

Girls basketball falls short

Taylor Spencer
Sports Editor

Falling to the Ursuline Bears 48-38 in the District Championship, the Falcons ended their postseason run on March 5.

Girls basketball advanced to the finals after defeating the Windsor Greyhounds 64-37 in the District Semifinals on March 2. Senior Ruth Vogel said the team gained momentum and adopted a more positive mindset after obtaining the lead.

"I think once we got the lead, we started to get more positive. We gained a better outlook. We were working together, playing together, and cheering each other on. We played one of our best games, and I was extremely excited and proud of us during that game," Vogel said.

At the end of the first quarter against Ursuline, the Falcons were trailing 8-7. Coach Dustin Hays said the team's defensive strategy was to prevent the other team from driving their baseline.

"Our defensive plan was to stop allowing so many baseline drives in our zone defense. We were guarding them to close, which was allowing their girls to drive on us, and then we were fouling too much trying to recover. Offensively, we wanted to try to get the ball inside and try to get some easy baskets," Hays said.

By halftime, the Falcons were down 22-13. The main point scorers were junior Avery Vincent with 13 points and senior Raina Bryant with 11 points. Sophomore Gabby Greer, who led rebounding with six rebounds, said the team had difficulties keeping up and not letting the intensity get



While going in for a layup, junior Avery Vincent (4) jumps around Grace Noonan (14) and Maria Cavato (11) of Ursuline as they move to defend. They lost the District Championship 48-38 at Ursuline, ending their postseason. (Photo by Danika Stilwell)

to them when the pressure increased. "Some challenges we faced as a team was trying to get back and set up on the defensive end. A few times we were not ready and on our toes and they got a layup out of it. To deal with this we began to talk more and work together as a team to get a united defense," Greer said.

By the end of the third quarter, the Falcons fell behind 29-13. Vogel said the team had trouble maintaining offensive pressure because they were focused on holding the team defensively.

"We usually struggle coming out of the third quarter, and I think we worried too much about our defense. We weren't

running offensive plays, and it didn't turn out the way we wanted it to," Vogel said.

The Falcons gained momentum in an attempt to make up their point difference during the fourth quarter. It was high-scoring, as the Falcons gained 25 points in this quarter alone. Hays said the team excelled in the last quarter, but the point difference was too great to make up.

"We played well in the fourth quarter. We had to press and increase the pressure to get back into the game. I am incredibly proud of the girls and how they [work hard] and never quit. Unfortunately, we just were down too far to be able to make the comeback," Hays said.

-COMMENTARY- Quarantines restrict teams, limit seasons

Taylor Spencer
Sports Editor

At the beginning of the fall season, students attended Let Them Play rallies, speaking openly about just how much their respective sports mean to them and why they need to play.

They protested loudly, creating signs and signing petitions demanding they have their seasons. Five months later, as spring sports begin, quarantines are causing seasons that students advocated so passionately for to slip away.

Whether coming on abruptly, stopping a team's progress by landing in the middle of the season, or squashing postseason dreams by knocking out District and State competitions, team-wide quarantines incapacitate programs. Although teams can practice individually or administer virtual workouts, the 10-day restriction from engaging with fellow teammates disconnects the team. At best, the quarantine will knock out only a portion of the team during the middle of the season. At worst, quarantines can bar individuals from participating in postseason events.

Now, the quarantine procedures themselves aren't the problem. They aren't ideal, but they are the safest way to conduct sports, so they remain a necessary evil. The problem lies with those who disregard mask protocol, putting their entire team on the line. Because that's exactly what happens when one individual doesn't follow proper procedure- they risk shutting down their entire team.

And it's not just high school sports that experience quarantines. Teams have faced complications with quarantining at the professional and collegiate level as well. For example, the University of Virginia's basketball team had to withdraw from the Atlantic Coast Conference of the NCAA tournament due to contact tracing from a positive COVID-19 test with the hopes that they would have enough negative tests to rejoin the tournament in time. I won't tell people to stop partying. What I will ask, for the sake of every team, is that students are conscious of their actions and make sure to follow proper mask protocol on and off the field, and even outside of their sports. Something as simple as keeping your mask on and distancing yourself when hanging out with a friend could make a difference.

