



Photo by Kathy Aney/EO Media Group

Enterprise coach Mike Crawford and his players react while watching the final moments of the team's overtime win against Heppner last Saturday in the Blue Mountain Conference district tournament at the Pendleton Convention Center. Enterprise beat the Mustangs 40-38, notching third place in the district and Crawford's 500th win.

500 and counting

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

ENTERPRISE — Mike Crawford used the word “blessed” several times in describing his basketball coaching career, one that at Enterprise High School has spanned 31 seasons, 758 games and — after last Saturday's 40-38 overtime thriller over Heppner at the Blue Mountain Conference tournament — 500 victories.

The blessings, though, stem more from the hundreds of athletes he has worked with since the start of the 1989-90 season, his first leading the EHS girls basketball program.

“What does it really mean? It means that I've been doing this a long time, but I've also been very blessed with the players I've had over all these years,” he said Wednesday.

Crawford, 61, joined an elite group in the state of Oregon with the latest milestone win, as he is just the seventh girls basketball coach in state history to win 500 games, and the fourth to win that many at one school.

Along the way, he's guided the program to numerous state tournament trophies, including a championship in 1996, had players who now help him on the sidelines as assistant coaches and even has second generations of families who have played for him.

And though many of the details now blend together, he remembers many of those games — wins and losses both — in a tapestry woven together over the last three decades.

Early days

Crawford is actually in his 40th year as a high school coach and has coached much more than just basketball. During his junior year of college at Oregon State University he did his junior block — observing a high school class setting — at Junction City High School and helped with the football program. His senior year, he student taught at Willamette High School in Eugene, where he linked up with baseball coach Pat Bailey, who later led George Fox University to prominence on the diamond.

“He provided me with a really solid base,” Crawford said of Bailey. “I can still hear



Photo by Kathy Aney/EO Media Group

Crawford and his players celebrate and react with emotion following last Saturday's win, No. 500 of his career.

some of the things he had to say to me.”

Bailey was one of several coaches Crawford worked with or learned from during his early years as he shaped his coaching philosophy. He taught in Arlington following graduation from Oregon State, where he coached junior high football, was volunteer coach on the basketball team and was then hired as the head baseball coach, leading Arlington to a state semifinal appearance in 1982. While there, he worked with John Rogers in football and Lee Bittinger on the basketball sidelines, and both programs won state titles during the 1981-82 school year. He later took over as the head football coach when Rogers departed.

When he and his wife, Tammy, moved to Enterprise after she got a teaching job there, he coached alongside football coach Chuck Corak, worked with boys basketball coach Dick Quinn, and exchanged notes on philosophy with former Joseph basketball coaching great Gary Sather.

All of them, he said, approached coaching with a common guiding principle.

“They all shared the belief — and I believe it, too — that

you gotta believe in what you're teaching. You gotta sell it that 'This is the way we're going to do it,’” he said. “If you don't believe, the kids aren't going to believe it.”

Lisa Farwell, Enterprise's volleyball coach, was a junior on the girls basketball team when Crawford took over the program at the beginning of the 1989-90 season, and said he sold the team on his ideas for the program from day one.

“I remember he came in with a lot of energy. He was excited to have the job and be a head coach. We bought in 100%,” Farwell said. “He was ready to implement some new things into the program. We worked on a press we called ‘the buzz.’ That was exciting. He had some new ideas.”

As is often the case, it took a couple of years to get the program moving in the right direction. EHS won just four games that first season, though one of them was a memorable victory for Crawford — one he called “very emotional.” The team's only league win that season came on the road against Pine Eagle, where he had graduated from in 1976.

A dynamic program

By the mid-1990s, Enter-

prise had become a force to reckon with not only in the Wapiti League but in the state. In the 1994-95 season the team won 22 games, and in 1996 EHS won the state championship, taking a thriller over Santiam Christian 58-54.

That game holds a memory that to this day sticks with Aneliese Stein, who was a junior on that team. Enterprise held a two-point lead in the final seconds, and she had an opportunity for two free throws to ice the game.

