

Tuesday November 20, 2007

High school ready to drop the puck

POST REGISTER

High school hockey teams have begun preparation for the 2007-08 hockey season. The season begins Nov. 27 when Bonneville/Hillcrest squares off against Idaho Falls.

Each local team hopes to be strong this season, leading up to the state tournament, which will return to Idaho Falls the first weekend in March.

Bonneville/Hillcrest

The Bonneville/Hillcrest squad graduated 75 percent of its offense last year and will be looking for balanced scoring from a pool of forwards.

Seniors Isair Labra and Christoph Parot will be aided by juniors Dylan Sherick, Josh Forbush and Devin Crighton.

With most of last year's offense gone, defense will play a large part in a successful season for Bonneville/Hillcrest. The defense will be led by juniors Mike Phalen, Jake Winters, Preston Wheeler and sophomore Jake Belnap.

Coach Gary Bowden returns for his second season with the Bonneville-Hillcrest squad. He will be aided by assistant coach Tommy Winters who returns for his fifth season on the bench.

Idaho Falls Tigers

The Tigers have a young, yet experienced squad. Two years ago, they had 14 freshmen who participated in the state tournament.

With that depth, the Tigers expect to be balanced on offense and will come at the competition with three solid lines. Senior Jake Johnson will be flanked by juniors Jared Latham and Morgan Cole. Helping pressure the opposition's goalies will be a pair of quick-footed juniors in Logan Winterholler and Josh Moon. Matt Francis, Devin Davis and Travis Hackett will also add scoring punch to the Tiger offense.

Idaho Falls' defense is made up primarily of juniors as well. Austin Hugus returns to the Tigers after a year away. He will be joined by Ryan Henderson and senior Bryce Ponce.

Matt Thomas and Larson Brandstetter also will be clearing the zone for Idaho Falls. The goaltending duties fall to the experienced pair of senior Liz Brown and junior Austin Mooso.

Coach Brian Latham returns to the Idaho Falls bench after a few years away and will be assisted by Robert Johnson.

Skyline Grizzlies

Skyline is strong in upperclassmen this season. The Grizzlies' roster features eight seniors, two juniors, eight sophomores and three freshmen. Skyline has

been the king of local hockey in recent years and hopes to remain strong despite graduating several key players from last year's team.

Leading the offense will be junior Ben Claver. He will be joined at the forward position by seniors Brady Ritchie, Larry Seymour and Nick Shepherd. Sophomores Cole Behm, Chris Birkenbine and freshman Ed Anderson will also play a role.

Defensively, Cole Braase will partner up with Tom Hughes to protect two steady goalies in Brett Seely and Mac Cox.

Head coach Craig Herman is in his first year at the helm with Skyline and will be assisted by Ed Anderson.

Salmon Rapids

Salmon won the Midget B State Championship last year in the Idaho Amateur Hockey Association State Championship but lost eight seniors from that squad.

This year, the Rapids will look to four seniors and nine juniors for leadership. Impact players to look out for are juniors Levi Aldous and Grant Adams at center, juniors Garret Stahl and Luke Nicks at wing and junior Shawn Sabo at goalie.

Chris Oldham is the head coach at Salmon. He is assisted by Dave Sabo and George Harkrader.

"We're going to give it our best effort," Sabo said of the season. "Most of our players are young, but they're been playing together since they were mites and squirts (7- to 8-years old). We'll have fun no matter what."

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Idaho Falls girls finish 3-1 at home tournament

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The Idaho Falls girls hockey team hosted teams from Salmon, Sun Valley, Boise and Utah over the weekend for the Ice Bowl -- a round robin tournament.

The Eagles defeated the Boise Herricanes 4-1, the Suns from Sun Valley 5-0 and the Salmon Lady Rapids 7-1. The only loss for Idaho Falls was against the Utah Lady Grizzlies 2-1 in the showcase game of the weekend.

Caitlin Collieran and Krystal Porraz led the Eagle's scoring effort with three goals each. Katie Contreras, Amy Wilde and Clara Thomas all scored twice each, and Kaisha Merrell, Murgan Scott, Beth Vernon, Liz Brown and Kayla Snyder each contributed one goal.

Contreras had three assists to add to the scoring. Merrell and Scott had two assists, and Wilde, Thomas, Vernon, Collieran and Brown finished with one apiece.

Forwards Morgan Thornberry, Marla Francis, and Marnissa Clafin kept the pressure on opponents making it difficult for them to clear the puck from their zone. Eagle defenders Claire O'Brien and Jennifer Pruyn kept shooters away from the net allowing only four goals over the weekend.

Idaho Falls goaltender Liz Brown stopped 61 shots on goal in three games and earned her first shutout of the season. Gabby Bataldan made five saves in the game against Salmon.