

WINTER SPORTS PREVIEW

Girls basketball hopes guards will lead the way to state

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With coaching changes and a bigger team the girls basketball team is ready to start playing. To understand how the players feel about the changes and how the team is working in practice the Charger had an interview with senior Abby Oliver and junior Madelyn Hutley.

How is the team different this year?

Oliver: We have a lot of different changes in the coaching staff and we have a lot more girls out. We went from only having 13 to having almost 20, so practices are more fast paced. We always have to be doing something to get everyone involved.

Hutley: This year there is a chance for new leaders to step up and do our role and we should have a pretty good season.

What are you most excited for this year with a different team?

Oliver: I think we are going to play a lot faster pace of game this year and looking forward to it, so that is always fun.

Hutley: I'm just looking forward to playing. Just getting out there and playing.

What are the goals that the team has?

Oliver: I think always our biggest goal is to win league. We have one of the toughest leagues in the state

Hutley: I wasn't going to say we have goals, we have a destination and that is state.

What strengths does this newer team have?

Oliver: I think our guards, we have really good guard play and we are really quick. We have a lot of fast girls.

Hutley: We are diverse.

What weaknesses do you guys have?

Oliver: Right now the few post players we have are hurt and we

don't have a big dominant post player.

Hutley: We are pretty small and we need to get in better shape.

How do you think the coaching changes will affect the team?

Oliver: I think the coaching changes this year are positive changes and having a third coach is good because we have a lot of freshman out and it helps them start somewhere.

Hutley: This year we have a lot more encouragement and it's more beneficial for the team.

The team opened the season Friday with a 54-37 win over Axtell. The Chargers play at home Tuesday, Thursday and Friday in the Wabauunsee Invitational.

BOYS BASKETBALL ENTERS YEAR WITH NEW COACH AND NEW GOALS

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The boys basketball team is starting the season with a new coach and new team goals. The Charger interviewed seniors Tanner Imthurn and Connor Brown about the upcoming season.

How many people do you have going out on the team this year, and how is it spread out between classes?

Tanner: It's like 20 something. I think there are more underclassmen.

Connor: I would say it's evenly distributed between classes.

How is this year going to be different with a new coach, and what are you looking forward to about it?

Tanner: [Looking forward to] Meeting some of the goals that we set as a team earlier in the season.

Connor: We have a lot more plays this year than we did last year. We have a whole new offense. I'm looking forward to our first game and seeing how well we apply our practices in the game.



Junior Maddy Hutley dribbles during Friday's 54-37 win over Axtell.

What are some team goals for this year?

Tanner: We want to give up less points than we ever have on defense before in past years.

Connor: Less than 45 points.

Tanner: We're trying to out rebound the other team by 10 and give the other team less second chances.

Connor: Working together on the court, and no bickering.

Tanner: Always have a positive energy.

What will be some of the challenges you think the team will face this year?

Tanner: One of the challenges is that we don't really have a big kid that's also tall. So we might struggle a little bit on the inside.

Connor: I think the only thing that's going to beat us is ourselves.

What do you think are the most important games this year?

Connor: I think they're all im-

portant.

Tanner: That's what I would say, I think they're all equally important.

Connor: If we can win all of our league games, they're pretty important.

What do you think are some community expectations for the team this year?

Tanner: Have a winning record, and make some kind of run into sub-state and state.

The Chargers fell 63-64 Friday against Axtell after taking the Eagles to overtime. "We definitely had some mental mistakes but as a team I think we'll grow and get better," senior Jackson Frank said. The team plays at home Tuesday, Thursday and Friday in the Wabauunsee Invitational.

WRESTLING LOOKS TO RELOAD AFTER GRADUATING STATE CHAMPIONS

Hannah Mumpower
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The WHS wrestling team is looking forward to a successful season under head coach Joey Heersche and assistant Travis Conrad. The Charger interviewed senior Sean Dugger and sophomore Eli Mumpower to get a better understanding of the team.

How many people are out?

Eli: Ten. Marek Boatwright and Jackson Havenstein are the freshman. Myself, Derek Wallin, Lane Berkenmeier, Isaac Mumaw, and Alex Warner are the sophomores. Frank Gilbert is our only junior, and Sean Dugger and Austen Bonnette are the Seniors.

How many returning wrestlers do you have?

Sean: We have 6 returning wrestlers from last year, so we aren't inexperienced. Austen is returning from sophomore year and Lane is returning from junior high.

What are some goals you hope to achieve as a team this year?

Eli: We want to have multiple state qualifiers.

Sean: While we'd like to make it to state, we still want to build the team up for years to come.

