

Suto closes prep career by tying for fourth at state

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Wallowa/Joseph's Tori Suto may have missed out on her ultimate goal of coming home with a state title, but the senior standout finished tied for fourth with a two-day score of 156 at the Class 4A/3A/2A/1A state girls tournament Monday and Tuesday in Redmond.

"(To) tie for fourth is pretty good with the quality of players that were there," head coach Marvin Gibbs said. "I was happy for her."

Suto's finish brings a close to her prep career with a third consecutive top-four finish

and a fourth time placing in the top 10. She placed second a year ago, fourth as a sophomore and tied for ninth as a freshman.

"It's just a great career," Gibbs said. "Especially for somebody coming from a 1A school. We don't get to practice that much like the kids down in Southern Oregon and don't get to go (to as many) places. It's pretty limited, so I'm really happy for her."

Suto shot 78 on both days, including an even 39 on both the front and back nine during Tuesday's final round. She carded 11 pars during play

Tuesday, and finished the tournament — and her prep career — with a birdie on the par-5 18th hole.

Suto started on the back nine during Monday's first round and shot 42 for the first nine holes. She recovered to fire an even-par 36 to post 78, and birdied the par-3 sixth. In fact, Suto was even-par on her final 12 holes Monday after shooting 6-over on the first six.

Gibbs attributed Suto's ability to calm down to her tenacity and dedication to the sport.

"It's hard to find high school



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

Wallowa/Joseph's Tori Suto tied for fourth in her final prep tournament.



Photo courtesy of Baylee McNeil

The La Grande Tigers' girls golf team, shown during some down time at the state tournament in Redmond, carded a two-day team score of 802 to place fifth in Class 4A/3A/2A/1A.

LHS girls come away in fifth

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

La Grande senior Baylee McNeil turned in the best performance of her career, carding a two-day total of 195 and placing 22nd overall to lead the Tigers girls golf team to a fifth place finish at the Class 4A/3A/2A/1A state girls tournament Monday and Tuesday in Redmond.

"Baylee had the best tournament of her career, and it was a fantastic way for her to end her high school season," head coach Cally Goss said. "I was so proud of her. That was clutch of her to come through with those good scores."

McNeil opened with a round of 95 Monday — including a front nine that was shot at an 8-over par 44 — to lead the team.

"I feel like I did my best because I tried keeping myself calm and tried to have a good time," McNeil said. "I wanted to put my best out there for the team."

She was one of three Tigers who was under 100 in the opening round, with Morgan Tussey (97) and Katie Williams (99) right on her tail.

"It just was her two days. She has been striking the ball pretty well, but it all came together at the right time," Goss added of McNeil. "Maybe it was her maturity as a senior, and I think she wanted to do really well on her last tournament."

Both Tussey and Williams had front-nine scores of 50 on Monday,



Photo courtesy of Cally Goss

Baylee McNeil shot a 195 to place 22nd at state and lead the La Grande girls to a fifth-place finish.

and followed with scores of 47 and 49, respectively, on the back nine.

McNeil and Tussey each fired scores of 100 during the final round Tuesday, with McNeil's highlight a birdie on the par-4 fifth hole. She played the front nine at 47 and carded a 53 on the back nine.

Tussey had a 51 on the front and 49 on the back for her 100. She finished with a two-day score of 197 — just two shots behind McNeil — to tie for 24th overall.

Williams shot a 102 Tuesday, with a 52 on the front nine and 50 on the back, and took home a two-day total of 201 to tie for 27th.

Tori Bowen placed 37th with an overall score of 209, shooting 105 on the opening day — including a back nine of 47 after a front nine of 58 — and following with a 104 on Tuesday.

Sydney Cox, a freshman in her first state tourney, added a score of 170 in Monday's opening round

and improved to 166 Tuesday.

As a team, the Tigers finished with a two-day score of 802 for fifth, one place short of taking home a trophy. The Tigers had a score of 396 in the opening round, then followed with 406 on Tuesday.

Goss said ideally the team would have worked any jitters out during the opening round and shot an improved score during the final round, but she still credited her team for the way they played.

"It wasn't quite our day (on Tuesday), but they fought hard and gave it their best shot," she said. "We were really wanting fourth, but we still feel proud of fifth. I'm proud of the girls for their accomplishments this season."

La Grande, which was in fourth after Monday's play, finished 15 strokes behind Woodburn, which placed fourth to grab the final team trophy.

"Woodburn really poured it on day two," Goss added.

St. Mary's was the runaway state champion with a score of 638, besting runner-up Valley Catholic by 67 strokes. ■

Tigers, Outlaws boys both come away in ninth

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The La Grande Tigers boys golf team came away from the 4A state boys golf tournament in Creswell in ninth place, finishing with a two-day total of 782 Monday and Tuesday.

The Tigers were in ninth after the opening round with a score of 388, then maintained their position in the team ranking after carding a score of 394 in the final round.

"I'm happy with what they did. I know they are disappointed in the scores that they shot, but for the golf course and the way they battled, I'm proud of them," head coach Ron Evans said. "These kids fought to the very last stroke, which is

all I could ask."

The Tigers finished just six strokes behind Banks, which tumbled from fifth to eighth place in the final round.

Evans commended the team because of the challenge that Emerald Valley Golf Club provides, calling it "the real deal" and "one of the toughest courses around."

Braden Bell, who was second on the team after the opening round of play, finished with a final round of 88 for a two-day score of 181 to tie for 19th overall. The senior played more consistently in the final round, shooting a 42 on the back nine with five pars to start the round and finishing with 46 on the front nine. He opened

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