

SPORTS

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AP Photo/Isaac Brekken

Gonzaga's Josh Perkins passes under BYU's TJ Haws during the first half of the West Coast Conference tournament championship game Tuesday in Las Vegas.

No. 6 Gonzaga beats BYU for sixth straight WCC title

By **JOHN MARSHALL**
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Gonzaga seemed headed for a dog fight with BYU to get a sixth straight West Coast Conference title. Once the Bulldogs started soaring, there was no stopping them.

Racing out for dunks and 3-pointers in transition, No. 6 Gonzaga overwhelmed BYU during a massive run to blow out the Cougars 74-54 on Tuesday night for its sixth straight WCC tournament title.

"That's probably as good a run I've been a part of in 28 years at Gonzaga, definitely in 19 years as head coach," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. "Fan-

tastic defense that led to great offense. It was just a thing of beauty to see."

Gonzaga (30-4), the regular-season champion, locked into a defensive battle with BYU (24-10) for most of the first half. The Zags revved it up at both ends and turned it into a title-game rout, reeling off a half-time-spanning 36-6 run to win their 17th WCC overall title.

Killian Tillie had 22 points, Zach Norvell Jr. added 17 and the Bulldogs held BYU to 35 percent shooting to win their 17th straight conference tournament game.

The dominant title performance should boost Gonzaga's chances for a high NCAA Tournament seed and

possibly a go-out-on-top end to the Zags' dominance in the WCC — Gonzaga is in talks to join the Mountain West Conference, possibly next season.

"Tonight, they were a handful for us," BYU coach Dave Rose said. "It's tough when things get that lopsided. It's really tough when they get it going like that."

Yoeli Childs had 20 points to cap a stellar tournament for BYU.

BYU seemed worn out in its third game in four days, unable to keep up with the flying Bulldogs.

If this is Gonzaga's final WCC tournament appearance, it went out with a flourish.

Gonzaga women beat San Diego for West Coast title

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Gonzaga went into the season with plenty of question marks, with new players on the roster and returning players filling new roles.

The regular season ended just the way it did a year ago: with a West Coast Conference championship.

Jill Barta scored 32 points and hit six free throws in the final 43 seconds, helping Gonzaga beat San Diego 79-71 on Tuesday to repeat as WCC tournament champions.

"We just worked out to our goals and we had people step up all year long," Gonzaga coach Lisa Portier said.

With hot teams, Davis, Lillard hot names in MVP discussion

By **BRIAN MAHONEY**
Associated Press

With the Houston Rockets on top of the NBA and James Harden on top of the scoring race, he may be running away with the MVP vote.

Anthony Davis and Damian Lillard might have something to say about that.

With stellar play steering their sizzling teams, they have at least entered their names in the conversation with a little more than a month left in the regular season.

Harden has been runner-up to Stephen Curry and Russell Westbrook in recent years, but it's looked like his time this season. With more than 31 points and nearly nine assists per game — third in the league in that category — for a team with the league's best record, it's hard to imagine needing to look elsewhere.

"What Harden and Houston is doing right now, he's the MVP of the league right now," Hall of Famer Isiah Thomas said on NBA TV.

Lillard and Davis could deserve some thought.

Lillard is building a good resume for this week's honor. He's scored 39 and 37 in two games thus far, with 19 in the fourth quarter Monday to rally Portland past the Lakers, and eight 3-pointers Tuesday in a rout of the Knicks. That gave the league leader in second-half scoring 35 or more in seven of the last 10 games.

Most importantly — for their teams and their candidacies — their clubs are rolling. New Orleans has won nine straight and Portland has won eight in a row.

Davis has carried New Orleans with dominant basketball since DeMarcus Cousins was lost for the season last month.

HOMETOWN REPORT



Jeff Ter Har/For The Daily Astorian

Maddi Utti, right, looks to pass for the Bulldogs in a game at San Diego State earlier this season.

Utti makes conference all-freshmen team

By **GARY HENLEY**
The Daily Astorian

Seaside High School graduate Maddi Utti was honored this week for her outstanding freshman year of basketball at Fresno State University.

Utti and teammate Aly Gamez were named to the Mountain West Conference all-freshmen team, in conference awards announced Monday.

