

Sports+Outdoors

VOLLEYBALL

Doubleheaders the new norm for the IMC

BY BRIAN RATHBONE

CO Media Group

REDMOND — Three teams each playing two league matches in one night at one venue is the new normal for high school volleyball as the official shortage continues to be an issue across all sports in the state.

For volleyball junkies, it is a chance to see three matches with league-standing and play-off implications in one gym and one evening. For those competing on the court, it is a bit like tournament play, only instead of playing matches that can go three sets maximum, the league matches can last five sets.

"I was a little intimidated at the thought of doing possibly 10 sets in one night," said Ridgeview senior Madie Vaughn. "But most teams are conditioned to play in tournaments. It felt like a tournament in that way. So we are used to pushing and going harder. Maybe a 10-set night would be a little intense, but I think it is doable."

Intermountain Conference play kicked off Wednesday night with Bend, Mountain View and Redmond squaring off at Bend High, while Caldera, Summit and Ridgeview played on the Ravens' home court. That is going to be common practice for most league and nontournament matches this fall.

The headliner of the IMC doubleheader in Redmond was Summit vs. Ridgeview, who entered the matchup as two of the top 10 teams in the OSAA coaches poll, with Summit ranked No. 8 and Ridgeview No. 10.

After beating Caldera 3-0 (25-12, 25-22, 25-14) in their first match of the evening, the Ravens took control of their second match in the third set to defeat Summit 3-1 (25-22, 20-25, 25-20, 25-16) and cap the night with a dog-pile on the court after the match-winning point.

"That was my favorite win ever. It was the best connection I've ever had on a volleyball team," Vaughn said.

"I feel like that is the most that has ever come together. I feel like you see a team that can hit big, can block big and you get down on yourself. But this team, we don't care. We play for each other and we don't put ourselves down because they know it's not good for the team." It would have been all too



Ridgeview's Madie Vaughn (8) hits the ball over the net during the third set against Caldera in Redmond on Wednesday night.

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— Madie Vaughn, Ridgeview volleyball player

easy for Ridgeview to fold against Summit. After the two teams traded wins in the first two sets, the Storm jumped out to an early 9-2 lead in the third set.

Then the Ravens slowly began chipping away at the lead. They finally tied it 16-16, then took their first lead at 18-17. After being down seven points, Ridgeview closed out the third set on a 23-11 run to win it 25-20.

Going into the fourth set, all the momentum was on the Ravens' side and they beat the Storm 25-16 to win the match.

"They went out there and took care of business," said Ridgeview coach Kurtis Bower. "They just had so much fire, that is what you are looking for, to play with so much energy."

Summit made quick work of Caldera, winning in straight sets (25-9, 25-9, 25-8), but was

unable to maintain momentum after a 16-minute break between matches.

Five of the Storm's six losses this season have come against 6A opponents. Summit is still seen as a threat in the IMC, but is still finding itself and learning to trust one another on the court, according to Summit coach Emily McMahon.

"I feel like we are a really, really good team with some



Ridgeview's Ellie Owen (7) returns a serve while playing Caldera at Ridgeview on Wednesday night.



Caldera's Akela Utu (14) hits the ball over the net while playing Ridgeview in Redmond on Wednesday night.

high-caliber players," McMahon said. "I feel like Ridgeview was more scrappy than us and I think that we got tired. And that is a new thing because we aren't used to (back-to-back matches that could go five sets)."

Caldera, Bend's newest school, is having a challenging start to the volleyball season, winning only one of its 10 matches. The Wolfpack nearly stole the second set Wednesday night against Ridgeview after leading for most of the set, but was unable to close it out.

The goal now for the Wolfpack in its first varsity season (and without a senior class) is to find ways to improve that might not show up in its record or conference standings.

Caldera is playing in a loaded

conference with three teams that have combined to win four of the last six 5A volleyball state titles — Summit in 2015, Bend in 2016 and 2017, and Ridgeview in 2019.

