

Wrestlers wrap up season at State

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

None of the four wrestlers representing Sisters High at the OSAA 4A State Championships made the podium, but according to coach Gary Thorson, the boys have no reason to hang their heads.

Cascade High School hosted the 4A tournament as part of the OSAA's decision to split up the meet to separate sites in order to minimize crowd sizes due to COVID-19 concerns.

"Once again, like we have all year, the kids wrestled very hard, but we did not wrestle our very best, and at that level there is no room for error," Thorson said. "We had a great week of practice and felt very good headed into the tournament. Other than Ben Cooper, who has had a bad wrist for weeks, we went in pretty healthy for this time of year."

Thorson said, "Three of the four won at least one match, which was good to see, but we really did expect to see a few of the kids on the podium this time around."

Hayden Kunz started the tournament on a tough note with a loss by fall at the 3:45 mark in round one of the 138-pound class, at the hands of Tanner Wood of Mazama. Kunz responded with a 7-4 victory over Jackson Lyda. In his final match Kunz came up short against Enrico Cervantez of Elmira/Crow, who topped Kunz in a 4-1 decision. The junior ended the season with a record of 20-16.

In the 145-pound class, Ben Cooper battled Jacob Hughes in a contest of wills before being edged by one point in a 5-4 decision. Cooper bounced back in the consolation round to win 7-1 over Luke Bozied of Banks, but Benito Roman of Woodburn out-pointed Cooper in the second round of consolation 7-3. He ended his season with a 39-15 record that included 29 pins.

Wyatt Maffey made quick work of Landon Myers in the first round of the 152-pound class, with a pin in just under two minutes. In the quarter-final round North Marion's

Landon Wing took the upper hand and beat Maffey by technical fall 19-3.

Maffey moved to the consolation round and stayed alive with a major decision over Ashton Swanson of Sweet Home 27-10. He then lost a close decision 7-5 against Ridge Kehr of La Grande and finished the season with a record of 33-12.

In the 220-pound division, Henry Rard faced off against the eventual third-place finisher in round one, Jackson Contreras of Tillamook, who took Rard down at the 1:16 mark of the match.

Rard moved on to face Cort Waggoner of Siuslaw, but once again fell victim to a fall, this time at the 4:02 mark, ending his season with a record of 20-18.

La Grande, with 18 wrestlers in the meet, won the team title with 275.5 points, Sweet Home was second (250.5), Tillamook third (187), and Philomath fourth (118).

Thorson concluded his comments, saying, "As coaches it was very difficult to see our kids struggle like they did, after they did everything we have asked all year long and us knowing how badly they wanted to perform well. It was a bummer way to end a great season in which the program took some more strides. All of us hated to see this season end, but on a positive note, it was a fun ride for us coaches with a great group of kids and very supportive parents and fans."

Lady Outlaws fall in first round

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The Lady Outlaws traveled to Corbett on Saturday, February 26, for the first round of the OSAA state basketball playoffs. Sisters, seeded 22nd, was pitted against Corbett, the 11th seed. The Cardinals entered the game with a 19-3 record, with two losses to No. 7-ranked Madras by three and four points respectively and one loss to No. 5-ranked Gladstone. Despite an excellent overall record, those losses placed them third in the Tri-Valley Conference.

The Outlaws were the sixth-place team from the Oregon West Conference and squeaked into the play-in game despite their 7-16 record. Sisters made it strictly on the strength of their league schedule, with three of the teams ranked in the top seven in the state, and also their five preseason wins.

Coach Paul Patton told *The Nugget* that the Lady Outlaws had hopes going into the game that if they played well and Corbett had an off night they might have a chance at an upset. Unfortunately for the Outlaws, that wasn't the case.

The Cardinals came out on fire, and easily made shots from the outside. At the

close of the quarter they'd racked up 24 points, including four shots from behind the arc. (Corbett tallied a total of 10 three-pointers in the contest.) Sisters finished the period with seven points.

Sisters struggled against Corbett's extended pressure on defense. They turned the ball over numerous times, and did not get very many opportunities to score. The Cardinals continued to score and extend their lead, and crushed the Outlaws with a 23-71 victory.

Ila Reid stood out for the Outlaws with her tough play on both ends of the court and Josie Patton also played her heart out. Haleigh Froehlich was a bright spot with a relentless desire to score, and her team-leading six points were hard-earned.

"The girls continued to play hard and compete for the duration of the contest despite the lopsided score," said Patton. "I'm proud of the fact we were able to give 14 athletes time on the court

and a taste of playoff basketball. Even though we came away with a tough loss, the fact that we got to play an extra game this season, and had three more practices before that, will help us moving forward."

"We are better off for the experience, closer as a team, and more determined to keep moving forward," added Patton.

Patton noted seniors Emma Lutz, Payden Petterson, and Reese Harwell, who saw their last action with high school basketball. He told *The Nugget* he's grateful for their contribution to and leadership of the team, and said they will be missed greatly.

Next year the team will return nine as senior players, along with some talented underclassmen, which gives them optimism about the future of the program. Patton stated the team just has to back up that optimism with continued hard work and dedication.



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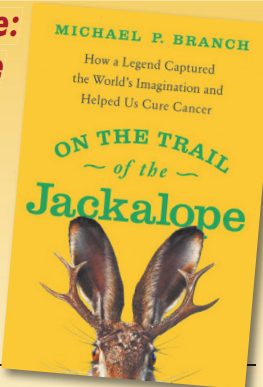
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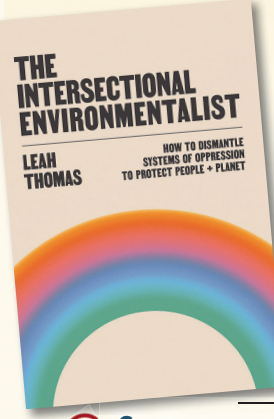
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