

Bronco basketball girls close rebuilding season with winning record at 13-10

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Thursday, 08 March 2012 18:21 - Last Updated Thursday, 08 March 2012 18:25



The Wauneta-Palisade girls basketball team takes to the floor at Hershey for introductions ahead of their district final matchup with Ansley Feb. 24. The Bronco girls fell short in their bid for a state tourney berth, closing their season at 13-10 after losing to Ansley.

By Diane Stamm

The Wauneta Breeze

After losing five seniors from last year's Wauneta-Palisade girls basketball team there were many questions at the start of the 2011-2012 season.

The big question: With only two seniors and one junior on the team, how would the young roster handle a schedule with teams like Brady and Hitchcock County?

In several instances, remarkably well. The Lady Broncos went down to the wire with C2's Southwest (14-8) and Dundy County-Stratton (13-8) and picked up one-point wins.

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The team hung tough to defeat Hayes Center 25-21 for the subdistrict title.

Those were three wins that Coach Roger Lauhead said “Could have been losses, if our players would have let up at the end of the game.”

In other instances the answer to the question was “not so well.”

Lauhead would like another crack at teams like Cambridge, which beat Wauneta-Palisade twice, and Maywood.

WP senior Sheyla Cristner led the team in scoring, chipping in 9.9 points per game. She finished second on the team with 6.3 rebounds per game and 13 blocked shots on the season from her forward position. Christner’s scoring and rebounding were up from her junior year as she took on a bigger leadership role.

Fellow senior Jonee Maris averaged 1.5 points and 2.1 rebounds per game. Maris played well over the last few weeks of the season especially versus Medicine Valley in the first round of subdistricts.

Lauhead said, “Our two seniors have been very important to our team over the years they have been in high school. They both work hard in practice and are very coachable.”

The Lady Broncos will return four starters for the 2012-13 season: sophomores Abbie Fanning, Tailor Lee and Brooklyn Nordhausen, and junior Emma Skelton.

Freshmen Sydnee Harchelroad and Brianna Einspahr and sophomore Cassidy Rathe picked up valuable experience off the bench.

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At point guard, Fanning averaged seven points per game and led the team with 57 steals and 62 assists. Encouraged by Coach Lauhead to be the vocal leader of the team, Fanning also set the pace with her hustle and energy.

Skelton led the team with 16 three-pointers, made from her spot at guard, and provided valuable ball-handling and passing throughout the season.

Lee finished second on the team in scoring with a 7.6 average. Playing forward Lee led the team with 7.2 rebounds per game and 23 blocked shots. She was second on the team in steals, 41, and assists, 53.

Nordhausen will return at center where she averaged 5.7 points and 4.4 rebounds.

With his team shooting 32.8 percent on the season Lauhead highlighted shooting as an emphasis for next season, saying, "We need to become a better shooting team and they need to shoot on their own over the summer."

Lauhead says the team will participate in at least two team camps and possibly a league.

When asked to pick a favorite moment from the season Lauhead said, "The highlight of the season was all season long. By that I am talking about the way this team cooperates with the coaches and each other. They are special in that way."

With a team attitude like Lauhead describes and the experience and composure gained by the close wins and ugly losses, fans can hope for a great year from the Lady Broncos in 2012-2013.