What are some of the challenges you will face this year?

Eli: Everyone making weight.

Sean: Poor motivation due to the long season makes it tough to keep going. Holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas also destroy motivation as it just means getting back down to weight.

What are some team strengths/weaknesses?

Eli: 30% of our team is ineligible already.

Sean: The team lacks experience on any state mats, but is willing to work hard to get there.

What do you think are some community expectations for the team this year?

Sean: I imagine the community expects a lot from how successful the team has been, so we might as well fulfill those expectations.

Eli: State qualifiers

How do you think the team will bounce back after losing two state champion wrestlers?

Eli: We already have some possible state qualifiers.

Sean: Just because we lost some champions doesn't mean we are going to stop, we are just going to want to send more to the state level as well as getting more champion titles.

In what way do you guys think you can help keep the program going in future years?

Eli: Keeping a fun environment so people don't quit.

Sean: By keeping a high level of success as well as having fun, the program will continue to improve.

The team opened its season Saturday at Mission Valley. Mumpower finished 4th and Wallin 3rd. The team continues Saturday at Clay Center.

New boys basketball coach hopes to lead by example

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New boys basketball boys head coach Christopher Smart is hoping to help achieve individual and team goals at WHS. Wabauunsee is Smart's first high school head coach job, but he brings several years of experience at Mission Valley and Marysville. Smart hopes to see improvements from the previous season.

Where have you coached before?

I started down at Mission Valley in 2002 as an 8th grade coach then the next year I was up in high school as the assistant coach. I went through 2006 there. Then I was in Marysville as assistant coach from 2006 to 2009, and I haven't coached since.

What are some of your goals for the year?

One of my big team goals for the season is to keep the opponents under 45 points, top three in the mid-east league, and get to the sub-state championship game to give a

chance to get to state, which I think this team has. We have a lot of hype, we have a lot of the keys I think to get there. I've told them this {The team} that as coaches we can show them to door, they have to walk through it.

Do you have any individual goals for the year?

No technicals, I will never be belligerent to refs, my face might be red and I might be cussing underneath my breath, but I will get T'd up if that means getting the boys fired up. Other individual goals are to just be a leader for the guys, show respect to the opponents, the fans, the refs, and the other coaches and just lead by example.

What prompted you to want to coach at Wabauunsee?

I didn't know if I would ever get back into coaching, and I came to a few games last year, and it really kind of got the fire going back inside me again, seeing the potential out on the floor, and seeing what these guys could potentially be. I then started talking to some school board members about it, even just

talking about the games themselves, then it kind of just came up that this high school coaching job kind of came open and those things we were talking about I think kind of got my foot in the door a little bit for this position, but it definitely peaked my interest coming to games last year.

What are some challenges that you never realized as head coach?

All the work I have to do. As a head coach you are constantly scheduling summer stuff, and constantly thinking about the future with summer, but its constant bombardment of stuff you have to do besides the basketball. Now that being said I don't mind that stuff it keeps extremely busy and I really don't mind it at all.

What do you think the community's expectations are of you?

I think that the community's expectations are pretty low but I feel really confident with this group. I think that we have everything we need, and I think once we start winning games the community will be a lot more interested in boys bas-

ketball. Another thing I am doing is having all the boys volunteer to get them out in the community, for the most part the community supports this program and I want them out supporting the community the way they are doing us.

What are some of the team's advantages and disadvantages?

Disadvantages I think are the previous seasons kind of just lingers over you. They are used to losing, not used to having success. Once they start winning they are going to deal with that. Are they going to get a big head? Do you need to keep them level? I think that's the big thing. That mentality gets into their heads and it just needs to be changed.

Advantages, I am impressed with the effort. I didn't know what to expect, coming in. I didn't know if they were going to bust their butts for me or like in grade school I have to give them a pep talk every 10 minutes. I had no idea. I think that their effort has been very good so far. Mentally we are getting there. It has been a lot of new stuff thrown at

them so I think they will get there.

Were there any challenges getting hired later in the year?

As soon as I got hired I was working to just get the boys to summer camp which was in just four or five days. Also trying to get the boys into tournaments during the summer. As soon as I got hired I probably called about seven or eight different coaches trying to get into tournaments.

Outside of coaching what do you like to do?

Hunt and fish, I am definitely an outdoors man.

How are you trying to build relationships with the boys?

I think that is some of the biggest challenges in coaching is also some of the most rewarding is connecting with them, I think that once you connect with them i think they respond. It's constant talking to them besides the basketball stuff. I really have to dive a little deeper with them.

Follow the Chargers throughout the season at www.whscharger.com.