

Lady Raider Cagers Battled Inconsistency, Finish 9-17

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who did not miss a game all season, also led the team with 62 steals, while contributing 115 rebounds, 49 assists and 12 blocked shots.

"Taylor Sebolao had a terrific year. As a fourth-year starter, she will be returning as one of the top players in the county," Coach Ryan said.

Sophomore Katie Harper, in her first year as a starter, was named the Raiders' Most Improved Player. She was second on the team with 215 points (13 3-pointers, 46 free throws), dished out a team-leading 60 assists and was the chief thief with 63 steals. She also had 48 rebounds and two blocked shots.

Freshman Thabitha Dwnfour made her presence under the board known immediately upon stepping onto the court this season. For a few weeks, she led the state in rebounds and finished with a team-leading 291 (11.2 per-game average), while adding a team-leading 55 blocks. She also rolled in 195 points (40 free throws), while adding 19 assists and 26 steals.

Junior forward Tara Sweeney also provided strength underneath the basket. She was second on the team with 116 rebounds and 14 blocked shots. Sweeney sank 90 points and added 11 assists and six steals.

Sophomore Alyssa Riporti, strong on defense, made 84 rebounds, 12 blocked shots and 27 steals, and also finished with 87 points and 19 assists. In her time on the court, sophomore Madison Maisel was an outside threat, sinking 28 3-pointers to finish with 123 points. She also dished out 38 assists, and added 45 rebounds, 28 steals and three blocks.

"We are looking forward to our three top performers: Taylor, Katie and Thabitha returning, along with other experienced players like Tara Sweeney and Madison Maisel. The girls will be working very hard in the off-season to improve their game by playing AAU and attending camps. We are working towards being more consistent on the offensive end and more effective on the defensive end," Coach Ryan said.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
SETTING UP THE GUILLOTINE... Cougar Ian Henry, left, tries to set up a guillotine pinning maneuver on Elizabeth's Ralph Stadler in the 126-lb title bout. Henry claimed a 10-2, majority decision and the championship.

Cougar Matmen Finish, 15-8, Return Experienced Team

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ing at 152-lbs, finished second in the district and fourth in UCT and recorded a 27-10 record.

"A lot of people look across the mat and see this kid, they don't think much of him. Six foot something and 152-lbs, but he uses that lankiness. Cradles! Legs! He's got those long arms and legs to wrestle like an octopus. He knocked off some good kids. I think he is going to have a great year next year," Coach Gorman said.

Junior James Dwyer missed the middle part of the season due to illness but managed to place third in the district at 160-lbs and finished with a 9-4 record. Senior Glen Cook filled in and also finished 9-4.

"Glen had a great year. Dwyer beat him in a wrestleoff for the districts. He just couldn't break the lineup at the end of his high school career," Coach Gorman said.

Freshman Gavin Murray showed up on the radar screen immediately when he won the Garden State Holiday Tournament at 120-lbs in December. He also placed third in the UCT and second in the district to finish 29-8.

Sophomore Corey Birch finished 17-15 at 132/138-lbs and junior Mike Helmstetter competed primarily at 126-lbs and finished 8-8. Junior Matt DiMartino competed at 145-lbs, junior Nick Frediani competed at 138-lbs and sophomore Kevin Quigley competed at 106-lbs.

The Cougars got some good mileage from some football players in the heavier weights. Junior Jeff Weiss

competed at 220-lbs, placed second in the UCT and second in the district to finish with a 21-14 record.

"Jeff is only a second-year wrestler. We went to North Bergen. He wrestled a kid who took second in the state and only lost 10-7. That was his turning point in the season. Since that, he wrestled with confidence. He's very athletic. He picks up on things," Coach Gorman said.

Junior Nick Diaz, a linebacker on the football team with two years wrestling experience, rotated at 182-lbs and 195-lbs and finished with a 17-16 record.

"Nick gave up a lot of weight. He really weighted 175. He's come a long way," Coach Gorman pointed out.

Junior Rob Kessler also rotated at 182-lbs and 195-lbs.

"Rob bumped up and down the lineup like Diaz. He is going to have a great year next year," Coach Gorman said.

He placed third in the district and fifth in the UCT at 182-lbs and finished with a 17-14 record. Sophomore Jon El-Khoury competed at heavyweight.

