

SPORTS

Knights surge past upset-minded Vikings

BY ERIK SKOPIL
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Depth ruled the day for the Irrigon Knights Tuesday.

After trading leads with Umatilla through one half, reserve guard AJ Timpy got the nod for a rare second half start, and the sharp-shooter didn't disappoint.

Timpy drilled a trio of three-point shots in the opening minutes of the second half to blow open the game, and the Knights cruised from there, running away to a 67-34 romp of the Vikings on the final day of the Les Schwab Shoot-Out at the Pendleton Convention Center.

The Knights (8-0) held just a 25-21 halftime edge, but Timpy's third consecutive three-pointer made the count it 34-25.

"He had a tremendous summer, and he got confident shooting the ball, and with him he's always ready to go," coach Mike Thompson said of the senior guard.

The perimeter shooting prowess placed the momentum squarely in the Knights' corner and they

completed the game on a 33-9 run.

"I feel like we (usually) come out and execute well and compete," Umatilla (6-5) coach Derrek Lete said. "Tonight, for whatever reason, we came out flat in the second half. Irrigon is a team you definitely don't want to do that to or they'll light the scoreboard up."

Foul trouble hindered the Knights in the first half. Junior Fredy Vera was the only Irrigon starter not sidelined with more than one foul. His eight points helped Irrigon carry a diminutive lead into the break.

Vera didn't slow down in the second, scoring 16 points to finish with a game-high 24 points. Vera led four Irrigon players in double figures. Adrian Romero had 13, Timpy 12 and Anthony Landeros 11.

Umatilla senior guard Eric Garcia led all scorers with 10 first-half points, but the Knight defenders held him to four second half points on 2-for-8 shooting. Umatilla scored just 13 points in the last 16 minutes of play.



EO MEDIA GROUP PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS
Irrigon's Freddy Vera puts up a shot surrounded by a host of Umatilla defenders on Tuesday in the Knights' 67-34 win against the Vikings in Pendleton.



EO MEDIA GROUP PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS
Irrigon's A.J. Timpy (3) and Adrian Romero put pressure on Umatilla's Danny Ayala on Tuesday in the Knights' 67-34 win against the Vikings in Pendleton.

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beating themselves with fouls and turnovers. Now 9-2, consistent play is a constant, not a hope.

"We're putting things together for longer periods of time, and we're doing it with a lot of bench support, a lot of role players," Hoffert said.

That bench support, though, is the biggest mark of improvement for Hermiston. In its second game in Lake Oswego, Hermiston played Iolani, a Hawaii Division II powerhouse from Oahu, and came out on top after two overtimes.

The Raiders, according to Hoffert, were the fastest team Hermiston will see all year and probably the smallest, too. Early on, Hoffert said the Lady Bulldogs were in "survival mode" due to Iolani's relentless press and dribble drives. The Raiders'

depth was also an issue. They went 10-deep, and there was no drop-off in athleticism or skill.

"We went with a smaller, quicker lineup, and it slowed them down," Hoffert said. "It took away some of things they were doing in the first half."

Hermiston closed, and Sara Ramirez hit a 3-foot runner at the buzzer to send the game to overtime. The first extra period was back-and-forth, with Hermiston getting a good look at the buzzer to potentially win it. It didn't go down, and Hermiston won anyway in the second extra period.

"In the second overtime, I thought our conditioning, our bench, our depth won the game for us," Hoffert said. "We seemed quicker, fresher, quicker to loose balls, quicker to rebounds. We felt good about the fact that we were able to pretty much outlast them and finish strong with girls who typically don't get a lot of minutes and get put in that

position."

Sandwiched around the win over Iolani were double-digit wins over North Medford (54-41) and Roseburg (43-28) and the championship completion over Centennial 43-37 on Tuesday.

Those size and lineup adjustments will pay huge dividends for the Lady Bulldogs. Against Iolani, Sydney Moore, a reserve guard, played the entire fourth quarter and most of the overtimes. Rileigh Andreason gave good minutes.

"I've coached a lot of years," Hoffert said. "I've had a lot of great basketball team, but I've never had a team that the bench was more valuable to us than this year. For them to show us that they can do that, that they can come back, it gave them confidence. It gave our starters confidence. If we're not playing well, those girls can come in and win games."

