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Big 5 girls' MVP Ashley Curry / Little 4 boys' mvp vince Ayala / big 5 boys' mvp maximo perez

H-DNC announces White Star recipients

by Jackie Christensen, 3/18/2006

The Humboldt-Del Norte Conference has released its 2005-06 All-League and Honorable Mention basketball selections, and not surprisingly, bringing home the most White Stars in the conference was the championship McKinleyville Panthers girls' team, who had four of its players selected to the All-League team, including the Big 5's Most Valuable Player, UC-Davis-bound Ashley Curry.

Del Norte's Maximo Perez was the MVP for the boys in the Big 5, St. Bernard's Vince Ayala was named MVP of the Little 4 for the boys, and South Fork's Rochelle Connolly was named MVP of the Little 5 for the girls.

Del Norte had three of its boys make the All-League team as Perez, Chris Prokupek and Cody Lesley all received a White Star.

"They're great kids and I feel fortunate to have been able to coach them," said Del Norte's head coach Blaine Lopez. "Not only are they good basketball players, they're great kids and they deserve everything that they've gotten. They all had different roles on the team but no one person's role was more important than the others."

For Eureka, David Norton and Joshua Hash were also All-League selections, and McKinleyville's Tom Jaso and Nick Rasines, Arcata's Jonatahn Biggs and Fortuna's Jeremyah Branson also made the team.

"We played 31 basketball games this season and had seven different players who were leading scorers on more than one occasion," said Eureka head coach Duane Peterson. "We didn't have one guy who was the leading scorer every game and that says a lot about the ability of all of our guys."

For the girls in the Big 5, McKinleyville's Curry, Alex Iorg, Courtney Cuffee and Natalie McCartney made the All-League team, and head coach Brad Warze couldn't have been happier with the way each one of them played this season.

"Alex did an admirable job this year and really handled the pressure well for us in the season," he said. "Any successful team starts with a good point guard. Natalie was a great defender and instrumental to the success of our full-court press, Courtney, especially in the last few games of the season exerted herself to be a force offensively, and as for Ashley, where do I start? She's one of the best basketball players to come out of Humboldt County for the last 20 years and we're just hoping we can have someone fill half of her shoes next year."

Arcata's Natalie Bensky and Karen Pontoni, as well as Eureka's Katelyn Guild, Fortuna's Stephanie Lewis and Del Norte's Ashley Webster were also All-League selections.

In the Little 4 on the boys' side, the St. Bernard's Crusaders had three of their players selected to the All-League team. Ayala, Tyler Thrap and Greg Meyer are all White Star recipients.

"Those three guys have been playing together for at least 10 years," said Crusaders head coach Dave Michael. "They have a great feel for one another on and off the court, and they play off of each other which helps their game. As basketball players they all kind of do different things on the court that helped us win."

South Fork had three of its girls selected to the All-League team as Connolly, Shylo Wantt and Janay Wilkinson will get a White Star.

Ferndale had two players selected, as Chelsea Boynton and Brittany Miranda were All-League. St. Bernard's Michaela Redner was the only Crusader to make All-League, but Alicia Naylor and Alex Vallee made honorable mention.