

Bobcats shake off loss for best finish since 2007 season

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Union Bobcats shook off a match that saw them impacted by nerves to rebound for one of the best finishes in UHS volleyball history.

After a loss to Vernonia in the state quarterfinals Friday, Union took down Blue Mountain Conference foes Weston-McEwen in four sets and Grant Union in three sets Saturday to win the consolation bracket at the Class 2A state tournament in Redmond and place fourth in state — the program's highest placing since taking fourth in 2006 and 2007.

"All I can say is how proud I am of coming back from losing to Vernonia," sophomore setter Callie Glenn said. "We didn't play our game that game, and then playing Weston and Grant Union from our league was pretty cool. We were familiar with them and knew how to play against them, so that helped."

The Bobcats' finish at state is among the best in program history, bested only by a state championship in 2002 and runner-up efforts in 1995 and 2004.

"I couldn't be prouder of this team," head coach Karly Knapp said. "Bouncing back from yesterday was definitely a worry of everyone, but we bounced back and (I'm) super proud of them. They played the way we played all season to get here, and that's all we could ask for."

In the fourth-place match



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Union's Kylie Marriott had 17 kills during the fourth-place match against Grant Union Saturday. The Bobcats won the match for their highest finish at state since 2007.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Union's Autumn Daggett reaches out for a dig during the fourth-place match Saturday.

against Grant Union, which the Bobcats won 25-19, 25-15, 25-17, Union (24-4 overall) received a major boost from Kylie Marriott, who had 17 kills in the match, including nine in the first set. The junior had three kills, and Autumn Daggett added two aces during an important 10-2 run in the first set to help Union take a 14-10 lead. A block later by Glenn and Sydney Antoine broke a 17-17 tie and started an 8-2 run to end the set. Marriott had three more kills in the rally.

"I wouldn't expect anything less of her," Knapp said of Marriott's effort in the final match. "She's been there all season, is a great team player, a great leader

and shows up (when she's needed)."

Marriott came up big again during the second set, with four kills during a 9-1 run that gave Union a 20-12 lead. Glenn had two kills and an ace during the run.

"I love playing against them," Marriott said of the matchups against both Grant Union and Weston-McEwen. "I knew I had to play for our seniors and our last game together and go all out."

Daggett, who had just two kills through the first two sets, came out strong in the third with five kills, including back-to-back kills late for a 20-13 lead. Union finished the match on back-to-back kills from Marriott to lock up the fourth-place trophy.

"Our goal was to at least go out with a bang," senior libero Brianna Kohr said. "We did that with getting fourth place. It's been a long time since we've done this well in high school volleyball."

The Bobcats admitted they were off their game in Friday's quarterfinal loss to Vernonia, a 26-24, 25-18, 23-25, 25-23 setback.

"We had so many nerves. We sat all day, we got a lot of anticipation coming through," Glenn said. "I think we sat too long, and all the nerves came out in that game."

The Bobcats won Saturday morning's elimination match against Weston-McEwen in four sets, 25-15, 25-16, 21-25, 25-21, beating the TigerScots for the third time this season — a point

the team discussed heading into the match.

"Everyone always says it's hard to beat a team three times, so that's in the back of everybody's minds, but I told the girls if we can show up and play our side (of the net), play our game, we should be able to pull through," Knapp said. "I have to give it to Weston and Grant Union. They give us great games. It's fun to play. It's fun to have all three of us down in the tournament."

Kohr, who along with Taylor Daggett and Autumn Daggett was one of three seniors playing their final match, said it meant a lot for the team to not only get to state but finish the way it did.

"I love my team like they're my sisters. To be here has been one of my dreams," she said. "They helped me accomplish it, and it means a whole lot. I want to thank my coaches and my teammates for making my last season the best season."

Knapp guided Union to its best finish in more than a decade in her first year as head coach, but gave the players praise for their effort.

"My biggest goal was to teach the girls to love the game of volleyball," she said. "Through that they had fun, through that they started winning and kept winning, and ended up in fourth place at state. I give all the credit to the kids I have. They are awesome kids, fun (and) make me appreciate volleyball even more."

Mounties take second, third

Observer staff

Both Michelle Herbes and Megan Boals cracked into the top 10, leading the No. 12 Eastern Oregon women's cross country team to a third-place finish at the Cascade Collegiate Conference championship meet Friday at Cottage Grove.

"Herbes and Boals did an excellent job of engaging with the lead back early and racking hard to stay up front, giving us two low point scorers," head coach Ben Welch said.

Herbes came in second with a time of 17:47.1, trailing only freshman phenom Amelia Pullen of Warner Pacific, who finished in 17:35.7. The two were the only runners to break the tape in less than 18 minutes. Herbes' time was also the second best ever at EOU, Welch said.

"Getting second individually was a big accomplishment for me," Herbes said. "Two of the goals I set at the beginning of the season were to place in the top five at conference and go sub 18 (min-

utes). As for the team getting third overall, I thought that everyone worked really hard to get us there."

Boals posted a time of 18:16.8 to take 10th overall. The effort garnered all-conference recognition for Herbes and Boals as both finished in the top 12.

Lisa Megargee finished the race in 20th place with a time of 18:48.5, while freshman MacKenzie Trainer continued her solid finish to the season with a 28th-place finish and a time of 19:04.8. Stormy Bullard, who posted a time of 19:28.2, took 33rd to round out Eastern's top five.

The Mountaineers edged Oregon Tech for fourth place. EOU scored 88 points as a team, while OIT had 94.

College of Idaho was the top team with 55 points and a pair of top-five finishers. Southern Oregon (70 points) was second.

The 23rd-ranked EOU men scored 110 points to take fourth overall behind a top-five finish from all-CCC runner Alex Navarro.

Navarro came in third overall, posting a time of 25:21.5 to finish just six seconds behind race leader Riley Sine of Northwest (Washington).

"Alex Navarro continued his superb season of excellent racing," Welch said.

Travis Running finished one spot out of all-conference recognition, taking 13th with a time of 25:53.7.

Hunter Nichols and Braxton Wilson finished together in 34th and 35th. The freshman Nichols crossed the line in 26:57.6, and Wilson followed just 0.1 seconds later.

Weyekin Wild Bill was 41st in a time of 27:07.5 to complete Eastern's top five.

College of Idaho, like on the women's side, won to complete the team sweep, scoring 43 points. Southern Oregon (59) was second, and Oregon Tech (84) placed third.

Eastern now waits to see its fate for the NAIA national championship meet, which will take place Nov. 22 in Vancouver, Washington.

LHS soccer bows out in quarters

Observer staff

The La Grande girls soccer team fell just short of a return trip to the Class 4A state semifinals, dropping their quarterfinal contest on the road against North Valley Saturday, 3-2.

The loss brings an end to the Tigers' season with a final record of 12-3 overall.

The La Grande boys soccer team lost on the road to Marist in the Class 4A state quarterfinals Saturday, 2-0.

The boys finish the season with a final record of 9-5-1. Stats were not provided for either contest.



Scott Stoddard/Grants Pass Daily Courier

La Grande's Grace Perry moves the ball upfield as North Valley's Zoe Guthrie defends during the 4A playoff game between the Tigers and Knights Saturday.

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