Hermiston plays today at Kennewick at 5:45 p.m. and heads to La Grande for a 7 p.m. tilt Tuesday.

Echo girls no longer undefeated

The Echo girls basketball team dropped its first game of the year Tuesday, losing to Country Christian 57-51 in the Cougar Den in Echo. Kelsey Ranger had 17 points and six steals, and Elizabeth McCarty had 15 points and 11 rebounds for Echo.

"We gave them a hell of a game," Echo coach JD Brazil said. "They're a really good team. They're the No. 1 team in the OSAA rankings and No. 2 in the coaches poll."

Echo (10-1) shot 53 percent from 3-point land, sinking eight of 15, but shot just 28 percent from the floor as a whole, going 16 of 56. Meanwhile, Country Christian (8-1) shot 40 percent from the floor and just 28 percent from 3.

Echo also missed 15 free throws and had nine shots blocked.

"We definitely would have liked to have made more free throws," Brazil said. "The blocked shots I'm not concerned about. The free throws missed, yeah, I don't like that. If we're going to attack and go to the line, we need to capitalize."

After being tied at the half, Country Christian locked down the defense and allowed only five points in the third quarter. It was the lowest quarter point total by the Cougars this season.

Echo won the fourth quarter 15-14 but couldn't cut into the seven-point lead.

"All in all, it was a good performance," Brazil said. "I'm not a moral victory guy, but this was a barometer game. To be with a team that could very well win it all this year, it makes us feel good about our chances."

COUNTRY CHRISTIAN 57, ECHO 51		
CC (8-1, 2-0)	17	12
14	14	
Echo (10-1, 2-0)	13	18
5	15	51

Country Christian — D. Grandle 0, M. Lewandowski 12, C. McGrath 8, S. Ross 0, A. Farmer 0, A. La Pointe 4, K. Nofziger 15, M. Halverson 8, M. McGrath 0, A. Cunningham 4, A. Barden 6.

Echo — E. Parks 3, K. Ranger 16, D. Tarvin 0, T. Swaggert 3, H. McCarty 8, L. Cox 0, G. Strofe 6, E. McCarty 15, L. Wiggins 0, B. Millbroy 0, H. Reese 0. 3-point field goals —

Country Christian 2, Echo 8. Free throws — Country Christian 3-8, Echo 11-26

Fouled out — A. Farmer (CC). Fouls — Country Christian 24, Echo 11.

Umatilla girls strong after break

The Umatilla girls basketball team is in good shape after holiday break, beating River View (Washington), Lost River, Union, Irrigon, Nixyaawii and losing to second-ranked Kennedy by just two points.

On Dec. 23, Umatilla beat River View 38-26 and followed that up with a 46-38 win over a previously undefeated Lost River team Monday to kick off the Enterprise Tournament in Pendleton. Against the Raiders, Aleesha Watson had 16 points and 10 rebounds, with five coming on the offensive glass. Sidney Webb tacked on another 12 points on 4-10 shooting from 3-point land.

In the championship of the Enterprise tournament in Pendleton, Umatilla topped Irrigon 43-18 in a rematch of both teams' first game of the year. Watson again led the Lady Viks in scoring with 13 points. Brenda Campos was the other Lady Viking in double figures with 10, and Courtney Dohman grabbed 11 rebounds.

On New Year's Day, Umatilla traveled to Salem for the Salem Academy Tournament and drew second-ranked 2A Kennedy in the first round. Watson had 19 points and nine rebounds, Dohman had 16 and 8 and Webb had 11 points and three assists. Kennedy led 30-22 at the half, but the Lady Viks stormed back in the third behind 10 points from Watson, with six of them coming on free throws. Umatilla's fourth-quarter rally came up just a basket short, however, and Kennedy handed Umatilla its third loss of the season.

Friday, in the consolation bracket, Umatilla topped local 1A power Nixyaawii 51-24 in Pendleton. Umatilla had three girls in double figures: Webb (11), Dohman (10) and Iri Campos (10). Dohman, Campos and Kassandra Galbraith all had six rebounds, Watson had five and Galbraith swiped six steals.