Accidents happen, and no one intentionally contracts COVID-19 to ruin an entire team's season. With that being said, it is important to be as conscious of one's actions as possible to avoid accidentally quarantining your teammates or friends. One person's actions can have major repercussions on an entire program.

If students truly value their seasons, it is essential they follow proper protocol. If even one person neglects proper guidelines, the entire team can be set back.

If athletes are determined to participate this season, they have to be considerate of how their actions affect the entire team. If they want to have the spring season and postseason they've been dreaming of, they have to be both responsible and cautious to prevent quarantines from wrecking their season.

Girls wrestling places at Districts Athletes fall short of qualifying for State

Katie Eckrich
Of The Talon staff

The girls wrestling District tournament ended in a victory for the team as juniors Emily Droppelman, Jaylah Walker, Sheri Owens, and freshman Chaire Perks moved on to Sectionals.

Out of the nine wrestlers that competed at Districts, four moved onto the Sectional tournament in hopes too qualify for State. One of these being Droppelman, who said that as a team, she believed that they performed well overall after working hard in preparation for the event.

"Some matches I'm not fully prepared for, but as a team we're always pretty prepared. To prepare for State we worked hard at our practices and trying to get through Sectionals," Droppelman said.

One unexpected obstacle the team had to conquer was the captain junior Addie Wilhelm becoming quarantined, according to coach Kenneth Holmes.

"One of the struggles that we ran into leading up to the District tournament was that we lost one of our captains to contract tracing due to COVID-19 and another wrestler was sick, which unfortunately ended their seasons short. As a team, it took us a day or two to bounce back after that setback, but our girls responded [to that challenge] and wrestled well over the weekend," Holmes said.

Holmes said the main strategy he utilizes

is to treat each match equally, no matter how important or unimportant it may feel.

"As a team, we emphasize that no match is more important than another, so we tell the girls to only focus on their next match and nothing else. If they come out and wrestle their best match for six minutes, that's all we can ask for," Holmes said.

The wrestlers not only used a variety of physical drills and training techniques to prepare for Districts, but they also had to mentally prepare, focusing on their

There were long periods of waiting for our next match in between rounds, so we had to mentally prepare and recover after each match the girls wrestled."

Kenneth Holmes
Coach

mindset. For example, Droppelman said she thought through possible moves she could make during the match to help herself mentally prepare.

"During my match I focus on what moves I can make, and going into my matches I try to maintain a positive mentality," Droppelman said.

While the Falcons did not send any athletes to State after Sectionals, Owens and Perks advanced to the third place match, barely falling short of qualifying for State. Both of these athletes wrestled

in the consolation finals, but did not advance. Holmes said that there were a few challenges for the team, the main one being the new format to the tournament.

"This was the first year that they have added a Sectionals component to our postseason tournaments. Prior to COVID-19, the top four places in the District tournament would automatically qualify for the State tournament. Basically they added a step to advance and only had the top three from Sectionals advance to State. So if you were wrestling for third at Sectionals, you had to win that match to advance, which was very different from [how the format would be] in previous seasons," Holmes said.

The tournament was an all-day event, Holmes said, as athletes had matches from early morning to late evening, and the event included eight wrestler brackets.

"Due to the format of the tournament, there were long periods of waiting for our next match in

between rounds, so we had to mentally prepare and recover after each match the girls wrestled. It was a very exciting, intense day as our girls were trying to advance to the State tournament," Holmes said.

Despite the loss, Owens said that the team did their best and performed well.

"Personally I feel like Sectionals went really well for me. I lost my placing match for third, but throughout that whole day, I feel like I did really well. Additionally, I believe my teammates also did really well," Owens said.