Fresno State's Candice White was selected to the All-Mountain West team, making the Bulldogs the only team in the MWC to have three players honored in the post-season awards.

Utti started 25 straight games, led all MWC freshmen in field-goal percentage, and ranked third overall in the league at 56.4 percent. At only 5-foot-10, the undersized post player and former point guard with the Gulls led all freshmen in rebounding at 5.7 per game.

Utti also ranked third among freshmen in minutes (32.4) per game and fourth in scoring (9.8). For Fresno State, she ranks first in field-goal percentage, second in rebounds and blocks, and third in steals and assists. She has posted 10 double-figure performances in league play, and two double-doubles.

Astoria grad gets win for WSU

Astoria's Nick Strange recently earned his first victory as a member of the Wash-



Warner Pacific

From left to right, Warner Pacific players Katlyn James, Mady Hanna and Michaela Pin were recently honored before the team's Senior Night.



Washington State University
Nick Strange

ington State baseball team.

A junior on the Cougars' pitching staff, Strange came on in relief in a non-conference game Feb. 22 against Grand Canyon in Phoenix, Arizona. He pitched one and two-thirds scoreless innings, including a 1-2-3 ninth to pick up the win.

Washington State won 5-4 on a

two-out, run-scoring single to left field in the top of the ninth by Justin Harrer, a graduate of Sisters High School.

Strange made his WSU debut Feb. 18 in Tempe, Arizona, in a non-conference game against Nebraska.

He pitched two scoreless innings out of the bullpen, in a 5-3 loss to the Cornhuskers.

Hanna finishes career

The college basketball career of Warrenton's Mady Hanna officially came to a close last month, as the season ended for Warner-Pacific with a loss at Southern Oregon in the Cascade Conference tournament.

Hanna appeared in every game for the Knights, starting 16 and averaging 18.4 minutes per contest. She was second on the team this season with 83 assists.

Blazers win 8th straight with 111-87 win over the Knicks

By **ANNE M. PETERSON**
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Knicks coach Jeff Hornacek said it may be time to get Damian Lillard into the Most Valuable Player conversation.

"The guy is playing fantastic. He might be one of those guys you've got to start talking about that MVP too with the way he's playing," New York's coach said after Lillard scored 37 points in a 111-87 victory over the Knicks on Tuesday night.

Lillard made eight 3-pointers, one off his career high, in the Blazers' eighth straight win.

CJ McCollum added 19 points for the Blazers, on their longest winning streak since winning nine in a row in 2014. They have moved into third place in the Western Conference standings.

Even the fans have lofty expectations for Lillard, chanting "MVP! MVP!" at times when he got to the line.

"I said after I won Rookie of the Year, I said I think I can be MVP in this league," he said. "Being in the discussion, it's an honor to be mentioned, but I don't look at that and think 'Oh they mentioned me in the MVP discussion.' I feel that's the level of player I can be."

Lillard added that he believes this has been his best season. He's averaging 26.8 points, but he's been particularly effective over the streak.

The Blazers hit a season-high 20 3-pointers in 33 attempts (60 percent).

Enes Kanter had 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Knicks, who lost their fifth straight. It was Kanter's 32nd double-double this season, a career high. Tim Hardaway Jr. finished with 19 points.

New York has won just one of its last 14 games. The Knicks trailed by as many as 22 points.

The game in Portland was the third of a four-game road trip for the Knicks and comes off a 102-99 loss to the Kings on Sunday. Sacramento's Skal Labissiere had a 3-pointer with 1.6 seconds left to win it.

The Knicks lost top scorer Kristaps Porzingis last month to a season-ending ACL tear injury that required surgery, and they've since gone 1-8.

UP NEXT: BLAZERS

• Golden State Warriors (50-14) at Portland Trail Blazers (39-26)
 • Friday, 7 p.m. TV: NSNW

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE

THURSDAY

Boys basketball — OSAA Class 4A state tournament quarterfinals (at Forest Grove High School):
 Sisters vs. Banks, 1:30 p.m.
 Valley Catholic vs. La Grande, 3:15 p.m.
 Newport vs. Marshfield, 6:30 p.m.
 Mazama vs. Seaside, 8:15 p.m.