

# Season ends one day early for Knappa

By MIKE WEBER  
For the Daily Astorian

PENDLETON — For the Knappa boys basketball team, a remarkably successful season concluded unfortunately one day earlier than expected.

After losing 56-54 in overtime to Heppner in a Class 2A state tournament quarterfinal game Thursday, the Loggers hoped they could bounce back and get a win Friday.

The Loggers, in the tournament for the first time in four years, wanted to resume their quest for a trophy while playing in the consolation bracket of the prestigious three-day, eight-team event Friday at the Pendleton Convention Center arena.

The No. 6-ranked Northwest League champion Loggers, guided by coach Chris Spencer, faced the No. 8-ranked Western Mennonite Pioneers (20-9) in an elimination contest. The Loggers never really recovered from Friday's heartbreaking defeat, as they were out of sync offensively and unable to focus on playing up to their potential as they lost 39-26 to the Pioneers.

"There's nothing wrong about ending your season in Pendleton, no matter how you do it," Spencer said. "We played as hard as we possibly could against two very good ball

clubs. Western Mennonite has skilled players all the way through their lineup and they're a well-coached team. The loss to Heppner took more out of us than we realized, so I think that had something to do with our performance today. I think things might've gone a little different if we could've had a couple of shots fall earlier in the game. They were the same usual shots we've always been taking, but their (Pioneers) zone defense really didn't allow Tyson much room to work effectively."

Western Mennonite's traditionally successful program enables them to be a title contender year after year and that was obvious Friday as they played near flawless basketball from start to finish.

The Pioneers jumped in front 13-0, while almost holding the Loggers scoreless in the first quarter. A free throw line jump shot by Knappa senior Chase Rusinovich with 3.8 seconds left in the quarter, made the score 13-2 after one.

"We usually rely on Tyson and having him do his thing, while he can also kick the ball out to some other guys to take make shots, but

that just wasn't happening," Spencer said. "They were able to defend Tyson a little better than we expected and they certainly made a good defensive effort."

Despite the early double-digit deficit, the Loggers never gave up and fought back in the second when they held the Pioneers scoreless for more than five minutes. Knappa freshman Dale Takalo drilled a 3-point field goal from the corner, trimming the margin to 13-5 with 4:05 left until halftime.

An eight-point deficit wasn't too much to come back from. However, because Knappa's shots were not dropping with any consistency, it proved to be too much to overcome. Knappa shot just 21.6 percent (11-for-51) in total field goal shooting.

A 7-3 Pioneer run made it 20-8 at the half.

Western Mennonite, the Tri River Conference runnersup to Regis, had a 7-0 run at the outset of the third to really take control, up 27-8. The Pioneers, led by coach Gary Hull, outscored the Loggers 14-5 in the third to extend their lead to 34-13 after three quarters.

Knappa didn't quit and they scored the first six points of the fourth on a jumper by Rusinovich, followed by back-to-back baskets by standout senior guard Tyson Burnard, making it 34-19.

"It's a hard journey just to get to Pendleton and it's every team's goal to be here," said Burnard, who was selected for a second time in the tournament as the Moda Health Player of the Game. "All in all, we're happy that we made it here even though we lost two games. We played our hearts out in the Heppner game last night and it was just hard to respond well after having such a heartbreaking loss. Our shots just weren't going in today and that's the main reason we had such a tough loss."

The 26 Logger point total was their lowest output of the season.

"Knappa is a good team, they're well coached and No. 21 (Burnard) is a great player, who is very quick, athletic and a good shooter," Hull said.

The game marked the conclusion of their basketball career for Knappa seniors Burnard, Justin Dragoo, Andy Miller and Rusinovich. Dragoo led Knappa in rebounds with eight and he was an intimidating defensive force inside with four blocked shots. Dragoo had nine blocked shots in the previous game versus Heppner.

"What Tyson has done in the playoffs recently (118 points in three previous games) is almost legendary back home in Knappa," Spencer said. "The run he's had with all the points he scored was something incredible and he kind of carried the team on his back. Justin Dragoo worked so hard under the hoop in blocking shots and rebounding and for a 6-foot-1 guy, he really plays like he's 6-5."

Chase Rusinovich was one of our main reserves all year and I was really proud of what he has contributed. Andy Miller has been one of our top scorers when he's healthy, but he's had injuries all year that has really reduced his effectiveness. We just needed some other guys to step up and have strong performances, but it just didn't happen today."

The disappointing conclusion of their season with two straight losses, shouldn't overshadow the fact that the Loggers did have a fantastic year. Knappa was in the Elite Eight of the 43-team Class 2A level competing in high school basketball's version of "March Madness." Being in Pendleton is an impressive accomplishment that every team hopes for at the conclusion of the season and the Loggers have a lot of things to feel very proud about this year.

