

# Sports



(Courtesy photo for The Illinois Valley News)

IVHS Freshman Holly McKenzie rides during the regular season. McKenzie will be representing IVHS in pole pending in Redmond, Ore on Wednesday, May 15.

## IVHS Equestrian Team qualifies one state competitor

By  
**Tristan Stocker**  
IVN Contributing Writer

The Illinois Valley High School Equestrian Team got off to a rocky start, but things started to come together for them towards the end of the season.

“As a coach, it was nice to see the kids laughing even when things went awry,” said head coach Desiree Eddy.

But despite the inevitable downs which seem to always accompany the ups; IVHS won the Southern District Sportsmanship Award, which is awarded purely on a peer-vote basis.

“There’s really no benefit to being mean towards our opponents,” said Eddy. “It’s kind of like the Olympics – as soon as we get to state we’re recognized as Southern Oregon, and that kid you were mean to is now your teammate.”

The equestrian season only lasts for three months wherein they compete in three meets to determine who will move forward to compete in the state competition, and Holly McKenzie will do just that by representing IVHS in pole pending in Redmond, Ore on Wednesday, May 15.

At the third and final meet, IVHS came in second place in the In-Hand Obstacle Relay (IHOR), coached by

Alicia Kinsey, and just missed state qualification by a couple points.

“We had a rough start at the first meet in the IHOR event because one of our horses wasn’t acting right,” said Eddy. “It turned out the horse was sick and had to be escorted to the vet.”

This year, team took on new recruit Monica Meng from China, who was paired up with a rather large horse named Bubba.

“We’re grateful for having Monica on the team this season,” said Eddy. “In China, the only place she’s seen horses was at the zoo. She’s made us laugh and cry over the season and the coaches have had a wonderful time watching her and

Bubba develop.”

At the third meet, the team said their Senior Farewell to senior Bryan Sowell as this is his last year competing for the Cougars.

“Bryan is an amazing young man who I’ve had the pleasure to coach for two years on my Drill Team,” said Eddy. “He steals the hearts of many when he takes the arena and is seen as a role model by the rest of the team.”

Sowell has cerebral palsy, but he doesn’t let a few heart surgeries and a pacemaker get in the way of his passion for equines.

“He struggles with constant pain and doesn’t complain at all,” said Eddy. “He’s a true inspiration just because of who he is. Other issues

make him a miracle.”

Sowell has plans to sign up to be a volunteer firefighter this summer and afterwards attend Montana State in the fall.

Eddy and the team would also like to thank all the coaches for their time, the parents for the money they invest and to the community who supports the team at fundraisers.

“We’ve spent \$5,000 this season so far and we still have to go to state, which isn’t cheap” said Eddy. “Therefore we’d especially to thank All Sprint Ranch and the Late Carl Allman for the use of your arena twice a week. We are also very grateful for Don Clark allowing us on sunny days to ride in his arena.”

## Freshman Halona Jackson and IV Cougars leave competition in the dust

By  
**Tristan Stocker**  
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On Tuesday, April 23, the Illinois Valley track team took to Glide to compete in the second Glide Small Schools meet and on Friday, April 26, the freshmen and sophomores competed at South Medford High School in the Bob Newland Frosh/Soph Invitational.

“We had a really good meet at Glide against the other small schools – like us,” said head coach Ray Yarborough. “We had a lot of kids break personal records that day – probably the most at any meet this season.”

Placing first for the men’s team was Jovanny Sanchez in the 800 meters (2:20.56) and 1500 meters (4:42.4); Joshua Allen in the pole vault (11-00.00); and Mack Epple in the high jump (05-08.00).

For the women, Taysha Hodge, Samantha Milner, Amanda

Brooks and Theresa Frederick placed first in the 4x400 relay (4:34.38); Halona Jackson placed first in the 100 meters (12.81), 200 meters (27.03) and triple jump (31-02); while Frederick took first in high jump (5-) and pole vault (7-06).

