

Clark College basketball's Boone is Bay's loss

Coach leaves Hudson's Bay to lead the Penguins

By **PAUL VALENCIA**
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Nancy Boone, who brought a breath of fresh air to the Hudson's Bay High School girls basketball program with her knowledge and enthusiasm, is leaving the Eagles' bench.

She is not going far, though.

In fact, she will be coaching across the street from Hudson's Bay.

Boone has accepted the head coaching position for the Clark College women's basketball team, taking over for Aaron Christian, who is now the women's coach at Concordia University in Portland.

"I wanted to see what I could do at the next level," said Boone, acknowledging that at the age of 53, she couldn't pass on the opportunity. "I love my kids here, but I just wanted to see what I could do."

Boone proved herself in Clark County the past three seasons by taking over an underachieving Bay program and leading the Eagles to

within one victory of a regional tournament berth.

Boone's Eagles did not win a league game in the 2003-04 season, but they improved to 3-9 in her second season.

The Eagles also went 8-0 in non-league games for an overall winning record for the 2004-05 campaign.

This past season, the Eagles again claimed double-digit wins for the season, and they were 6-6 in the Class 4A Greater St. Helens League, advancing to the district tournament. Hudson's Bay won a game in the tourney before losing to Battle Ground by two points

in a game that determined a berth to the West-Central regionals.

"It's been fun watching the kids grow up as basketball players," Boone said. "It's been fantastic having them 'buy in' to what was needed to turn the program around."

In the three-year process, she showed that a program mired in a string of losing seasons could become a contender in the postseason.

"We need the same thing," said Lisa Quednow-Bickler, the athletic director at Clark

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College. The Penguins went 9-20 this winter, failing to qualify for the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges tournament.

"She has a great track record at Hudson's Bay the last three years. She's done fantastic things," Quednow-Bickler said. "She really knows the basketball community. I think she's going to be a great addition to our staff."

Boone recently attended an open-gym session for her new

players at Clark, and her first impression was "Wow."

"It's a little bit more intense, and the basketball I.Q. is a lot higher," Boone said of the college athletes. "They come in understanding what the game's about."

Hudson's Bay, which will move from the Class 4A ranks to Class 3A next school year, is in the early stages of searching for a new coach.

Boone will remain at the high school as a physical education teacher. She said she will be busy with Clark basketball, but

she will keep an eye on how the Eagles are doing, as well.

The team, she said, will be fine, provided the players remember the key to their improvement the past three seasons.

"I see a road to state, but they've got to work hard," Boone said. "It's not going to be an automatic."

Boone came to Hudson's Bay with a joy for the game that was contagious, helping the Eagles learn to win.

She hopes to use the same tactics to lead Clark College.