# Fear of never winning again motivates champion Harvick

LAS VEGAS (AP)—It sure looks as though Kevin Harvick hasn't missed a beat since wrapping up his first career Sprint Cup title three months ago.

The 2014 champion grabbed his first win of the season on Sunday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, where he continued his hot start to his sophomore season at Stewart-Haas Racing. Harvick finished second in the

season-opening Daytona 500, was second last week at Atlanta and, dating to last season, has six consecutive top-two finishes.

He also has won three of the last six races dating to last season.

But he fretted through the offseason that his career year last season was an anomaly, and the results would not be the same as he tries to defend his title.

"I have been absolutely terrified that we would never sit up (on the podium) again," Harvick said. "You have to figure out ways to motivate yourself and motivate our team, and for us, it's just that motivation of trying to be the best you can in every practice and be the best that you can in qualifying."

"We're going to celebrate it like it's the last one. We're go-

ing to approach next week like we've never won a race because that's what keeps it fun and that's what keeps us motivated."

Except next up for Harvick? A stop at Phoenix, where Harvick has won four of the last five races. His November win pushed him into the championship race.

Harvick on Sunday led 142 of the 267 laps, and beat Martin

Truex Jr. to the finish while battling a vibration that developed after his final pit stop.

"It got to be a handful there at the end," Harvick said. "For whatever reason, we got really, really loose the last run. Tires started vibrating and we were just kind of hanging on. Glad the race is over for our own good."

Harvick now has a win that gives him a near-certain berth

in the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship, where he'd be guaranteed a shot to defend his title. The Chase format awards slots into the playoff via regular-season wins.

"It feels pretty good. I'm pretty excited about it," Harvick said. "This whole Chase thing, there is a lot of strategy to get in to it. The best strategy is to go out and win races."

## SCOREBOARD

**BASKETBALL**  
**HIGH SCHOOLS**  
**Class 2A Boys Consolation at Pendleton**  
**W. Mennonite 39, Knappa 26**  
**WM (39):** Trevor Oyer 11, Jacob DeJong 10, Colby Williams 5, Wyatt Roth 4, Alex Martinez 4, Daniel Domes 3, Simeon Hess 2, Sam Arnold, Daniel Gray, Kieran O'Leary, Brandon Nye, Michael

Wan, Seth Mack.  
**KNA (26):** Tyson Burnard 6, Dale Takalo 5, Chase Rusinovich 4, Andy Miller 3, Colton Weirup 3, James Hendrickson 3, Dakota Severson 2, Jason Miller, Justin Dragoo, Mitch Geisler, Ethan Rubus, Michal Goodman.  
**W. Mennonite 13 7 14 5—39**  
**Knappa 2 6 5 13—26**  
**Field goals:** WM 14-41; Knappa 11-51. **3-Point Goals:** WM

2-9 (Domes, Oyer); Knappa 4-26 (Takalo, A. Miller, Weirup, Hendrickson). **Free throws:** WM 9-13; Knappa 0-0. **Fouls:** W. Mennonite 6, Knappa 12. **Turnovers:** W. Mennonite 17, Knappa 16. **Rebounds:** W. Mennonite 39 (DeJong 17); Knappa 31 (Dragoo 9). **Blocks:** W. Mennonite 1 (DeJong); Knappa 4 (Dragoo 4). **Assists:** W. Mennonite 9 (Roth 3, DeJong 3); Knappa 6 (Takalo 2).

**St. Michaels 47, Seaside 40**  
**SEA (40):** Zach Marston 12, Meyer 9, Smith 8, Januik 5, Eagon 4, Thompson 2, Lewis, Babb.  
**Players of the Game:** Jacob DeJong, Western Mennonite; Tyson Burnard, Knappa.

**NV (47):** Cody Thompson 21, Morasa 12, Whitmore 10, Fairman 3.  
**Seaside 13 8 10 9—40**  
**N. Valley 15 5 13 14—47**  
**Girls**  
**Seaside 54, Klamath Union 43**  
**KU (43):** Jordan Newman 12, Choukalos 8, Haupt 6, Rice 6, M. Najar 5, K. Newman 2, Vanover 2.  
**SEA (54):** Maddi Utli 26, Dundas 10, Westerholm 9, Villegas 7, West

2, Pldeue, Bussert, J. Ideue.  
**Klamath U. 9 8 14 12—43**  
**Seaside 20 16 4 14—54**  
**Field goals:** Klamath Union 13-32; Seaside 22-59. **3-Point Goals:** Klamath Union 2-9 (M. Najar, J. Newman); Seaside 2-17 (Westerholm, Utli). **Free throws:** Klamath Union 15-18; Seaside 8-19. **Fouls:** Klamath Union 17, Seaside 15. **Turnovers:** Klamath Union 33, Seaside 12.

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