

Young team, old results

Miners deep and talented squad comes together in 18-5 season

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

Bingham coach Rand Rasmussen admitted that, if he had the chance to accept an 18-5 record before the 2010-11 season ever started, he would have taken it.

When the year was over, he hadn't changed his mind. Only now, he grimaces at what could have been.

"Did I really think we could be 18-5? I kind of did," he said. "The kids buy into what we're doing. I had such fun kids. There was no drama all year. For me, the highlight of this season was just being able to hang out with these kids."

At Bingham, success in the girls basketball program goes hand in hand and every Bingham student knows it. Tryouts were a zoo, and after cuts were made, Rasmussen had 11 freshmen and sophomores on the team's 18-person roster.

There was a lot of inexperience, and not much size. But there was a lot more talent.

"I broke a record for having the youngest team I've ever coached," said Rasmussen, who finished his 22nd year at Bingham and 41st season overall. "I coach every team the same way, but we did have to put together a different game plan because of our situation."

Off the court, the girls came together and learned to play together. They had parties and sleepovers. On the night before the 5A state tournament began, they braided each other's hair and watched the movie, "Hoosiers."

On the court, "think big, play big, dream big" became their motto and that's exactly what they did. They played each game at a fast pace and forced opponents to adjust to their style. They



Seniors Brooke Blonquist (left) and Chantee Renouard were the anchors on a young and talented Bingham team.

weren't always successful, but put forth a strong effort.

Rasmussen said there were several season highlights, including an 11-game winning streak at midseason that led to the Miners' challenge for the Region 3 and 5A state titles. Bingham had a big matchup at home against Riverton near the end of the season, but fell 56-42 that led to the Silverwolves' finish on top.

In the preseason, the Miners defeated

Season highlights

- * - 18-5 overall record, second place in Region 3
- * - 5A state tournament berth
- * - Victories over 5A champ Alta (at home) and region winner Riverton (away)
- * - Opportunity to play in several big games
- * - Deep bench that resulted in time on the court for most players.

Continued on next page



LEFT: All-state guard **Summer Yack**.

ABOVE: **Mackenzie Bruggeman** was one of several developing young players for the Miners.

Team awards

Honors handed out at Bingham's 2010-11 postseason banquet:

Continued from previous page

eventual state champion Alta, and gave Syracuse (which was the defending champ had a long win streak at the time) a tough match until the second half. In the postseason, they defeated Hunter first in the first round of the 5A state tournament before losing to Pleasant Grove in the quarterfinals.

"That's the nice thing about Bingham," Rasmussen said. "Teams like to play us and we want to play good teams, too, because that's what makes you better.

"The kids know they'll get to play in big games."

The players also quickly developed and gave Bingham a ridiculous amount of depth. Rasmussen generally used a 12-player rotation in the games, and occasionally was able to play everybody on the roster. In region play, he noted that opponents had to adjust to play the Miners by going deeper on their roster – or they would wear out.

Overall, Bingham didn't rely on one player too much. Thus, no individual records were set. However, many players stood out at varying times, and most all built confidence for the future.

Junior guard Summer Yack became

Bingham's most well-known attribute. She played at just one speed – fast – while on the court and developed into the team's leading three-point shooter and scorer, averaging 13.5 points per game. Yack was also deadly from the free-throw line, and was named to the all-region and all-state teams.

Brooke Blonquist, an undersized center at 5-foot-11, averaged 8.1 ppg and was the team's top rebounder. She seemed to save her best efforts for the Miners' most important games. She also was named first team all-region, and made second team all-state.

The Miners will lose Blonquist, Leticia Lewis, Chantee Renouard and Katie Lloyd to graduation, but Rasmussen admitted he's "way excited for next year." Bingham's sophomore team finished 19-1 and the JVs 17-3. So the biggest problem might be finding where everyone will play.

"The pieces to the puzzle are fitting pretty well," he said.

The puzzle, however, will likely be more difficult next year when Bingham moves to Region 4. The Miners will be aligned with Riverton, Lehi, Lone Peak, Pleasant Grove and American Fork.