"Jon is a first-year wrestler. He learned a lot of things. He's constantly losing weight. He won't be a heavyweight next year," said Coach Gorman, who added, "We are only losing three seniors. With the record that we had and the caliber of wrestlers, 11 juniors and we are going to get a couple of freshmen next year, so the future is promising."

Blue Devils Have Near Misses

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be missed," Coach Palmieri commented.

Senior Aswad Turner sank 41 field goals and eight free throws to finish with 90 points. He led the team with 82 rebounds and added nine assists and eight steals.

"Aswad stepped up in some big moments. Losing those three is going to be tough to replace, but we are a little better equipped to replace guys now. I feel like we are replacing them with some kids who now have experience. Almost every kid that I really see playing a big role next year, saw significant time in big games for us this year," Coach Palmieri said.

Junior guard Keegan Hess led the team with 39 3-pointers, while adding 44 free throws and 31 field goals to total 223 points. Hess led the team with 65 assists and finished with 40 rebounds and 22 steals.

"Keegan was relied on a lot. He had some moments where he was very good. He had some moments where he struggled," Coach Palmieri said.

Sophomore guard Dylan Elliott, who scored 84 points, finished with 48 rebounds, 44 assists and 22 steals.

"Dylan did some good things defensively. When he was relaxed on offense, he played well. That's going to be a challenge for him to put that whole game together," Coach Palmieri said.

After transferring back to the team from Roselle Catholic, junior Scott Tresco used his size underneath the boards to score 97 points and grab 48 rebounds.

"It's nice to get players back. He was a good player last year, but he did a lot of sitting at the other school. His fitness level went down, so it took a little while for him to get back into shape and get accustomed to what we were doing. I totally figure him being a big part on the team next year," Coach Palmieri said.

Sophomore forward Mike Andronis rolled in 88 points and finished with 64 rebounds, nine steals and 13 assists.

"I think the combination of him and Tresco next year is going to be huge. We are going to be able to play both of them at the same time or one at a time. It's going to give me some leeway on what we are doing lineup wise," Coach Palmieri said.

Freshman point guard Danny Mitchell, in his eight games, scored 28 points and finished with 23 assists, 13 steals and 15 rebounds.

"He showed a lot of poise, but ultimately he's going to have to take the next step," Coach Palmieri said.

Coming off the bench, sophomore

Dave Kane proved to be effective and contributed 26 points and 31 rebounds. Junior Henry Smith scored 22 points, and added 11 assists and nine steals. Senior Tom Malley scored 18 points and 26 rebounds. Freshman Sean Elliott managed to experience some moments on the court also.

"Henry started contributing more toward the end. It's going to be who takes the next step up. A kid like Sean Elliott, we will see how he progresses over the summer. I am not afraid to play young kids if I feel they are going to give us a better chance to win. I want to create more competition with this program. I feel like we are starting to keep kids in Westfield. I think that's going to help our program overall," Coach Palmieri said.

Blue Devils to Live Up to Expectations

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a clean job at everything, smoothly fields the ball and knows where to throw it. Chrissy covers more ground than I think I've ever coached in a centerfielder. Chrissy catches everything and she can move," Coach MacDonald said.

The actual batting order has yet to be determined, but Coach MacDonald has some ideas.

"Last year we led off Cali all year. She is definitely the best hitter on the team. We are not sure whether it is going to be best for her to lead off. If she's going to do as much damage there or if we can move her down and depend on other people to get on base first, so she can drive in some runs. So we may lead off Cali or we might lead off Chrissy Ferraro. She has a lot of speed. Or we may lead off Sarah Seitz and put Chrissy in the two spot and, hopefully have two people on for Cali in the three spot," Coach MacDonald said.

Senior first baseman Audrey Peterson will bat cleanup and sophomore Julia Criscuolo will bat next.

"The good news is our four batter is pretty much set and our five batter is pretty much set. So if they walk Cali, we have two big hitters coming up. We want to put Cali in a position where she can drive in runs and also that she will not get intentionally walked. Our lineup is going to be good, so I hope that no matter where you pitch us, it is going to cause some damage," Coach MacDonald said.

The Lady Blue Devils will host Linden in their season opener on Monday, April 2, at 4 p.m.

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