



Ron Evans photo

The La Grande Tigers boys golf team poses with the first-place trophy after winning the district tournament Monday.

Suto takes district title again; LHS girls place second

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Tori Suto ran away with another district title, shooting a two-day score of 155 — 14 strokes better than the runner-up — to claim the 4A/3A/2A/1A Special District 4 girls championship Monday and Tuesday in Pendleton, earning an individual state berth.

“(She was) keeping the ball in play, not getting out in the long grass and (wasn’t) making big numbers. Just being consistent,” Wallowa/Joseph head coach Marvin Gibbs said.

The Wallowa/Joseph standout and state title contender put the championship out of reach Monday, shooting an opening round of 78 that left her 11 strokes ahead of the eventual second-place finisher — Nicole Prophet of Heppner. Suto was even better Tuesday, carding a final round of 77.

It was the second district title in as many years for Suto, who was a state runner-up in 2018. The win also gave the senior top-three finishes at district all four years of her career, as she placed third as a freshman and second as a sophomore.

“I was happy with her results. Two-time district champion and four-time state qualifier — you can’t have a much better career than that,” Gibbs said.

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Bell, Tigers win district

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Braden Bell’s intent entering the final day of the 4A Special District 4 Tournament was to be mindful of his own play and not those around him.

“I focused on playing against myself and the course and focused less on playing against my competitors,” the La Grande Tigers senior said. “They were more focused on beating me. I was more worried about how I could play.”

It worked, as Bell’s final-round score of 81 lifted him to an individual district title as the Tigers boys golf team took first at the district tournament Monday and Tuesday in La Grande.

Bell’s final round gave him a two-day score of 166, one stroke better than Baker’s Caden Long, who had an overall score of 167 after a final round of 84.

“I think he relaxed a little more and didn’t think he had to hang with Caden,” La Grande head coach Ron Evans said. “He could relax and play golf. He played really well today. He hit some good shots and made some putts.”

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande’s Braden Bell, shown during Monday’s first round, shot a two-day total of 166 to win the individual title by one stroke.



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

Wallowa/Joseph’s Tori Suto, shown during the La Grande Invite in April, won her second straight district title this week.



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

Brody Kincade and the La Grande Tigers rebounded from a four-run deficit to beat Irrigon, 9-8, Tuesday.

La Grande sneaks past Irrigon at home

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Parker Robinson homered during a seven-run second inning, Isaac Zamora and Brody Kincade drove in what proved to be crucial runs late, and the La Grande Tigers baseball team held on against Irrigon at home Tuesday, 9-8.

“It was good to see a little bit of resilience in that inning and some (ability to) battle,” head coach Parker McKinley said.

The visiting 3A Knights had scored four runs in the top of the second inning before La Grande responded with its own big inning. Kyler Malone scored on an error, Payton Cooper followed later scoring on a passed ball, and Zamora hit an RBI single to bring the Tigers within one. Robinson followed with a three-run home run to right field to give the Tigers a 6-4 lead. Kincade added a run later in the frame on a double steal.

“We talked about winning innings, and the biggest thing we need to try to do is avoid the big inning. We didn’t avoid the big inning, so we needed to have a bigger inning,” McKinley said, later pointing out that six of the runs were scored

with two outs.

“That put pressure on the defense, and keeping our foot on the gas pedal was good to see,” he added.

Irrigon inched within a run after scoring twice in the fourth, but La Grande re-extended the lead to 9-6 on Zamora’s RBI single and Kincade’s sacrifice fly in the fifth.

The Knights made one more push, getting back within a run by scoring twice in the sixth, but were unable to pull even.

Four pitchers combined to get the Tigers through the game, with perhaps the top effort by Devin Bell, who pitched a perfect seventh with the game on the line for the save.

“It was a (pitching)staff effort, and all four of them did a good job, for the most part throwing strikes and pitching to contact,” McKinley said.

Robinson finished 2-for-4 with three RBIs. Both Zamora and Wyatt Earp also had two hits, and Malone turned in a three-hit day.

La Grande (13-8 overall) finishes the regular season Saturday when it hosts McLoughlin.

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