

Panthers and Eagles take it to the court



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON AND SARA SANDSTROM

An annual matchup

Top, left; Nico Dow concentrates on the basket. Top, right; Max Godsil (34) and Ezra Williams (4) start the game with a jump ball. Bottom, right; Annabel Ivey (left) and Trinity LeBlanc (right) show their support. Bottom, left; Eagle Lane Willis goes up for a rebound with Panther Michael Garduno.

Dave Gibson Nederland

The Nederland and Gilpin County Boys Basketball teams met in Nederland Friday, February 3, for the only sporting contest of any kind between the two schools during the year. Students and fans of the Panthers and Eagles packed the bleachers for the much anticipated game. Being from a small mountain community, a lot of the players from the opposing squads already knew one another.

The coaches were friendly, with mutual respect for the other's program. In an interesting side note of prodigy against mentor, Nederland Head Coach John Leventhal coached Gilpin Assistant

Coach Steve Boulter when he was a preteen middle school cager in Lafayette decades ago. With 35 years of middle school basketball coaching experience under his belt, this is Leventhal's inaugural season at the varsity level. It is Gilpin Head Coach Lisa Boulter's second year.

The first period was hard fought with the Gilpin Eagles taking a 13-10 edge. The Nederland Panthers caught fire to open the second quarter, draining seven unanswered points. Following a timeout, the Eagles countered and tied the score with 2:40 remaining in the half. Score at halftime: Nederland 22, Gilpin 19.

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Between neighbors

Top; Trey Lindberg contests a Panthers shot attempt. Middle, right; Eagle Ellis Lopez and Panther Austin Chareunsouk battle for the basketball. Bottom, right; Senior Austin Chareunsouk goes after the ball. Bottom, left; Ezra Williams scores an easy layup.

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Emphasizing the first three minutes of the second half to his players, Leventhal believes, "It is important to set a tone and play hard to try to establish dominance." Gilpin Coach Lisa Boulter and her team were prepared for the assault, holding off the pressure. With the Eagles trailing 34-30 and 2:21 left in the contest, the Panthers kept their composure and were steady down the stretch. Final score: Nederland 41, Gilpin 32.

Senior point guard Trey Lindberg led Gilpin scorers with 14 points and seven rebounds. Senior Ezra Williams had 10 points and five steals.

Coach Leventhal noted after the game, "I felt like our two seniors led the way in this victory. Nico Dow had his third double-double this season registering 14 points, 11 rebounds, two assists, and two blocked shots. Max Godsil added 10 points, six rebounds, and two assists. Junior Rick Fortunado scored 10 points that included some big free throws at the end. Junior Michael Garduno played tenacious defense while contributing seven points and five rebounds."

Leventhal closed with, "This is a great bunch of kids. This rivalry and the game today showed what high school basketball is all about."

