

# from the editor: It's Good to be King

Championships in sports don't come around that often.

The last time a Vernonia Logger team won a state championship was in boys basketball in 1978.

So let's take a moment to appreciate, celebrate, and even treasure, what this year's Vernonia Loggers boys basketball team accomplished when they brought home the 2A State Championship from Pendleton on March 6.

Head coach David Weller's team had what has to be considered a truly remarkable season. After losing their opening game the Loggers didn't lose again, winning their next 28 straight games.

This was a team that included several teammates who had played together since the third grade, but also included four players who had just arrived in Vernonia and were welcomed and embraced like brothers who had always been here. The team held weekend breakfasts almost every week and bonded like the family they became.

At Pendleton, the Loggers showed they were also good citizens who were noted for their polite and good behavior throughout the weekend. Following each of their three games, the Loggers voluntarily spent time cleaning up the bleachers. This unselfish behavior was noticed by officials from OSAA, who called the Loggers behavior "classy" on Twitter.

The group that Weller and assistant coaches Matt Blair and Byron Schorzmann took to Pendleton was a complete team. Throughout the season Weller had the luxury of rotating his squad, using his deep bench and giving playing time to those that earned it or had the hot hand. Each player understood their role and the goals of the team and Weller used a deep rotation to spread the minutes around. There was a healthy competition on the squad for playing time, which in turn brought out the best in each player.

Sophomore Clay Sullivan, after spending most of last season as the team leader, didn't have as much pressure on him this year. This year's varsity included a group of talented juniors: Brett Elliott, Tristan Adams, Brett Jones, Luke McCallum, and Blake Clark. These players were all a year older and more experienced. Added to that group were two seniors, Jared Medearis, a determined guard who spelled Sullivan at the point, and Robert Conner, a 6' 6" transfer student

who vocally provided leadership and motivation. Three exchange students, 6' 9" Arne Schiemann, Francesco Mian and Marc Henke, all earned varsity spots. Schiemann and Mian gave Weller some size in the post. When Henke, one of the best all-around players on the team, went down with an early season knee injury the Loggers hardly missed a beat and continued their winning ways. Weller added sophomore Andrew Vazquez from the JV squad at the end of the season.

The Loggers made it to Pendleton by winning as a team, and that's how they won the State Tournament as well. Weller's Loggers knew they could count on somebody to step up on any given night. One night it might be Sullivan or Adams with the hot hand, or Elliott grabbing a big offensive rebound or sinking some key free throws, or Jones or McCallum providing a spark off the bench, or Conner or Schiemann or Mian working inside and attacking the rim.

At Pendleton the Loggers had three different leading scorers and three different players named Player of the Game.

Against Burns in the opener on Thursday, March 3 it was Sullivan who led the way with 15 points and 8 rebounds. But it was Elliott who coolly stepped to the free throw line with 41 seconds left and calmly sank three shots to give the Loggers a 43-42 lead; the Loggers won 44-42.

In the semi finals against Bandon it was Adams who got hot, scoring 19 points on 7 for 10 shooting, including 5 of 8 from three point range and was named Player of the Game.

The final against the number one ranked Regis Rams was the Loggers season in a microcosm. With Sullivan struggling from the field Conner stepped up and scored 17 points on 5 for 7 shooting while going 7 for 10 from the foul line and was named Player of the Game. Adams was once again sharp and had 14 points, Schiemann added 10 points and Mian came off the bench and scored 10 points. Even though he struggled shooting the ball, Sullivan still found a way to contribute, grabbing 6 rebounds and running the offense from the point. The Loggers shot 52 percent from the field in the second half, a torrid rate in a pressure packed high school final, proof that Sullivan was getting the ball to the right players in the right spot. The 57-49 win was a complete and dominant team effort.

After the game Sullivan was

named First Team All-Tournament and Elliott was named Second Team, but certainly Adams and Conner were also both deserving of All Tournament recognition.

This championship certainly belongs to the players and coaches on this amazing squad. But it also belongs to the school and the district - to the athletic department, to the administration, to the School Board, and to the faculty and staff. It certainly belongs to the student body who cheered them on and to the cheer squad and pep band who provided entertainment and spirit throughout the season.

This championship also belongs to the community at large, because this really was a community effort - to the youth coaches who worked with these boys since they were young, to the parents of the players, to the businesses and fans who supported the program with funding for the trip to Pendleton, and to all the fans who cheered them on all season, at home, away, and in Pendleton.

Winning this title is something that can never be taken away from these players and coaches. They will always be together. They will always be champions.

So remember these names Vernonia: Sullivan, Elliott, Adams, Medearis, Jones, McCallum, Conner, Schiemann, Mian, Henke, Clark, Vazquez, Weller, Blair, Schorzman.

Today they are our Kings!

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Triple Edge Band

**Sun, April 10**  
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**733 Bridge St, Vernonia • 503-429-9999**



**Friends of Stub Stewart State Park and Banks-Vernonia State Trail Monthly Meeting**

**March 24, 2016**  
**7-9 pm**

The Dairy Creek West Meeting Hall  
Stub Stewart State Park  
30380 NW Hwy 47  
Buxton, OR 97109

Interested public welcome  
Terra Kemper, Park Ranger  
503-324-0606 x223

**Cedar Side Inn**

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**St. Patrick's Day**  
Corned beef & cabbage special  
Thursday, March 17th

**Karaoke**  
Every 2nd & Last Friday

**Taco Tuesday**  
from opening until 9pm  
3 hardshell or 1 softshell \$4.25

**Ladies' Night**  
every Thursday 6pm-close

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• Free Pool • Free WiFi • Specialty Pizzas


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Check our Facebook page for daily specials and upcoming events  
756 Bridge Street, Vernonia 503-429-5841

**Upper Nehalem Watershed Council Meeting**

**6:30 pm on Thursday**  
**March 24, 2016**

at the UNWC office  
1201 Texas Ave. Suite A  
Entrance is around the back of the School District building



For more info call  
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