



Steven Preston managed a 1-2 record in his final state appearance. At 160 pounds, Preston posted a 21-7 record and capped his career with back-to-back state qualifications. Jeremy Lanthorn/Contributed photo

## TD WRESTLING

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matches to Kolton Malone (Thurston) and Roman Bagley-Rios (Parkrose) by first-round, and 182-pound senior Mauricio Carrera (8-6 record) lost two consecutive matches by pin versus Crater's Owen Burkhart (43 seconds) and Hillsboro's Sebastian Echeverria (1:41).

While he is graduating in June, Steven Preston had the chance to stand side-by-side with his little brother Ian and was able to show him what it takes to be successful on the varsity stage.

"I think it was awesome. It has been several years since I have been on the same team with my little brother and really go through the grind together," Steven said. "I think he is going to push the Preston legacy to an all-time high. He made it to state this year and did good. He wrestled his heart out and I can see him being a future state champion by his senior year."

For seven years, Beasley had been spending several hours of his day developing Ophath Silaphath, Ben Nelson, Quinn Wilson, Miguel Torres, Steven Preston, Karen Villa and Carrera, the senior core that made an impact on his life.

Beasley got especially emotional once Carrera was eliminated from state contention.

"I said, 'I only cry once a year and it is at this tournament with my seniors,'" Beasley recalls telling Carrera. "You know, I can't say enough about them. I could spend

hours talking about what special people they are. One of the things that I enjoyed the most from this tournament is sitting down with them and asking them about their future plans. And every one of them had a plan after high school. It was neat to hear them talk about what wrestling meant to them, what the program meant to them and how it is going to propel them in the future. It always brightens my heart knowing that they are going on, but I am really saddened by it too."

While Beasley is losing a top-flight group of veterans, the younger programs are climbing in numbers, with the kids club boasting a roster of 60 under coach Kevin Marx, and there are 35 middle school wrestlers, coached by Alexander Kramer, ready to make a jump to the next level, 10 who are incoming freshmen.

Beasley vividly remembers when The Dalles had a dual against Hermiston with only six kids.

He has been around for some of the lowest points, but he cannot be more hopeful about the future of the wrestling program.

"We have had the most kids in the high program now than we did in the past 10 years, so things are definitely on the rise for us," Beasley said. "I am really excited about the group that we have coming from middle school. I had a chance to coach them in football and we are starting to get that connection again where we are having kids coming in from the football program and giving us some numbers. We have needed that for many years."

## SWC HOOP

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in these big games. We will learn from them though."

Following back-to-back season where they went 12-36, the Redsidies racked up a 20-7 record, went 11-3 in league to earn the district tournament's top seed and wound up ranked 13th in the state.

SWC notched two three-game winning streaks, then from Jan. 24 to Feb. 21 won nine in a row, before losing in the Big Sky Conference championship game to Lone-Arlington, 74-68.

The Redsidies defeated Elgin by a 72-45 margin in state sub-round action on Feb. 26 to set up Saturday's contest with Joseph.

Finishing so close, yet so far from Baker, Hull is optimistic his squad can use the big-game moments to bolster next year's run.

It hurts, especially since if SWC would have beaten Ione-Arlington in the district title matchup, they would have played Joseph at home instead of making the long Eastern Oregon trip.

SWC is still young in many areas with six underclassmen

on the roster, led by sophomores Thomas, LaFaver, Sheer and Alex Stebbins, and freshmen Ian Ongers, Dominic Marquez and James Best.

Birman, Olson and Haiden Perez will be seniors next year, taking over the spots vacated by graduating seniors, Marshall Bell and Davis.

"Marshall and Tanner were here during those lean times, but they stayed with it," Hull said. "Tanner is who I would consider one of my most improved players. He has been one of our leaders and he did an awesome job this year of getting the ball where it needs to be, he hit some big shots, he improved his game and showed up consistently on a nightly basis. You just hope that someone comes in next year to fill those shoes."

The Big Sky Conference will undergo a facelift of sorts starting next year with the addition of four Washington schools.

In one division will be SWC, Dufur, Horizon, Trout Lake, Klickitat-Glenwood and Lyle-Wishram, and on the other side is Sherman, Condon, Ione-Arlington, Echo, Mitchell-Spray and Bickelton. Teams will play two in-division games and have one apiece against the other



SWC senior point guard Tanner Davis sends off a baseline floater in Saturday's basketball game played in Enterprise versus Joseph. Neither squad had more than a five-point second-half lead and SWC had a game-tying attempt at the buzzer fall short, as they lost, 43-40. Ellen Bishop/Wallowa County Chieftain

side. This past year, the Big Sky teams battled each night and seventh-place Mitchell-Spray was in district contention up until the final weekend, so there was plenty of parity in the league.

"It is definitely going to be a bit of a grinder when it comes to the new league schedule, but this year and how tough

our league was, allowed us to be where we were and allowed us to grow up a little bit, compared to being in a league where we just ran through everybody," Hull said. "We have our main core coming back and they will be battle-tested. They now know what it takes. It's a matter of making those plays and executing down the stretch of games."

# TRASH TALK

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Jared, The Dalles

**A.** Jared, I don't know of any local options for VCR or stereo recycling. You do have an option in our area for "e-waste" though. The Oregon Electronics Recycling Program (E-Cycles) accepts seven items for free: computer monitors and towers, T.V.s, laptops, printers, keyboards and mice. Three drop sites: Hood River Transfer Station, The Dalles Disposal, and Sherman County Transfer Station near Biggs Junction.

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