

JOSEPH

Continued from Page 1C through a season without an ejection, but subtracts points for an ejection.

All told, the Eagles scored 1,640 points to top the 1A classification by 30 points over Hosanna Christian, according to the OSAA website. Joseph was the fourth Northeast Oregon team to win the award, but first to do so since Wallowa in 2003-04. La Grande has won the award twice, the last time in 2002-03.

“For our students, it reinforced the concept that academics goes along one and the same with sports,” Joseph Athletic Director Jason Crenshaw said. “Also the sportsmanship aspect is really important. It gave us a chance to show the kids there is an award for their behavior on and off the court. It helped us hammer it home.”

It hasn't always been a perfect situation at Joseph, but, as the award attests, it has markedly improved. Olan Fulfer and Toby Koehn, teachers at Joseph who joined the staff earlier this decade, both said the culture was different when they came to town.

“We've been working hard as a teaching staff to try to change the culture, not just on the field but in the classroom. It takes all of it,” said Fulfer, who is a PE and fire science teacher and also the boys basketball coach.

Fulfer said, for example, a couple of basketball players a few years ago were consistently in trouble in the classroom, and it took time to change the culture to one

where students were focused in excelling both off and on the field.

Now it's hardly an issue. “We rarely have incidents with students now. Even the ones who don't play sports,” Fulfer said. “Even last year I didn't hear much about any of our players getting in trouble.”

Fulfer gave credit to Koehn — who is the school's agriculture and FFA teacher, and for three years was the football coach — for helping bring about the change.

“He set a precedent for success in the classroom and trying to be good people,” Fulfer said. “I copied a lot of his strategies with that.”

Koehn said he had conversations with student-athletes and “as a whole school (we talked) about our schools goals, not only in the sports season, but in FCCLA, FFA, those people who aren't part of the sports teams. There was (an) intention in setting that expectation.”

The attitude has permeated through and is creating student-athletes who are more well-rounded, an approach Crenshaw called “the whole student.”

“That's one of the concepts our teachers believe in. Our coaches really emphasize classroom behavior: getting your schoolwork done,” he said.

Koehn added the areas of athletics, academics and sportsmanship working in unison is what the award emphasizes.

“That's coming across. Having a positive staff with a lot of energy creates the ‘whole student,’” he said.

While the school plays a



Jason Crenshaw photo

Joseph is the fourth recipient of the Oregonian Cup in Northeast Oregon. Wallowa and La Grande have also won the award, with the Tigers doing so twice.

key role, Homan said parents are hugely important in helping students become the “good people” that Fulfer referred to.

“That's why we're here,” said Homan, who himself is also a parent. “We think highly of our students. It's a great group. That's fully credited to our parents and guardians.”

To Homan, it's even a community award.

“Athletics is the platform, but (winning the Oregonian Cup) really is a representation of our school, staff and community,” he said.

The weight of the award is starting to sink in with students as well. While it may not have the immediate draw of a state championship, the realization of what

it means is growing.

“This doesn't have that same immediate effect (as winning a state title), but as a school and an administrator it's more important,” Homan said.

Crenshaw added, “As we display it, it's going to sink in even more.”

The hope is that the award will spur further drive to continue on the path Joseph is currently walking. For Fulfer, it also means passing on the “whole student” culture to younger student-athletes.

“We will continue what we're doing and try to keep building more on that,” he said. “Encourage the kids to try hard and keep pushing them athletically and academically.”

Outlaw girls take Burnside Invite

Observer staff

PREP ROUNDUP

In their final race before the district meet next week, the Enterprise girls cross country team took top honors at the Kyle Burnside Wildhorse Invitational Thursday in Pendleton.

Ellyse Tingelstad (19:21) and Kyla Hook (19:43.2) paced the Outlaws with a 2-3 finish. Enterprise had three in the top 10 on their way to 55 points and the win. The Dalles (72) was second, while Union/Cove (73) was third and La Grande (108) came in fourth.

Ella Coughlan was the third Enterprise runner across the line, placing ninth in 20:18.7. Ashley Wilson (20:55.3) and Sydney Rouse (21:41.1) rounded out the top five for the Outlaws in 17th and 28th.

Both Jaimee Baxter and Audrey Wells paced Union/Cove with top-10 finishes. Baxter came in eighth in 20:07.8, while Wells was 10th in 20:29.4. The rest of the top five for the Bobcats included Abriel O'Reilly in 15th (20:48.3), Kaitlin Martens in 20th (21:05.1) and Alisa Fox in 22nd (21:06.3).

Maia Vandervlugt (19:46.1) and Abby Crews (19:49) took fourth and sixth, respectively to pace La Grande to fourth place. Audrey Garlitz followed in 24th in 21:25.6. Corbyn Sexton (22:19) was 38th and Jenna Ault (23:10.3) placed 45th.

Jocelyn Palmer led Elgin by taking 27th in 21:39.2. Anika Jacobson clocked in at 24:06.2 in 61st, and Kaylee Smith (27:20.9) was 84th.

On the boys side Tim Stevens of Union/Cove continued his strong season by winning

easily with a time of 15:08.6, taking first by nearly 27 seconds. The win paced the Bobcats to 71 points and a second-place finish behind The Dalles (56 points).

Jack Silveira followed for the Bobcats in fifth in 16:01. Andrew Lackey (16:56.3) placed 14th, Matthew Sheehy (17:24.5) was 24th and Israel O'Reilly (17:45) was 31st.

Enterprise was third overall with 93 points, and put two freshmen in the top 10 and three in the top 15. Henry Coughlan (16:10) and Zac Knapp (16:22.5) paced the Outlaws by placing seventh and eighth, respectively. Bayden Menton (16:43.3) followed in 13th. Cole Gomes (17:54.1) took 34th and Ian Goodrich (18:08.2) was 37th.

Cristian Mendoza paced La Grande, which took fifth with 133 points, with a 10th place finish in 16:29.8. Bennett Welch followed in 12th in 16:38.8. Calvin Smith (17:54.6) took 35th, and Braxton Bisenius (18:17.2) was 43rd, just ahead of teammate Eli McLean (18:17.7) in 44th.

Jordan Palmer led Elgin by taking 59th in 18:43.9, while Kaden McClure was 75th in 19:32.5. The teams are in action next Friday at their respective district meets.

Prep football UNION DROPS FINALE

The Union Bobcats football team fell to the Ione Cardinals Thursday, 48-28.

Stats were not available. Union finishes at 3-5 overall and 2-5 in Special District 3-W.

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