

## **Trip to state tournament highlights Lady Broncos' season**

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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**Team leaders for the Lady Broncos were included senior Emma Skelton.**

**By Diane Stamm**

**The Wauneta Breeze**

In coach Betsy Johanson's first year as head coach, the Wauneta-Palisade Lady Broncos finished the 2012-2013 campaign with 18-7 record and a district championship.

With a tough stretch to open the season, the team headed into the new year with a 5-4 record following losses to C2 schools Southern Valley (17-7) and Dundy County-Stratton (17-7) and two losses to Brady (20-4), a team ranked throughout the year in D2.

The difficult early schedule was definitely advantageous, according to Johanson. After making it to January the team went 13-2, losing to C2 Perkins County (13-9) and giving eventual champion Dundy County-Stratton a scare in the RPAC tournament before making it to state.

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During the home stretch the Lady Broncos picked up wins over 20-5 state qualifier Sutherland and C1 Chase County, before avenging the early losses to Brady in the district finals.

Coach Johanson said it was a great year and she's proud of, not only what the girls did as a team but also, being a part of the girls' lives on and off the court.

"They're great basketball players and they're great people," Johanson said. "They were so fun to work with, and I really appreciated their willingness to make changes and their patience throughout the season."

In her final season for the Broncos, senior Emma Skelton, a two-year starter, averaged 6.4 points. Johanson said Skelton did a great job and seemed to always hit the big shot when the team needed it.

Juniors Tailor Lee and Abbie Fanning led the team with just over 11 points each.

"Abbie is absolutely the leader of this team by her words and her actions," said Johanson. "And Tailor has become a force to be reckoned with."

Fellow juniors Brooklyn Nordhausen and Cassidy Rathe averaged 4.5 and 3.9 points, respectively.

A starter, Nordhausen was a strong presence for the Lady Broncos in the lane, according to Johanson.

Coming off the bench, Johanson said Rathe had a knack for rebounds and being in the right place.

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Sophomore starter Brianna Einspahr averaged 6.5 points. Johanson said Einspahr was a “jack of all trades” for W-P, able to step in wherever the team needed her.

Sydnee Harchelroad came off the bench to average 5.6 points. Also a sophomore, Harchelroad’s speed and hustle, as well as her court vision, were valuable to the team, according to Johanson.

“Anything that was accomplished this season was only possible because of all 13 girls on this team. We were fortunate to have competitive practices all year long—that’s why we were able to improve all season,” said Johanson. “It’s because of Leiauna Alberts, Hannah Nordhausen, Nicole Strand, Ellie Lee, Cameo Rector and Tryssta Duvel that this team was 18-7 in varsity contests and 13-5 in junior varsity. With all that success and so many returning athletes it’s exciting to start looking forward to next season.”