

SPORTS

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Warrenton girls top Taft in playoff

The Astorian

Trailing 5-4 late in the first quarter, the Warrenton Lady Warriors went on a 24-3 run to close out the first half Tuesday night, and that was all Warrenton would need in a 38-20 win over Taft in a Coastal Range League girls basketball playoff.

The Tigers were playing their second road playoff game in 24 hours, after winning an overtime game at Rainier 43-40 the night before.

The Warriors advance to play Thursday at Willamina. A win would secure a return trip to state for Warrenton, and would send the Warriors to the league championship game, Saturday vs. Clatskanie at McMinnville.

Meanwhile, Kenzie Ramsey and Avyree Miethe starred for the Warriors in Tuesday's win.

Miethe scored all six of Warrenton's points in the first quarter, then scored the first two baskets of the second quarter to turn a 5-4 deficit into an 18-6 lead.

Ramsey and Melia Kapua added 3-pointers, with Ramsey capping the first half with another trey for a 28-8 lead.

After making one of their first two shots from the field, the Tigers proceeded to miss 21 of their next 22. Taft finished the first half 2-for-23, and made 4-of-26 in the second half to finish the night 6-for-49 from the field.

The Warriors had struggles of their own in the second half, hitting just 2-of-24 from the field, 0-for-10 in the final quarter.

Still, it was one Warrenton's best games of the season. The 38 points was the second-most in a game over the last month-and-a-half.

Ramsey led Warrenton with 14 points, followed by Miethe with 13.

"It was a great team victory for us tonight," said Warrenton coach Jake Mullins. "A lot of things were really working well for us. It was our most complete game in a while, and we did a great job in a lot of areas we've been working on. I'm really happy for the girls. We played some of our best basketball all year tonight."

Warrenton improves to 7-17 overall, while the Tigers finish 10-13.

Warrenton boys hold off Clatskanie

After falling short of the state playoffs by one game last year, the Warrenton boys basketball team is again one win away from a return to state.

The Warriors got off to a great post-season start Tuesday, defeating Clatskanie 52-48 in a Coastal Range League playoff at Warrenton.

The Warriors play a winner-to-state game Thursday at Willamina.

Clatskanie senior posts Dawson Evenson and Jonathan Moravec kept the Tigers in Tuesday's game, but the Warriors closed it out at the free throw line.

Warrenton — which did not make a single field goal in the fourth quarter — was 8-for-17 at the free throw line in the final period.

Warrenton was 11-for-20 over the last two quarters, while the Tigers did not have a free throw attempt in the second half.

Instead, Clatskanie got hot from the field, as Jack Boothe, Chase Baker and Evenson all had 3-pointers, and the Tigers were 14-of-24 from the field in the final two quarters.

Warrenton's Dawson Little and Devin Jackson made 3-pointers in the third quarter, in which Hordie Bodden-Bodden scored six of his points.

Clatskanie rallied from a 42-31 deficit late in the third, closing to within 48-45 with 44 seconds left, but the Warriors were 4-of-7 on free throws in the final 38 seconds to clinch the win.



Corey Conant

Warrenton district champion wrestler Sam Irwin, center, took the top spot on the podium, a place the junior has been standing all season.

WARRENTON QUALIFIES FIVE WRESTLERS FOR STATE MEET

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

The Warrenton wrestling team will be sending five wrestlers to the state tournament, Feb. 28-29 in Portland, following the Warriors' performance last weekend in the 3A Special District 2 tournament.

Dayton ran away with the team title, scoring 282.5 points over the two-day tournament, Friday and Saturday at Amity High School.

Willamina/Falls City (229.5 points) was a distant second, followed by Warrenton (226) and Taft (201) in the eight-team field.

The top three wrestlers at each weight qualified for state.

Last year, the Warriors finished fifth in the team standings and sent three wrestlers to state. This year — third place and five wrestlers.

"With the addition of Yamhill-Carlton, we knew our district was going to be even tougher," said Warrenton coach Corey Conant. "We took 20 wrestlers and 16 of them placed. We knew that we had some depth, and we scored team points all over the lineup."

The Warriors had two district champions. Heading the list of those going to state will be individual champions Aricin Rodriguez (106 pounds) and Sam Irwin (195), with additional state qualifiers Nic Pior (second at 145), sophomore Josh Niehuser (second, 160) and Alex Tapia (third, 152).

With just five wrestlers at 106, Rodriguez only had to wrestle two twice, and less than six minutes of action to win the title.

He pinned Kaden Byrum of Taft at the 2:42 mark in the semifinal, then scored a fall over Clatskanie's Austin Hahn in 2:27

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE THURSDAY

Girls Basketball — Banks at Seaside, 6 p.m.; Playoff: Warrenton at Willamina, 6 p.m.

