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Janay Wilkinson, left, Vince Ayala, center, and Sage Romberg were all named league MVPs. File photos

H-DNC Hoops standouts

by Ray Hamill, 3/21/2007

The Humboldt-del Norte Conference has announced its 2006-07 all-league selections in boys and girls basketball and there are few surprises.

On the boys' side, Eureka sophomore Greg Allen was named Big Five MVP after leading his team to a third league title in four years, while in the Little Four, St. Bernard's Vince Ayala took home the MVP award after helping the Crusaders secure a league crown.

On the girls' side, meanwhile, South Fork continued its recent dominance in the Little Five, with Lady Cubs teammates Rochelle Connolly and Janay Wilkinson earning co-MVP honors, while in the Big Five, McKinleyville freshman sensation Sage Romberg took home the MVP award.

For Ayala, a senior, the MVP award is his third straight.

"Anyone who saw us play this year knows how valuable he was not only to us, but to the entire league," St. Bernard's head coach Dave Michael said. "Vince played his best ball in the big games and had an overall huge year."

The Crusaders, who finished the season at 24-7, won a third consecutive Little Four crown and reached the semifinals of the North Coast Section Division V playoffs.

Allen, meanwhile, had a dominating season in the Big Five on the way to leading the Loggers to a third league crown in four years and a semifinal appearance in the NCS Division II playoffs, where they barely fell to a tough Richmond side.

Eureka closed out the season at 22-8, the school's fourth straight 20-win season under head coach Duane Peterson.

For the girls, Romberg got the nod in her first season competing at the high school level after leading the Panthers to third straight Dick Niclai title and a sixth consecutive 20-win season.

"I would venture to say she was one of the best five freshmen in state," Mack head coach Brad Warze of Romberg.

Romberg's Mack teammate Courtney Cuffee, who was named to the first-team all-league team, also garnered consideration for league MVP honors.

Mack closed out the season 21-9, winning a pair of playoff games to reach the NCS Division-IV semifinals.

"She meant a lot to us," Warze said of Romberg, who was also the individual H-DNC golf champion in the fall. "She's a great player and she's got a great future in front of her and we look forward to having her for three more years."

Cuffee joined Mack teammate Stacey Sundberg on the all-league team, along with Fortuna's Mallorie Franco and Jain Tuey.

Arcata's Karen Pontoni and Lydia Banks also were named all-league along with Eureka's Danna Wahlund and Del Norte's Christy Gavin.

In the Little Five, Connolly and Wilkinson were joined on the all-league team by teammate Casey Murphy.

Southern Trinity's Kalyn Parrott and Jennie Jackson were also named all-league along with Lea Pratt of Hoopa, Michaela Redner of St. Bernard's and Ferndale's Brittany Miranda.

On the boys' side, Eureka's Lee Thibodeaux and Travis Tollner were also named all-league, along with Del Norte's Bryce Lund and Scott Redmond, Arcata's Ben Miller, Fortuna's Skylar Rice and Jeremyah Brason and Mack's Nick Rasines.

In the Little Four, Ayala was joined on the all-league team by teammates Tyler Thrap and Mike Dominick, as well as Ferndale's Tanner Hacket and Kyle Miranda, Hoopa's Aaron Cloud and Rico Tello, and South Fork's Hank Carl.



Rochelle Connolly (23), left and Greg Allen were both named league MVPs. File photos