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scholastic sports in Austria aren't that prevalent or competitive. Most sports are club-based and practice only about three times a week with sporadic games. Schools there, she said, are "mostly for learning and boring" and don't really have competitive athletics programs. It's nothing like the athletics schedules for athletes in the States with practices or games six days a week, she said.

"I just didn't expect it," she said. "I didn't think about having practice every day after school."

In the fall, Katterbauer was assigned to the junior varsity volleyball team and didn't get much playing time early on. She admitted she wasn't as good as her teammates, mostly due to her inexperience. She said it amazed her how competitive sports are in this country and how hard people work at them.

"Here, people build their life on their sports," she said. "They're crazy about sports."

Competing in sports made her transition in America easier, however.

When she came to Herm-

iston, Katterbauer was not familiar with Oregon. She knew what and where California is, and a couple of other major, internationally known cities, but had never heard of Oregon or Hermiston. So when she came, she had no friends, no idea where to find them. Volleyball, however, gave her that opening.

"I had some people to hang out with from the very first day," she said. "I think as an exchange student it's kind of hard to fit in to groups of friends, but with playing a sport, it's way easier to find friends and to make connections with people."

Wang, an exchange student from Italy, had a similar experience playing soccer for the Bulldogs.

He played club soccer since he was a child, but was also surprised by the schedule and also saw differences in athleticism.

"I'm not saying it's tough, but it's something that's more into your life rather than just something that you do for fun," Wang said. "Not that my team back in Italy's bad, but we do only one, two practices per week, and there are teams that do three, four, five depending on the level and the goals of the team."

Wang also sees other differences between soccer here

and in Italy. He said here, players are more disciplined and humble. Back in Italy, he said, "We're just playing for chill" or fun.

"And we go there, and we chill," he said. "Sometimes our coach gets mad, (but) there is no discipline."

Wang said, instead of soccer in the fall, he wished he had played football instead. He acknowledges that some of that desire came from seeing the football team win the state championship, but he also wished he had tried something he's never done before.

"I've been playing soccer for so many years," he said. "And next year when I'm going back (to Italy), I'm not planning on playing soccer anymore. And even this year, if I was still in Italy, I would not have chosen to play soccer."

Both Katterbauer and Wang are now dedicated to swimming.

"I mainly picked swimming because I'm not very good at basketball," Katterbauer said. "Because everybody was like, 'Oh yeah, basketball is the most competitive sport ever. If you go for basketball you have to put everything in it.' But swimming..."

"It's relaxing," Wang chimed in.

low and sit with a record of 2-7.

"I think we've been headed in the right direction the last four days," McElligott said. "I think we're headed in the right direction. We just have to get better in every aspect of the game, offensively

and defensively. I think the team we have now that I saw these last few days is still a far cry from where we will be and where we should be."

These next three games for Hermiston will say a lot. It'll be a juggle for the Bulldogs, as they face

Lions, Tigers and a Storm. Today Hermiston travels to Kennewick to take on the Kennewick Lions at 7:30 p.m. today, head to La Grande to take on the Tigers at 7 p.m. Tuesday, then host the Summit Storm at 1:30 p.m. Jan. 10.

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gles stand out.

"Those are going to be fantastic basketball games, as they always are," Bra-

zil said. "We'll probably play again at districts, and that'll be an epic battle, and we might see them again at Baker (at the state tournament). If we play them four times, I guarantee nobody's going 4-0."

After a perfect run to open the season, Echo lost its first game Tuesday at the hands of top-ranked Country Christian, but Brazil said the Cougars aren't fazed by the loss.

"You never want to

lose," Brazil said. "Yeah, we wanted to win (Tuesday), but we're not looking at that as 'Oh, this great undefeated streak has come to end.' We got off to a hot start, ran into a good team and got beat. But we gave it

hell ... It's not like the seasons over. Some days you win. Some days you lose."

Being new to the OOL, as Echo came over from the Big Sky League with Helix and Nixyaawii, the Cougars aren't sure what to expect from

the other teams they will play.

"I think what we're going to have for a league title, barring catastrophes, injuries, (whatever), I think we're going to have a couple teams in the mix," Brazil said.