Boys Basketball — Banks at Seaside, 7:45 p.m.; Playoff: Warrenton at Willamina, 7:30 p.m.; TBA at Knappa, 7 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Seaside 44, Tillamook 24

SEA (44): Lilli Taylor 13, Douglas 10, Blodgett 7, McFadden 6, Doney 6, Klemm 2, Peterson, Snyder.

Seaside 14 9 9 12-44

Tillamook 5 8 3 8-24

BOYS BASKETBALL

Valley Catholic 64, Astoria 39

VC (64): Daniel Pruitt 14, French 10, Hussein 8, Schultheis 8, Baglai 8, Cheung 6, Lo 6, Eberhart 4.

AST (39): Xander Marincovich 12, Stenblom 11, Junes 5, McMaster 4, Brockman 3, Moore 2, Williams, Altheide-Nielson, Field, Boudreau.

Valley C 15 12 18 19-64

Astoria 10 13 5 11-39

in the title match.

"Aricin has gotten better every tournament," Conant said of the freshman. "He's not afraid to wrestle tough wrestlers that may be heavier than him, and always gives himself a chance to win."

Irwin cruised to another title, pinning his first two opponents in 2:49 and 4:48 then posted a 7-2 decision over Willamina sophomore Corey Greenlaw in the championship.

A junior, Irwin "has put together a stellar season, making the finals in every tournament this year," Conant said. "After an all-state football season, he looks to keep rolling at state."

A junior at 145, Pior opened with a pin over Amity's Josh Espalin and won his quarterfinal match by injury default with Yamhill's Eli Potter when Potter suffered a dislocated elbow.

Pior pinned William Calderon of Taft in 5:06, then lost the championship match against Brandon Isaacson, in a 6-2 decision.

"Nic was district champion last year, and we know he was disappointed to not repeat," Conant said. "He can be proud of how he wrestled and will be locked in on his state tournament goals."

Niehuser won twice at 160, with a pin in 1:46 against Dayton's Corbin Magee and a 9-3 semifinal decision over Andrew Allen of Willamina, before Rainier's David Katon pinned Niehuser in 3:01 in the final.

Tapia won his first match at 152, advanced by forfeit to the semifinals, where he lost by fall to Willamina's Spyre Nelson.

He bounced back with two consolation wins, including a 5-4 decision over Willamina's Wyatt Baker in the third place match.

"We picked up some wins that people didn't expect us to win in the early rounds, and pushed 10 into the semifinals and four into the finals," Conant said. "Winning a district championship has big implications for state seeding."

The three champions from each district and best runner-up will be the top four seeds in a nine-wrestler bracket at state. With the realignment of leagues and the shrinking of the 3A tournament from 12 to 9 wrestlers, places will be awarded for 1st-4th instead of 1st-6th.

"We think this group (a freshman, two sophomores and two juniors) can surprise some people at state, and we'll take the next two weeks to work on stuff and be as sharp as possible," Conant said.

"Improvement is always the goal, and we exceeded that goal as a team," he said. "We tried to engineer our practice and schedule to prep us for districts as much as possible, and the work bore out for us. On the other hand, we still have a lot of room to keep improving. Our wrestlers are hungry to get better."



A Valiant sweep at the Brick House

The Astorian

Valley Catholic held a slim 27-23 lead at halftime, then outscored Astoria 18-5 in the third quarter on its way to a 64-39 win over the Fishermen, in a Cowapa League boys basketball game at the Brick House.

Valley Catholic also won the girls game, scoring a 54-47 upset over the No. 4-ranked Lady Fishermen.

In the boys' game, Daniel Pruitt scored 14 points and Will French added 10 for the Valiants, who improved to 2-5 in league.

Astoria finishes 0-8 in league, 2-22 overall. Xander Marincovich scored 12 points and Ryan Stenblom chipped in 11 for the Fishermen, on Senior Night.

"Had we been more healthy earlier in the season, I think we would have been more successful," said Astoria coach Kevin Goin. "But I'm still happy with how we performed. We played tough at Banks (a nine-point loss

last week), we kept it close with Seaside (an eight-point loss to the Gulls), and we played well against Tillamook. We struggled at Valley Catholic, and Pruitt was the one guy we couldn't stop tonight.

"I'm looking forward to next year," he said, following successful seasons at the junior varsity level. "We'll have five regulars back."

Girls

Valiants 54, Fishermen 47

With the Cowapa League title already locked up, the Astoria girls were still unable to close out a perfect league season Tuesday night, as Valley Catholic scored a 54-47 upset at the Brick House.

The Valiants handed the Lady Fishermen just their third loss of the season, and their first loss to an Oregon 4A team since Dec. 21 (Philomath).

Astoria will have more than a week off before hosting a first round state playoff.

Astoria's Ryan Stenblom soars in for a score in Tuesday's game against Valley Catholic.
Melissa Linder-Cho