

Wrestlers continue improvement

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

Gary Thorson, co-coach of Sisters Outlaws wrestling team, provided an update to *The Nugget* about the team's progress since holiday break.

"The team has continued to make big strides the last two weeks of their season," he said. The team took part in two big tournaments, one in Pendleton and the other in Pleasant Hill.

Just before Christmas, on December 22, the Outlaws participated in the 16-team Rollin Schimmel Memorial Tournament in Pendleton. According to Thorson, the Outlaws more than held their own.

"We had a great performance that day even though we only entered nine individuals at the varsity level," he said. "We ended up finishing fifth as a team."

The team's high placement came as a result of having three wrestlers reach the championship matches. Team points are compiled throughout the tournament, so the more wins each wrestler attains the more points the team gains.

Ben Cooper led the way by capturing first place in the 145-pound class. Wyatt Maffey at 152 and Hayden Kunz at 138 also wrestled for individual titles, but both came up short in their championship bout.

Sisters also got a third-place finish from Carson Brown, 138 pounds, as well as fifth-place finishes from Carter Van Meter at 113 and

Jared Miller at 160 pounds.

In the first competition of the new year, the Outlaws traveled to Pleasant Hill High School for the "King of the Hill" tournament, where the team placed fourth among 15 teams behind three first-place finishes and one runner-up.

Carter Van Meter qualified for the championship round with a pin in his first match and kept on winning.

"He is coming on like a freight train," said Thorson. "He is one of our hardest workers and his focus in practice to get better is paying off."

Wyatt Maffey worked his way into the championship match and nailed down the top spot with a commanding 17-8 decision. Ben Cooper also found himself atop the podium in the 145-pound class.

"Ben and Wyatt are our most experienced wrestlers and they are a huge help to everyone on the team," said Thorson. "Their passion for the sport rubs off on the others in a big way in our practice room."

Jared Miller made it to the title bout, but came up short against his opponent from Philomath, and finished second. Nonetheless, with two pins in the tournament, Thorson described Miller's performance as his best ever as an Outlaw.

Other top placers for the Outlaws included Henry Rard and Jacob Washington, who placed third and fourth respectively at 220 pounds. The teammates actually wrestled one another in the consolation round with Rard scoring a 4-1

decision.

On the girls side at Pleasant Hill, the Outlaws had a great showing from senior Daisy Patterson who placed second at 125 in the tournament. Along the way she picked up three pins, raising her season record to 10-5. Freshmen Brooklynn Cooper and Riley Kerkmann also took part in the tournament and "did great things" according to Thorson.

"Daisy is having a great season and she is a great help in the practice room with the other girls," said Thorson. "She takes about four of them under her wing every day and they have all benefited from her experience."

As the team moves into the second half of the season, Thorson is feeling quite pleased with the development of the team.

"Our staff is very happy with the progress and work ethic that we have seen with this bunch," he said. "I have coached a variety of sports for over 30 years now and I can say without a doubt this is one of the hardest working teams I have had the privilege to be a part of. They have come to understand that hard work can be fun and contagious, and also that quitting and giving up in practice or in their matches is unacceptable. This is a special group of athletes that has bonded well and is having fun participating in one of the most difficult sports they can sign up for."

The Outlaws are scheduled to wrestle locally this week at the prestigious Oregon Classic in Redmond January 14-15.

COCC hosts career fair for educators

Central Oregon Community College (COCC) is hosting a career open house for early learning educators from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, January 21, at the Bend campus's Coats Campus Center, co-hosted by East Cascades Works, NeighborImpact Child Care Resources, Worksource East Cascades and the Early Learning Hub of Central Oregon.

Representatives from a number of regional early education employers will be available to share information about employment opportunities and career resources. Masks are required and distancing protocols will be followed.

Participating employers of the career fair include Oregon State University-Cascades' Little Beavs/Little Kits, Boulden Rogen Early Childhood Academy, MountainStar Family Relief centers, The Children's Learning Center in Madras, Head Start/Early Head Start in Crook and Deschutes

counties, the Boys & Girls Club of Bend, the High Desert Education Service District's Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Intervention programs, the Bend Park & Recreation District and NeighborImpact Child Care Resources, among others.

"For both soon-to-be and recent graduates, this is a great chance to learn about specific positions, but it's also a chance for those considering a career in early education to ask questions of those in the field," said Amy Howell, Ph.D., director of COCC's early childhood education program.

Additionally, COCC will host the regional chapter of the Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children's annual Early Learning Conference, April 29-30, which offers livestreamed and pre-recorded sessions; interested presenters are invited to submit proposals by January 31 by emailing ahowell@cocc.edu.

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