

SPORTS

Girls basketball

Continuity, perimeter play have Panthers on a roll

Patrick Slack
Staff Writer

Less than two weeks into January, the Spring Lake Park girls basketball team has matched last year's win total and exceeded that of the two years prior.

The keys? A mix of old and new.

Continuity in the players on the court ... and tweaks to how the Panthers use those players to attack.

"Up to this point of the season we are playing quite well," Spring Lake Park head coach Randy Eatherton said. "We only graduated a couple girls last year, so the majority of the girls that we have playing this year played quite a few minutes last year, which made things going into the season very smooth."

The Panthers have altered their style some this winter, taking advantage of the athleticism and perimeter shooting ability

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Spring Lake Park's Averi Dunbar (13) sprints for a loose ball in the Panthers' 78-61 win over Tartan Jan. 12. The win capped a perfect week in which Spring Lake Park improved to 8-4 on the season.

Photo by Bill Jones

Hockey

Robertson Cup to return to Blaine

The North American Hockey League (NAHL) has announced that the 2019 Robertson Cup National Championship will once again be played at Fogerty Arena in Blaine May 10-13. This marks the second consecutive season the Robertson Cup Championship will be at Fogerty Arena.

The Robertson Cup is awarded to the national playoff champion of the NAHL. The oldest junior hockey trophy in the United States, the Robertson Cup is named in honor of Chuck Robertson, a pioneer of junior hockey in the NAHL and youth hockey in the state of Michigan.

"The 2018 Robertson Cup outperformed everyone's expectations in terms of the on-ice competition, the number of scouts in the building and the number of fans in the stands. When we combined all those factors, the decision to return to the Fogerty Arena in 2019 to host our National Championship was a pretty easy one," said NAHL Commissioner and President Mark Frankenfeld. "We had over 70 NCAA commitments in the NAHL following the event, including 21 from the four teams that participated in the 2018 Robertson Cup. It continues to be an important part of the NAHL event structure and continues our mission of

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Nordic skiing

Bengals charging down the stretch

Boys, girls both top-10 at ABC Relays

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As the Northwest Suburban Conference Championships and the postseason approach, the Blaine boys and girls Nordic ski teams both turned in top-10 finishes at the ABC Relays at Wirth Park Jan. 12.

The Blaine girls 'A' relay took sixth in 41:26, while the top boys relay was ninth in 35:44.

"Both our boys and girls teams have been performing increasingly better as the season goes on," Blaine head coach Andy Schwen said. "We've had some

kids not at full strength due to illness in the last couple of weeks, so we have yet to see all our kids skiing at 100 percent, and they have still been performing well at our conference races. We have an eighth-grader, Ben Lewis, that has turned out to be a consistent top-five skier for us, and some other kids on the team that are still fairly new to the sport stepping up and coming through with some great race performances.

"It's been a lot of fun to see these kids grow and develop into strong skiers, and the support in our ski community has been growing as well, with

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Blaine's Stephanie Lewis (3) charges out of the start at the ABC Relays at Wirth Park Jan. 12. Lewis had the eighth-fastest classic time as part of a sixth-place team finish for the Bengal girls, part of a strong finish as the conference championships and section meet near.

Photo submitted