Last year, he again placed third but did so in a personal-best and All-American Consideration time of 49.59.

That sets the stage for what Kim hopes will be a big senior season.

"Of course, with it being the last year you want to put in everything you have and make sure the team is in a good spot for years to come," Kim said.

Kim is continuing a family legacy at Camas swimming that started with his

brother Mark, a two-time state champion in 2017 who now swims for Army West Point.

Mark's work ethic continues to inspire Jaden.

"There was nothing else on his mind than trying to be better every day," Kim said of his brother. "I really admire that about him. There were a lot of times I'd look at him to get motivated because he'd be in the pool every day, no matter what."

Kim's younger brother, Nathan, is a freshman on the Camas swim team. Kim and fellow senior Luke Bales aim to inspire those young swimmers in the same way they were when

Camas won back to back 4A state team championships in 2017-18.

"I think people definitely swim better when their heart is in it and they're having fun," Bales said. "It's one thing to go out there and race because you want to win. It's another thing to go out, have fun and compete for the joy of competing."

And Kim finds that joy in grinding out countless lengths of the pool during practices that start as early as 5 a.m.

"The key to everything is consistency," he said. "If you stay with it, progress will follow."



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