Back on the men’s team, Nick Hoezle placed second in the 100 meters (11.58), 200 meters (23.94) and 400 meters (55.84); and Epple landed in second in the 300 meter hurdles (47.16).

Placing second in women’s was Amanda Brooks in the 100 meters (13.02) and Alex LaFlamme in shot put (27-10).

Athletes placing third in the meet were Epple in long jump (17-09.5), Hodge in 200 meters (27.94), Milner in 1500 meters (5:50.92), and Frederick in 300 meter hurdles (52.41).

Overall, the men placed third with a total of 90 points and the women took second with a score of 110.

The Frosh/Soph Invitational proved a bit more difficult for the Cougars, as they don’t have all that many freshmen and sophomores with which to compete.

“It’s the only frosh/soph meet we compete in all year and

it’s really good for the kids because they’re competing solely against kids their own age,” said Yarborough. “But they’re also competing against 5-A and 6-A schools.”

The Lady Cougars were the star of this meet, despite placing eleventh out of sixteen competing schools.

Freshman Jackson took first place in the triple jump (32.01) and third in the 100 meters (13.32) and 400 meters (62.43). She also placed fifth in the 200 meters (27.81).

Next on the agenda for the Cougars is the 64th Annual Grants Pass Rotary Track & Field Meet on Saturday, May 4 at the Russ Werner Field in Grants Pass which starts at 10 a.m.

The Grants Pass Rotary Meet is purely invitational, which means that athletes have to qualify in order to get invited.

“We qualified eight athletes this year,” said Yarborough. “However, the meet falls on the same week as the SAT tests, so only four will be going.”

The athletes who will be attending the Grants Pass Rotary Meet are Epple, Jackson, Sanchez and Hoezle.

## Freshman Skyla Patton of IVHS Golf Team sinks hole-in-one

By  
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IVN Contributing Writer

Thursday, April 25, marks a day freshman Skyla Patton won’t soon forget.

It was just a normal day of practice for Patton as she teed off on the eighth hole – a short par 3 – with her 6 iron.

“I just teed off and saw it land on the green,

so I went to grab my bag,” said Patton. “When I put my bag away and looked up, I couldn’t see the ball.”

It wasn’t until teammate Kimberly Rodriguez noticed the ball in the hole that Patton discovered her achievement.

“You just got a hole-in-one!” Rodriguez said to me, and I must’ve jumped up and down for like five minutes,” Patton said.

Patton has only been playing golf for two

months now and definitely plans to pursue it.

“My dad’s played golf for a really long time, so I knew I was going to play since I’m not a track person” said Patton when asked why she decided to play golf. “I got a set of clubs beforehand and decided it was super fun and I’m definitely going to do this.”

“I am very excited for Skyla,” said head coach Derek Duman. “Many golfers go their entire lives without getting a hole in one. It is

a once in a lifetime event that she will never forget.”

As for the team, they competed in Medford at the Centennial Tournament and took fourth place with 596 points. North Valley ended up winning that one with 485.

The girls then play their last pre-district tournament at Rogue Valley Country Club which is to be hosted by St. Mary’s High School on Tuesday, April 30.

Arts Red  
Garter

Lavender  
Blue

May 3 & 4  
Karaoke - Dancing  
Live Music

**East  
Fork**

Friday May 3 @  
5:30 p.m.

**Taylor’s  
Country Store**

**Wild River**  
HANDCRAFTED FOOD & ALE

Every Wed  
Open Mic  
Night  
From 6-8  
p.m..

**Pool Tourney  
Every  
Saturday  
Cash Prizes**

**Sportsman  
Tavern**

**Kate’s  
Redwood  
Bar and Grill**

Tuesday to Sunday  
Noon to Close

Kitchen Closes at 8  
Stop in and see  
Kate and Mamie  
Today!

**Outdoors in the  
Beer Garden**

May 3, 7 p.m.

**J.Barley  
Band**

\$8 cover

@  
**Mc Grew’s of  
Course**