

# Beaverton looks tough

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After a steady climb with progress every season for the last three, this could well be Beaverton's year to win a Jack Pine Conference basketball title, many coaches feel.

The Beavers expect stiff competition from Coleman and possibly others, but they are the logical favorites. Coach Roy Johnston's squad lost only one starter from a team which had a 16-8 overall record last year, including a District title, and was 9-5 for third place in the Jack Pine.

Rick Miller, a strong leader and rebounder, was the only regular who graduated. Joe Garvin, a junior, may start in joining veterans Doyle Durkee, Daily News area scoring champion and player of the year as a junior; Randy Sroufe, Jeff Roehrs and Mike O'Brien.

Good further strength is added by Ken Neighbors, Brad McLean and Emory Stubbs. Nine of the 13 varsity Beavers have won a letter. Two years ago as a junior varsity team, most of the same boys were 16-4.

Durkee, an all-around star guard who can handle the ball, drive and shoot, averaged 20 points a game last year while Roehrs had a 14 average.

The Beavers have some overall size. Arlie Russell stands 6-4, Ken Neighbors 6-3, Sroufe and Roehrs each 6-2 and Durkee 16-1.

Johnston says the Beavers' main strength should be their shooting; a possible weakness that only one starter is over 6-feet-2.

Coach Jim Simpson should have another of his typically strong Coleman teams. Last year they lost

the District title by just one point to Beaverton and earlier beat the Beavers in overtime, though sporting a deceiving 10-12 overall record.

Returning from that team, the Comets have a proven letterman, Dud Strauch. He was the team's leading scorer as a junior until missing some games with an injury.

Lost by graduation are Dud's older cousin Tom Strauch and Jeff Allen, both of whom averaged 13 - plus points per game as did Dud. Darrell Smith, a regular last year, cannot play because of a head injury.

Fine newcomers at Coleman include John Konopnicki, a 6-3 junior and fine rebounder; Peter Porte, Paul Brugger and Dean Johnson, another junior whom Simpson says "could do it all this year."

Modestly, Simpson says "Roscommon, Beaverton and Farwell will be real strong; Meridian and Harrison much improved."

About his own team, Simpson says: "We are better defensively and hopefully on the boards. We should have a running team. We have only three seniors returning. The (lack of) experience will bother us."

The Comets opened strongly last Tuesday with a 66-56 victory over visiting Merrill. Their next game is a big one this Friday at Beaverton. That rivalry was heated last year with three very close games between the two schools.

Meridian has a new coach, Tom Harvey, replacing Denny Blevins. Harvey isn't used to losing with a 51-14 career coaching record from Cadillac, and he hopes to bring his winning ways to Sanford. The Mustangs were 7-15 in all a year

ago; 4-10 in the league.

Harvey plans to use a "patterned two-guard offense emphasizing movement and passing and running only on defensive lapses." On defense he wants to use man-to-man pressure.

The Mustangs lost their top two scorers by graduation, Dennis Calkins and Chuck Thompson, both of whom averaged over 13 points a game. Returning is Bill Fillmore, with a 12.5 average a year ago for all 20 games.

Promising juniors from the JV team are Shawn McGinnity, top JV scorer; Bob VanNortwick, its top rebounder, and Steve Jankowiak. VanNortwick still is carrying an injury from football and probably will miss the first four games.

Harvey sees strengths as "enthusiasm and quickness" and weaknesses as "lack of size and inexperience." Fillmore is the only starter back and there are just two other lettermen — Ron Cay and Dean Dubay.

He sees Beaverton and Coleman as favorites and Roscommon and Harrison as darkhorses.

Evert lost a pair of all-conference players, John Dieson and Chuck Davis, from a team that was 10-4 for second in the league and 11-10 overall. The Wildcats lack height but have quickness and shooting ability.

Roscommon finished strong last year for a 13-8 overall mark, 7-7 in the league. The Bucks lost leading scorer Charles Collini, but have three regulars returning — Jeff Cousineau, Pat Emery and Jim Englehard. They could be troublesome.

Coach Jim Englehard says his team is "not good

shooters but improving. They are not quick enough on defense to run man-to-man. We should rebound well and if we do we will run."

JACK PINE CONFERENCE  
DAILY NEWS AREA SCHEDULES

## Beaverton

December 2, GLADWIN; 5, COLEMAN; 9, at Freeland; 12, at Houghton Lake; 19, FARWELL; 27, at Hale.  
January — 6, HARRISON; 9, at Evert; 16, MERIDIAN; 23, at Roscommon; 27, at Coleman; 30, HOUGHTON LAKE.  
February — 3, HALE; 6, at Farwell; 10, at Harrison; 13, EVART; 17, FREELAND; 20, at Meridian; 24, at Gladwin; 27, ROSCOMMON.

## Coleman

November — 25, MERRILL (66-56).  
December — 3, at Beaverton; 9, SAGINAW ST. STEPHENS; 12, EVART; 16, at Saginaw St. Peter & Paul; 19, at Meridian.  
January — 6, at Roscommon; 9, at Harrison; 12, at St. Stephens; 16, at Houghton Lake; 23, FARWELL; 27, BEAVERTON; 30, at Evert.  
February — 3, ST. PETER & PAUL; 6, MERIDIAN; 10, at Roscommon; 13, HARRISON; 17, at Merrill; 20, HOUGHTON LAKE + a; 27, at Farwell.

## Meridian

November — 26, BULLOCK CREEK.  
December — 2, at Standish Sterling; 5, at Harrison; 12, at Roscommon; 16, FREELAND; 19, COLEMAN.  
January — 6, at Houghton Lake; 9, FARWELL; 13, at Bullock Creek; 16, at Beaverton; 23, EVART; 27, HARRISON; 30, ROSCOMMON.  
February — 3, at Freeland; 6, at Coleman; 10, HOUGHTON LAKE; 13, at Farwell; 17, STANDISH STERLING; 20, BEAVERTON; 27, at Evert.  
CAPITALS, home games. \*Conference games.