

Continuing dominance in tennis

With no state tournament to look toward, Redmond boys still enjoying an undefeated season

BY BRIAN RATHBONE
The Bulletin

REDMOND — Not long ago, the Redmond boys tennis team was eyeing a run that could have resulted in multiple state titles.

After capturing the Class 5A state team title in 2019, coach Nathan Saito saw 2020 as a year the squad could have repeated as champions, and 2021 as a year his team would be seeking a three-peat.

The COVID-19 pandemic put an end to that possible string of state titles. However, winning the state championship, let alone repeating, is not what the program has been about.

“We don’t really have goals like that. One of our mottos is to go out and play every match to win,” Saito said. “Just go out and play hard. That takes a little pressure off. It is a good group of kids. I say this before every match: the goal is to play good tennis and have good sportsmanship, and that is what they do.”

That formula has continued to work after the 2020 season was canceled and no state tournament is scheduled this spring after a short six-week season. With two matches remaining in the season and a district tournament on the horizon, the Panthers have yet to lose a match as a team. Their most recent win came May 5 in a 7-1 victory over Ridgeview at Sam Johnson Park in Redmond.

“I would say we are having an up year while the rest of the league is kind of down,” Saito said of the Intermountain Conference. “It has been nice to get out and play competitively. We have a good crop of seniors who have put a lot of time in here, and this year we would have been competitive (at state). We are thankful that we could even play.”

A new crop of leaders is paving the way for the Redmond program. Gone are Benny Saito, 2019 doubles state champion, and Braden Brooks, who finished third in the singles state tournament in 2019. Now it’s the younger Saito brother, Yoshi, and Skyler Jones, the second half of the doubles championship duo with Benny Saito, in charge of guiding the team.

“I just hope to inspire the younger guys and help improve their skills and just make them better,” said Jones, a senior playing his final weeks of high school tennis before hitting the hardwood for basketball. “I want to get better and improve my skills but I also want them to succeed as well, pushing them and encouraging them and cheering them on.”

In an individual-driven sport like tennis, keeping skills sharp is important so as not to



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Redmond’s Yoshi Saito returns a shot while playing a singles match against Ridgeview’s Walter Gates at Sam Johnson Park in Redmond on May 5.

get passed up by other players. Jones and Yoshi Saito play multiple times per week, and from time to time, square off against each other to improve.

“We will occasionally hit at

Eagle Crest (Resort) because it is good to challenge yourself by playing people of equal or better ability than you, so it is important for us to be hitting and playing each other,” Jones said.

“When I can hang with him it’s fun,” said Yoshi Saito, a junior. “When he is whooping me it isn’t.”

Although there is some disappointment that there is no state tournament this year, the Redmond program is enjoying the home stretch of the season with upcoming dual meets against Hood River Valley and Crook County next week, before the Intermountain Conference Tournament returns.

“It will be fun to make a run at districts,” Yoshi Saito said. “I think our eyes were set on state this year and last year. But it is too late for that now. We are just out here having fun.”

Reporter: 541-383-0307, brathbone@bendbulletin.com

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DEATH NOTICES

Homer I. Clark of Redmond, OR
Feb 19, 1928 - April 30, 2021

Arrangements: Arrangements Entrusted To: Redmond Memorial Chapel; 541.548.3219. Please visit www.redmond-memorial.com to sign the on-line guest book or to leave a thought, memory, or condolence for the family

Services: Graveside services are scheduled at Juniper Haven Cemetery, Prineville, Friday, May 14, 2021 at 10:00 AM. Potluck to follow service at Harwood Park, Prineville
Contributions may be made to: A Charity of Your Choice

Fred Lewis Coulter of Bend, OR
August 20, 1927 - April 28, 2021

Arrangements: Baird Funeral Home of Bend is honored to serve the Coulter family. Please visit our website, www.bairdfh.com, to share condolences and sign our online guest book.
Services: 1:00pm on May 15, 2021 at Finley-Sunset Hills Memorial Park in Portland, Oregon
Contributions may be made to: St. Charles Hospice (<https://foundation.stcharleshealthcare.org/donate>)

Gloria J. Kuenzi of Redmond, OR
February 3, 1939 - May 2, 2021

Arrangements: Arrangements Entrusted To: Redmond Memorial Chapel www.redmondmemorial.com; 541.548.3219
Services: A Celebration of Life will be planned for a future date
Contributions may be made to: American Diabetes Association

Timothy J. Allen of Bend, OR
January 25, 1952 - May 3, 2021

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals, Bend 541-318-0842 www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: Memorial services will be held later
Contributions may be made to: Partners in Care Hospice, 2075 NE Wyatt Ct., Bend, OR 97701

John W. Bancroft Jr. of Bend, OR
July 8, 1933 - May 3, 2021

Arrangements: Baird Funeral Home of Bend is honored to serve the Bancroft family. Please visit our website, www.bairdfh.com, to share condolences and sign our online guest book. 541.382.0903
Services: Family Service planned at a later date.

Barbara Lynn Winters of Redmond, OR
Dec 21, 1927 - May 3, 2021

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals-REDMOND www.autumnfunerals.net 541-504-9485
Services: Private services will be held at a later date.

Lois Mae Maddox of Terrebonne, OR
May 1, 1928 - April 29, 2021

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals, Redmond 541-504-9485 www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: No Services will be held at this time.

Maria Lockhart of Redmond, OR
Aug 20, 1930 - April 27, 2021

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals, Redmond 541-504-9485 www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: Services will be held at a later date.



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“Jill Cummings is the local candidate! She grew up in Central Oregon, has spent eighteen years in the local banking industry and is a proven leader. Having raised two kids in the Redmond School District, she has seen the entire K-12 experience. Jill has a proven long-term track record of serving our youth and community. As a school board director, we deserve a candidate with experience, knowledge and community connections. Vote Jill Cummings for Redmond School Board, position 3.”

- Mike McIntosh, former Superintendent

Paid for by the committee to elect Jill Cummings

SOLUTION
Sudoku on Page 2

8	2	9	4	1	6	5	7	3
6	7	5	3	8	9	1	2	4
1	4	3	7	5	2	9	8	6
2	5	7	9	4	1	3	6	8
3	9	6	2	7	8	4	5	1
4	8	1	5	6	3	7	9	2
5	6	4	8	3	7	2	1	9
7	1	2	6	9	4	8	3	5
9	3	8	1	2	5	6	4	7

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