

IVHS Equestrian club takes honors in first district meet

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

Students from the Illinois Valley High School Equestrian team made waves at the first district meet Feb. 4-6, competing with high schools all over Southern Oregon at the Jackson County Expo Center.

IVHS represented itself well, with students of all experience levels in events that many outside the horse world may never have heard about: dressage, in-hand obstacle relays, drills, figure-eight and keyhole.

The variety of events allows equestrian students to showcase their skills and techniques of horseback riding. It's not enough just to get a fast time: students are also judged on style and control.

"[They're] judged on posture and how well the pony responds to their touch," Eddy said. "If the horse starts cocking its head in any manner they deduct points."

According to Eddy, a highlight for Illinois Valley was the in-hand relay with Jessica Rollins, Mali Whicheloe, Oscar Flores and Lorraine Schlabach.

"This was the first event of the season and I was very proud of the team," Eddy said.

Newer members of the equestrian team also held their own at the competition. Eddy said that freshman Meghan Flores did well in her individual events, and also commended sophomore Savannah Krauss.

Senior Lorraine Schlabach placed third overall in the in-hand trail event out of 18 others, and could make a run at the State level tentatively scheduled in May.

Eddy said equestrian athletes normally practice two to three days a week, sometimes with five-hour practices on Sundays. That all adds up to about nine hours a week.

Illinois Valley equestrian athletes are scheduled to compete again the weekend of March 4-6.



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

Jesse Rollins showing that Illinois Valley Equestrian team has game, and bovines.

Cougars' Senior Night win sets new record



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Junior Tyler Robbins, #12, goes up for two during the Feb. 8 home victory against St. Mary's.

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Senior Night recognition ceremonies were only part of the reward for seniors on the Illinois Valley High School basketball team Tuesday, Feb. 8.

Before taking the court to play the St. Mary's Crusaders, the Cougars found out their league rival Cascade Christian had just lost to Lakeview 48-51. That meant Illinois Valley could take the top spot in the 3A Southern Cascade league with a win Tuesday.

"That was like a late Christmas present or something," said Coach Jeff Winters. "But it didn't take the edge off our guys. It made them more nervous because they knew they really had to win."

If the Cougars were nervous, they

didn't show it for long. After a rare bungled free-throw attempt by Roger Hults, he laughed it off and made the second to put Illinois Valley on the board. They would never relinquish the lead.

By halftime, the Cougars were up 47-14 and cruising against St. Mary's, taking apart their offensive blueprint and keeping their point guard under control.

Illinois Valley asserted itself with a 76-41 win with extra motivation through the Senior Night festivities and the chance for a league championship. The Cougars also broke the school winning streak record at 13 games in a row.

Curtis Paulson, James Buck, Roger Hults, Alex Hess and Jesse Bethke received senior recognition before the game. Winters commended all the seniors, noting Bethke's improvement over the course

of his four years on the basketball team.

"He's come a long way," Winters said. "If I showed tapes [of his freshman year] you wouldn't believe he was the same guy."

Winters also praised Hults, who he said was "on fire" Tuesday because of Senior Night and made several three-point shots from outside his usual zone.

"He was all over the court," Winters said. "He was on fire. But he also gets excited when his teammates do something good ... he has good sportsmanship like all the guys on the team."

Paulson also had a solid night on both ends of the floor and scored four points against St. Mary's.

"He's one of the more inspirational guys on the team," Winters said. "He can play two or three different positions; he can shoot, pass and defend."

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