

Sports

Tough season-ending losses overshadow outstanding finishes as fall playoffs wrap up

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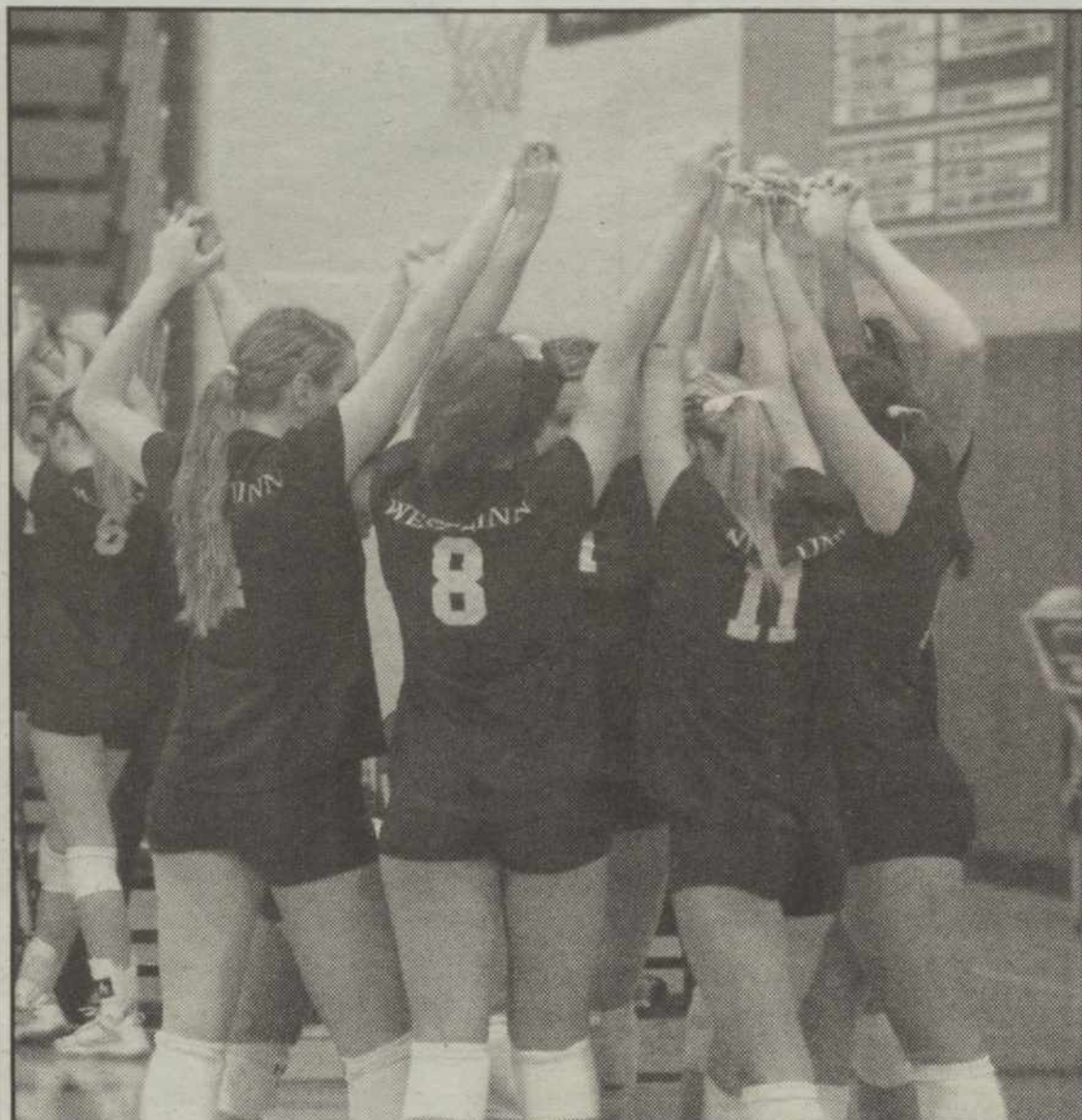
With State titles in their sights, the fall teams finished what may have been the best fall playoff season in school history, sending five teams to State.

