

SPORTS

Eagles clinch second place, IMC baseball playoffs next

By Mike Weber
For Columbia Gorge News

The Hood River Valley High Eagles baseball team has enjoyed tremendous success this season and they're hoping that it will continue as they seek to win the Intermountain Conference Championship for the first time since 2017.

Following a pair of wins May 8 in Redmond, the Eagles clinched second place in the six-team IMC with a 6-2 league mark and an 8-4 overall record. HRV will play an opponent yet to be determined in an IMC semifinal May 19 at 4:30 p.m. at Hood River Valley High School. The winner of that game plays in the May 21 championship game at a site and versus an opponent both yet to be determined.

Hood River, guided by 12th-year Coach Erich Harjo, played the first game of a three-game series vs. Gorge rival The Dalles May 11 (results came after the printed edition deadline). Hood River meets The Dalles (3-4 IMC, 3-9 overall) in the final regular season contest for both teams in a 3 p.m. double-header May 14 at Hood River. A Senior Night ceremony will be held after Game 1 to honor Eagle seniors playing in the final regular season game.

"Everything is going good, the players have a good attitude, and our league is stronger than we thought it was going to be," said Harjo. "Things are so much different now, but we're trying to keep things as normal as possible with practice and games and we're just trying to maintain the same routine that we've had in the past. Having a shorter season isn't ideal, but it's better than what we had last year, which was no season at all."

The Eagles' stellar season continued last week when they won three straight games. The streak started with a 10-7, come-from-behind home win May 4 over

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Erich Harjo
HRV baseball coach

the Redmond Panthers (3-4 IMC, 3-7).

"We expect to win every game because we have an experienced team with lots of juniors (seven) and seniors (six)," said Harjo, a 2000 The Dalles High graduate. "When you play against a young team like The Dalles (10 freshmen, no seniors) the biggest thing you have to keep in mind is you have to jump on them early and play competitively right off the bat and try to get them to match your effort. If you play at an effort that is difficult for them to match, then it can set the tone for the rest of the series."

"I played on the baseball team for (The Dalles Coach) Steve Sugg when I was at The Dalles High School and I know how he operates. I have a lot of respect for Steve and what he does and how he goes about things and I know he'll have his guys ready to play hard. They've won some games, so I expect them to be a pretty competitive team. We're just going to play Hood River Valley baseball to the best of our ability and stick with the goals that we have this year."

HRV baseball against Redmond last week came with a never-say-die attitude. Redmond took a 3-1 second inning lead, but HRV narrowed it to 3-2 in the third when sophomore Jake Von Lubken (3-for-4, two singles, RBI) hammered a solo home run. Redmond came back, extending its advantage to 7-3 in the fifth inning.

The Eagles responded with an explosive sixth-inning rally, highlighted by a two-RBI double by junior Mason



Hood River Valley High School senior baseball players stand for a photograph. Pictured are, left to right, Nate Van Dooren, Nolan Ryan, Andy Foster, Sebastian Zeman, Emilio Castaneda and Harrison Howell. Mike Webber photo

Spelley (3-for-4, four RBI) that helped narrow the margin to 7-6. A key RBI single by senior Harrison Howell knotted it 7-7 with Spelley scoring the tying run. The Eagle offensive spurt included three more runs to propel Hood River in front 10-7 after six innings. The Panthers were unable to recover from the Eagle power surge (15 total hits) and Hood River's defense was solid and didn't allow any Redmond runs in the seventh inning.

"It was hit hard enough to get past their infielder, and it allowed a run to score and tie the game," said Howell. "We played really sluggish at the beginning of the game, but then we started hitting the ball better later. Everyone just started putting their bats on the ball and we were scoring some runs and we got the lead and scored seven runs in the sixth, which was the most

runs we've scored in one inning this year.

"It would be sweet to win the championship. We'll probably meet Pendleton in the finals and hopefully we'll be able to beat them again to win the title. We have a really good team and I know we can beat them. I believe we can do it."

Hood River won 11-3 over the defending IMC Champion (2019) Pendleton Buckaroos (8-0 IMC, 10-2) in a non-league game April 16 in Hood River.

Spelley, the Eagle starting pitcher and relief pitchers Von Lubken and Howell, combined to allow 12 hits. Howell is one of six Eagle seniors who will be honored in Friday's Senior Night event. The others include Nate Van Dooren, Sebastian Zeman, Nolan Ryan, Andy Foster, and Emilio Castaneda.

On Saturday, the Eagles

traveled to Central Oregon to face the Panthers again and Hood River had a more dominating performance in an 8-1 win at Redmond High School. The Eagles jumped in front 1-0 in the second inning when Howell (4-for-4, three singles, double, two RBI) scored on a wild pitch thrown by Redmond's Isaac Erhardt. HRV added run in the third for a 2-0 edge. HRV then put three runs on the scoreboard in the fifth, while Redmond got one run, making it 5-1.

The Eagle momentum continued in the sixth, led by Van Dooren (3-for-4, three singles, two RBI) and Howell (4-for-4, three singles, double, two RBI), who each drove in runs to help extend HRV's lead to 8-1. Von Lubken had a sparkling performance on the mound while scattering five hits and striking out nine. Hood River outthrew the Panthers 15-5 and the Eagles

played outstanding error-free defense.

In Saturday's second game Hood River won 6-5 over the Class 6A Summit Storm (8-6) at Redmond High. The Eagles built an early 3-0 second-inning lead, highlighted by RBI singles by juniors Hunter Hough and Ryles Buckley. Summit came back and trimmed the margin to 4-2 in the third. The Eagles added a run in the fifth for a 5-2 lead and both teams scored a run in the sixth, making it 6-3.

Buckley (2-for-3, RBI), Ryan (2-for-2) and Spelley (2-for-3) led the Eagle eight-hit offensive attack. Starting pitcher Van Dooren scattered five hits and had five strikeouts in six innings pitched. Van Dooren and relief pitcher Hough allowed seven hits.

HRV boys golf win streak ends despite lowest score of season

The level of competition increased last week for the Hood River Valley boys golf team and the Eagles responded with their lowest 18-holed, par-72 round of the season.

HRV was a last-minute entry into a Northwest Oregon Conference tournament after its regular season, Intermountain Conference tournament in Pendleton was cancelled. The Eagles played solid golf at Glendoveer Golf Course in East Portland against St. Helens, Scappoose, La Salle and Wilsonville, finishing second

by five strokes to La Salle, 336-341. St. Helens finished third with a 348, Scappoose was fourth at 366, and Wilsonville shot 378 for fifth.

"I knew La Salle had a pretty good team," HRV Coach Erin Mason said. "I had heard their No. 1 and No. 2 golfers were single-digit handicap players potentially." "It was a shootout in the end and a close one. None of my players had ever played the course. So, in the end, I couldn't be happier with how my guys played."

Ren Tappert led the HRV boys with a 75 and placed second overall. Dylan Santee

was seventh with an 83. La Salle's Will Koch was medalist with a 73.

"We went to a course no one had played ever and competed with the top school in that conference," Mason said. "Hats off to La Salle, they have a great team and coaching staff. I would love to be able to get them on our course for a rematch."

Hood River Valley played its final home tournament Monday at Indian Creek vs. The Dalles and Pendleton (results were unavailable for the print edition).


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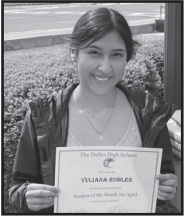
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Dr. Cullen's
Student of the week

Yuliana Robles, Student of the week

I could not ask for a better student. She has a strong work ethic, is not afraid to ask questions, and has completed every video and homework assignment that has been assigned.


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