“He told me right before I went to the line that he knew I could do it,” recalled Stein, who now is an assistant coach alongside Crawford at Enterprise.

Stein indeed hit both to seal the championship.

The win leading up to that state title game berth is one that is still with Crawford.

“The semifinals at state that year we played against Regis. That was a triple overtime game we won in the semis and then won the final the next night,” he said of the 63-61 thriller.

The title season was one that came during a stretch where Enterprise won the league eight years in a row and claimed six district titles. The team also won 20 games or more each of those years and followed the '96 title with a third-place finish in '97 and a runner-up performance in 2001.

The '97 squad was undefeated — despite injuries late in the season to key players, including Stein — up until a semifinal loss to the team it had defeated in the finals the year prior, Santiam Christian. Even in that game, with all the injuries, Enterprise had a 12-point lead before a late flurry by the Eagles.

“No doubt about it — I'll say it forever — we had the best team in the state,” Crawford said.

In all, Enterprise has won 20 games or more 14 times, been to the state playoffs 17 times and claimed 10 placings at state in the last three decades. Only nine times has EHS had a losing season under Crawford.

Crawford's coaching success at Enterprise is not limited to the hardwood, though, as he coached the boys golf

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Kohr drains 10 treys, powers Union to tourney



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

Union's Brianna Kohr scored 35 points and hit 10 3-pointers Friday night.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

UNION — Brianna Kohr was at a loss for words Friday after a stunning performance that helped boost the Union girls basketball team back to the 2A state tournament.

In her final career home game, the Bobcats' senior hit 10 3-pointers — seven in the second half — and finished with 35 points as Union thumped Lakeview in the first round of the

state playoffs, 65-31, to reach the state tourney for the first time since 2015.

“That was our goal from the beginning. We were working hard in practice all week,” Kohr said of the team making it to the state tourney. “It was really an overall effort from start to end. It's a good feeling.”

Kohr had 11 first half points to help the Bobcats, who never trailed, build a 27-14 halftime lead.

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Southern hoops stun EOU women

Observer staff

LA GRANDE — The Southern Oregon University Raiders got the best of Eastern Oregon this time.

After losses by 23 and 22 points earlier in the season to the Mountaineers, SOU upended EOU Friday in La Grande, 76-69, in the Cascade Collegiate Conference semifinals.

“It was a game of runs. We got up two different times up by 10 and one other time by eight,” Eastern head coach Anji Weissenfuh said. “They made a lot of big shots. We gave up 13 3s after a game we didn't give up any.”

The Raiders shot 13-for-28 from 3-point range on the night.

EOU took a 59-49 lead into the fourth quarter, but SOU went off in the last 10 minutes, scoring 27 points to take control of the game.

The tight back and forth battle saw EOU trail after one quarter before taking a 36-35 lead into the half.

Eastern used a big third to build the lead, but Southern had the final say.

“We had our opportunities,” Weissenfuh said. “The girls put everything they had into it. We weren't able to get a rebound or a stop or offensive execution when we needed it. SOU came and played hard.”

Emma Logan, Rachel Fielder and Jane Nelson all scored 13 points, while Taylor Stricklin added 11.

The win sends the Raiders to the NAIA national tournament with the CCC's second automatic bid after Northwest Christian won against Corban, and left EOU's hopes for an at-large bid in major peril. Eastern (22-10 overall) is ranked 25th in the nation, but lost three of its final four contests.

“We're right on the bubble. Honestly, I am a (conference) rater. We could be the first one out, could be out by three or four, or make it by one,” Weissenfuh said.

EOU softball falls

Observer staff

ASHLAND — The Eastern Oregon University softball team dropped the first two games Friday of its weekend road set against top-ranked Southern Oregon, losing the opener 9-1 in six innings, and the

second game 12-0 in five innings in Cascade Collegiate Conference play. Due to technical issues, stats were not available at press time.

The Mountaineers (3-13 overall, 3-3 CCC) and the Raiders play two more games on Saturday.