Volleyball: Three Rivers League Champs, Second Place in State

A second place finish at State would be a spectacular end to the season for most teams, but the Lions Volleyball Team walked away as State runner ups slightly disappointed after falling one victory short of defending its State Championship title.

For the second straight year, the Lions entered the State Championships as less talked about favorites, mostly overshadowed by Jesuit's dominance in the regular season. However, unlike last year when Jesuit was upset by a surprise North Medford squad, the Lions had every intention of upending Jesuit themselves, for their second consecutive State title. Unfortunately, it was not to be for West Linn, as Jesuit cruised its way through the tournament, and battled past the Lions 25-15, 25-13, 25-21 for their second State title in school history.

"We played a team that played their system better than we played our system," West Linn coach Carl Neuberger



The Varsity Volleyball Team celebrates on Senior Night, the Lions' last home game of the regular season. The team honored the departure of eight seniors, most of whom will go on to play in college.

said of Jesuit. Neuberger was named this year's Three Rivers League Coach of the Year.

Over the course of the two day tournament, the team played some of its best volleyball of the season, over which they compiled a record of 29-5 (12-0).

Many of the Lions' accomplishments at State may be diminished by falling just short, but the fact of the matter is West Linn had another

successful State run.

In the semifinals the Lions took down a highly ranked Sheldon team, 25-10, 25-21, 25-18 to reach the finals. The Lions cruised through the semifinal thanks to a number of kills from Alyssa O'Neil and Caitlin McDonnell, seniors. The Lions stopped Gresham on many attacks, thanks to the stellar defense of Danielle Sargent, senior. Sargent's defense dominated throughout the tournament, and earned her a featured article in the *Oregonian*.

O'Neil and Kawasaki were both named First Team All State. Their volleyball careers are far from over, as they will be squaring off against each other for the next four years. O'Neil will play for Oregon State University, and Kawasaki will play for the University of Oregon.

Seniors McDonnell, Sargent, Brenna Kelly, Stephanie Hutchinson, Lindsey Wickert, and Betsy Wilhelm all graduate in the spring, and many will go onto play collegiality along with O'Neil and Kawasaki.

Football: Second Place Three Rivers League, Second Round of State

Amongst the confusion and shock following the football team's 12-10 loss to Beaverton in the second round of the State playoffs, only one thing was certain; this one was going to sting for a while. For the second consecutive season, the Lions found themselves on the road

up against a high powered offense with an opportunity to reach the final eight of State. This time however, instead of being blown out by West Salem, the Lions dominated the Beaverton Beavers for three and a half quarters, and led 10-0 with only two minutes standing between them and the quarterfinals.

Beaverton scored its first points of the game with just a minute and half remaining. The extra point opportunity missed wide right, and the Lions held onto a 10-6 lead, meaning the Beavers would need a touchdown, and not a field goal, to win the game. After failing to run out the clock, Beaverton got the ball back with just under a minute to go.

The Lions' defense held steady, forcing the Beavers into a fourth and ten situation

team and as a family this year and had lots of fun." Reid Adams, junior, said.

While it was a bitter end for many of the seniors, it should not be forgotten that the football team had a tremendous season, especially considering the number of injury obstacles they have had to overcome.

A week earlier, the Lions notched a home playoff victory to move into the second round. In the first round encounter with the Barlow Bruins, the Lions offense outshined the Bruins star running back Malcom Johnson, as the Lions won a 42-28 shoot out. The Lions, who had struggled to stop the run in games earlier this season, gave up over 300 yards on the ground to Johnson, but got the stops when they needed them. Despite Johnson's big performance, it was not



The Girls' Varsity Cross Country Team rallies before the State meet. The team suffered injury and illness throughout the season, but managed to pull off a 10th place finish at State.

Photo by Christopher Erbin

enough to lift the Bruins past the Lions.

Boys' & Girls' Cross Country: Boys: Three Rivers League Champs, 3rd in State Girls: Three Rivers Champs, 10th in State

The Boys Cross Country team walked away with a third-place team trophy, marking the best finish at State by WLHS in school history.

After finishing the race, the Lions knew they had run well but figured that they had missed the medal podium.

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Josh Oltman, senior, eludes a tackler in the first round playoff game against Barlow. Oltman led the team in receiving, including a 60-yard touchdown reception in the Lions 42-21 victory.

Photo by William Thompson