"So far we have been competing," said Caldera coach Alicia Rudloff. "Every game we have been getting better and better. We aren't going to go out there and make goals to win every match, because we are realistic. We are going out there to set personal goals and get better personally. We are trying to work on ourselves when we go into each match and hopefully that will reflect into our team goals. Our big thing is to play with intention."

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SOCCER

Ridgeview boys go unbeaten in nonleague play

BY BRIAN RATHBONE

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For a nonleague match, the 2-1 win for Ridgeview boys soccer over Hood River Valley was a perfect way to send the undefeated Ravens into their conference schedule.

Over the past four years, the Ravens and the Eagles were routinely duking it out for the top spot in the Intermountain Conference. The teams met eight times during that span, with Hood River Valley having the upper hand going 5-2-1 over the four years and claiming two IMC titles to the Ravens' one.

Even though the two teams are no longer in the same conference, Ridgeview senior midfielder Eric Rebuelta was thrilled when we saw the two former conference rivals would play one more time.

"I was super excited when I saw them on our schedule, and on our home turf," Rebuelta said. "We have had a rivalry with them over the years. Since they are in a different conference than us, it feels good beating them in my last year."

For more than 20 minutes into Tuesday's late afternoon match at Ridgeview with less-than-ideal air quality, the contest was scoreless. Then in a span of two minutes the Ravens took a commanding 2-0 lead.

First it was senior midfielder



Ridgeview's Orlando Jaimes (10) tries to get past a defender in the Ravens' 2-1 win over Hood River Valley Tuesday evening in Redmond.

Tucker Johnson scoring off an assist from senior forward Orlando Jaimes in the 25th minute to break the scoreless tie. Then two minutes later, sophomore defender Skiler Ornelas scored with a left-foot strike to make it 2-0.

"It is huge when you can score two goals because it takes that momentum," said Ridgeview coach Jimmy Kim. "It is funny how it happens in soccer. You get one, the energy level goes up, the other team's energy goes

down, and then they make a mistake and you capitalize on it. It is great when it happens to you, but it doesn't feel good when it is the other way around."

The two goals in two minutes was all that was needed for the Ravens, who did not score the remaining 55 minutes of the match. The Eagles (1-1-1 overall) scored late in the match, causing a tense ending, but the Ravens (5-0-0) were able to hold on and secure the win to remain

undefeated on the season.

And they did so without the reigning IMC Player of the Year Kevin Mendez Ochoa, who is nursing a leg injury.

"At first it was kind of surprising," Rebuelta said of the team's early success. "Then we kept playing and playing, and then I thought, 'We can do this. I'm really proud about the 5-0 start.'"

Even with the early success, Kim thinks there is another level the squad can reach this

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— Jimmy Kim, Ridgeview coach

season.

"I think our boys work hard, they have good connection, their fitness is good," Kim said. "But I really don't think we have put it all together yet. We are improving every week, but I think we can play better."

The first test for Ridgeview is a big one against defending Class 6A state champion Summit next week to open the new-look Class 5A IMC schedule with the return of the Bend high schools.

Although the Redmond and Bend schools were in different leagues and classifications the past four years, their programs still continued to compete against one another. In the combined 10 nonleague matches against Bend High, Mountain View and Summit since 2018, Ridgeview had a 6-3-1 record.

"The good thing is they aren't new opponents to us; we played them often in nonleague," Kim said. "We have to go out there and play, but we like where we are at and like our chances in

the league. Now we just have to go out there and see what we can do."

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PREP SCOREBOARD

Football

FRIDAY'S RESULTS

Summit 28, Westview 12
McMinnville 15, Ridgeview 7
Mountain View 42, Forest Grove 7
Bend 55, Centennial 0
Madras 14, Caldera 6
La Pine 28, Siuslaw 14
Sisters 21, Elmira 7
Culver 32, Santiam 20

SATURDAY'S RESULTS

Crook County 28, Redmond 21
Riddle 26, Gilchrist 12