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BADGERS WIN IN MANTECA

The The Yosemite Badgers girl's 7 grade basketball team recently traveled to Manteca to compete in a two-day tournament hosted by Courtside Sports and the Amateur Athletic Union. The team returned with a trophy after defeating the Tracy Panthers in the consolation championship game on Sunday in the "5th" Annual Courtside Sports Pre Season Fall Classic" tournament held at Sierra High School in Manteca.

After the victory, Yosemite Badger's head coach Jeff Nichols presented the team's trophy to assistant coach Rick Slayton for display at Grant Mercantile Agency's office. Coach Nichols said, "we wanted to recognize and thank Rick and Grant Mercantile Agency for their contributions and financial assistance to the team."

"I was extremely proud of our team," said coach Slayton. "It is so rewarding to see our group of kids work so hard to become a winning team. They played extremely well and deserved their win. I am equally proud of our student coaches-Dana Norvell and Krystal Montoya. Both are seniors at Yosemite High School and have been wonderful role models for our team. Krystal and Dana both play basketball for YHS and graciously share their time helping to coach and mentor our young players. It is an absolute joy and honor to have them be a part of our coaching team."

The Badgers practice twice a week at Oak Creek Intermediate and have seen their team roster grow to thirteen in recent months. Head coach Jeff Nichols said, "we now have players from Oakhurst, Bass Lake, Coarsegold and Madera Ranchos. The community support and encouragement has been wonderful. Although our basketball program is still in its first year of operation, we have performed well and have placed Yosemite on the map. I am grateful to all the mountain area schools, teachers, parents, coaches and businesses for the wonderful support we have received."

Assistant coach Rick Slayton said, "the Manteca tournament gave us an opportunity to observe many of our new players as they competed against some great teams. We were all impressed with the play of Jena Harper and Agnes Erickson from Madera Ranchos. Jena did a great job in the center position and led our team in a few fast break opportunities, while Agnes provided us with some great defensive plays. Coach Nichols added, "during our final game, Agnes set a block that was simply awesome. Although Agnes picked up a foul for moving slightly, the referee told me privately after the game that he wished he could get his high school football players to be as aggressive. This was a great compliment."

The Badgers began the tournament by competing against the "East Bay Explosion" from Stockton. Head Coach Jeff Nichols said, "we got off to a great Start Kristin Slayton played a great all-around game, while Patricia O'Neill got some great shot attempts from the center position. Although the score was close at the end of the first halt, the East Bay team started hitting their outside shots with confidence and out-scored us by 15 points to win the game in the second half."

"We came within ten points of winning game two against the "Valley Elite" team from Manteca," said student coach Dana Norvell. Our forwards - Tenaya Garcia, Kristin Slayton, Michelle Lalev and Liza Schlosser played an outstanding game, while our guards Katie Joaquin, Ashley Nichols and Tahni Smith did a great job moving the ball up the court. We were tied going into the third quarter, when the Valley Elite went on a 13-2 run. Our backup center, Terah Sonderland, and backup forwards, Samantha Walter and Katie Barris played great defense during the final minutes of the game and helped us close the score to within ten points to finish the game at 40-30. It was a very exciting game from start to finish."

Tournament director, Matt Johnson, congratulated the Badger's players and coaches for their win against the Tracy Panthers on Sunday while presenting the team trophy. The entire team got a chance to play and defeated the Panthers by 16 points to become the Tournament Consolation Champions.

The Yosemite Badgers will continue to practice twice a week at Oak Creek Intermediate in preparation for their next tournament in late November and early December. Anyone interested in learning more about the Yosemite Ybuth Basketball program may come by OCI during practice, or may contact Jeff Nichols or Rick Slayton at (559)683-5105.

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