

# Sports

## HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Kennedy clinches Tri-River title



Left: Kennedy's Kaylin Cantu drives the lane against Regis on Jan. 31. Right: Kennedy's Hannah Arritola drives the ball against Regis.

PHOTOS BY BILL POEHLER/STATESMAN JOURNAL

**Bill Poehler** Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

MT. ANGEL – Winning the Tri-River Conference championship in girls basketball brings with it an expectation.

The Tri-River champion has been in the OSAA Class 2A state championship game every year since 2011 and won five state titles.

“Who’s next from the Tri-River?” Kennedy co-head coach Peter Hall said. “When we get there, I don’t want to be the Tri-River team that fails. I want to be the Tri-River team that succeeds.”

Kennedy clinched the Tri-River championship with a 62-33 home win Jan. 31 against Regis.

It’s no surprise that the Trojans are the favorite to win the state title.

Kennedy is 10-0 in the Tri-River, 22-1 overall – the only loss was to 3A Dayton – and is No. 1 in the OSAA’s power rankings.

“You kind of get it in your head like we are good and we can do this,” said Kennedy senior Hannah Arritola. “It gives

**“You kind of get it in your head like we are good and we can do this. It gives you more motivation.”**

**Hannah Arritola**, Kennedy senior, on her team going on to try and win the state championship

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Ten times since 2007 the Tri-River Conference champion has been in the 2A state championship game and seven times in that span the Tri-River champion has won the 2A state championship including Kennedy, Western Menomnite, Regis, Santiam and Salem Academy. (Tri-River champion Scio lost to league runner-up Regis in the 2012 state title game.)

“If you’re one of the top teams in our league, statistically, you’re going to do well,” said Regis coach Tony Miller, who also coached Scio to a Tri-River championship in 2012 and state runner-up finishes in 2011 and 2012.

“You’ve been tested.”

The teams in the Tri-River play significantly different styles of basketball. There are teams, like Kennedy, who

full-court press and play up-tempo basketball. There are teams that play strictly half-court offenses with a focus on tall post players. And there’s everything in between.

If a team can win the Tri-River championship, they have faced and beaten every style of the game they might see at the state tournament.

“It does because you’re ready for everything,” Kennedy co-head coach Kerry Hall said. “We see a lot of 2-3 zone, we do see some man. Definitely everything we see every night does help us for state.”

When Kennedy last won the Tri-River, in 2016, the team won the state championship.

By clinching the league championship this season, the Trojans have put a target on their backs.

“All the teams in the Tri-River, we’ve always had really good basketball programs and every night it’s always been a dogfight and everyone plays really physical,” said junior post Kalysa Kleinschmit.

“You have to show up to play every game or else they could take it from under you.”

If Kennedy wanted to, the team could build an offense around the post tandem of Sophia Carley, a 6-foot sophomore, and Kleinschmit, and win a lot of games.

Instead, the team regularly goes deep onto the bench – 11 players regularly get playing time – without falling off.

“Their starting five, six girls are heads and tails above everybody else, but their next five or six girls are right here with them,” Miller said.

“They could split into two teams and both teams could do really well in this league this year. And that’s impressive.”

There are nights when a different

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## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

# Silverton’s Gonzales a force to watch for

**Bill Poehler** Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

David Gonzales has emerged as an offensive weapon on Silverton High School’s boys basketball team. The 5-foot-10 sophomore wing scored 23 points in Tuesday’s 69-42 win against South Albany and has helped the Foxes to a 15-1 record and a No. 1 OSAA’s power ranking.

Gonzales was voted the athlete of the week by a poll of readers. He will be the subject of a future Two-Minute Drill video and will be honored at the June 4 Mid-Valley Sports Awards at the Salem Convention Center.

**Last week’s nominees:**

**Andrew DeJager, Crosshill Christian basketball:** The senior wing scored 26 points in Friday’s 60-47 win against Perrydale and 13 in Wednesday’s 60-55 win against Livingstone Adventist Academy.

**Alexys Zepeda, Gervais wrestling:** The freshman won the 117-pound weight class at the Oregon Girls High School Girls Wrestling State Qualifier at Thurston Saturday by recording three technical falls and two pins, including one in the championship match.

**Emorej Lynk, Kennedy basketball:** The sophomore guard scored 21 points in Monday’s 57-40 win against St. Paul.



David Gonzales was voted Athlete of the Week by readers. PHOTO BY BILL POEHLER