

Photo by Adam Lapierre

NO MERCY: Freshman 126-pounder Jason Shaner puts the hurt on his Stevenson opponent Tuesday night. The Eagles won the dual 74-4 and followed with a 38-30 win at Pendleton.

Eagle wrestlers show no mercy

Hood River Valley High School wrestlers are in full attack mode as the pinnacle of the season quickly approaches. In action this week, the team competed in away dual meets against Stevenson in an annual dual called Battle of the Bridge and against Pendleton in the first Columbia River Conference Dual of the season.

Tuesday's result in Stevenson wasn't much of a surprise. The Eagles won all but one match to finish with a dominating 74-4 score. Thursday's thriller in Pendleton was another story. Both teams knew the dual would be close, but after falling behind 30-3 in team points, the outlook was grim. The Eagles finished with seven straight wins – from Steven Swafford, Justin Wilson, Jessica DeHart, Angel Jones, Jason Shaner, Christian Marquez and Junior Manzo – to seal a 38-30 win over their CRC rivals.

Awesome opportunity

In a unique opportunity for the community and Hood River Valley wrestling, members of the U18 Japanese national wrestling team will be in town for the next few days and will stay with HRV wrestling families through the weekend. On Monday the public is invited to a dual meet between HRV wrestlers and the Japanese team at HRVHS at 1:15 p.m. Visitors are asked to enter the school through the regular athletics event entrance.

Hawks make statement in Big Sky opener

Bloomster, Davis combine for 47 in latest Horizon win

By MIKE WEBER
For the News

The 1A No. 1 ranked Horizon Christian High Hawks boys basketball team got off to a good start in their Big Sky Conference season opener with a 71-56 home win Tuesday over the Sherman Huskies.

Led by the dynamic duo of seniors Mason Bloomster (25 points, 11 rebounds) and Jared Davis (22 pts., seven assists, five steals), the Hawks led from start-to-finish to notch their first win of 2015.

The Hawks (9-2) went on the road Friday to face the No. 12 ranked Dufur Rangers (6-3, results unavailable as of press time) and return home to meet the Arlington Honkers (2-8 overall) Saturday at 5:30 p.m. The team's next big test comes on Tuesday, when it travels to one of the state's top 2A squads, the 10-1 Irrigon Knights.

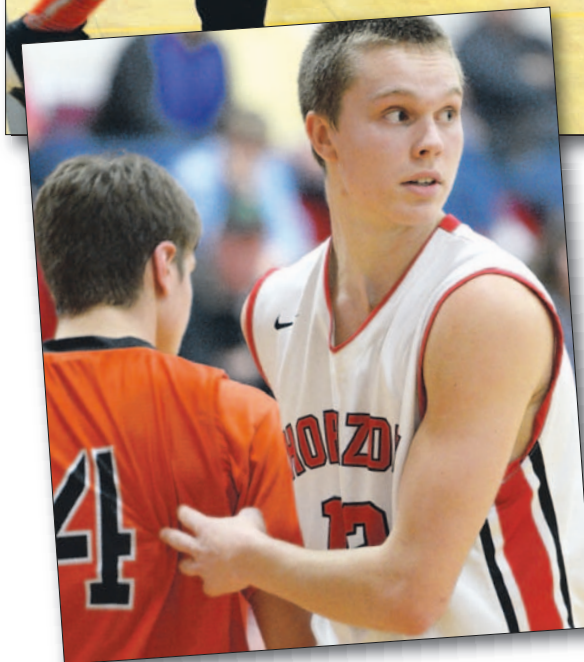
Despite a long break in action for the holiday break, the Hawks appeared in mid-season form against Sherman, displaying a potent offense and a rock solid defense against the No. 9 ranked Huskies (7-2), who are considered to be one of their top Class 1A opponents.

"I thought it might be a tough game for the boys since we haven't played in quite awhile, but the kids were not rusty at all," said coach Darren Lingel. "We did have a little trouble adjusting to Sherman's defense, which seemed to limit our scoring somewhat in the first half. After we made some adjustments at halftime, the kids came out and played pretty well in the second half."

Horizon jumped in front early on baskets by Nick Andersen (two pts.), Davis and RJ Hicks (nine pts.) in building an 8-1 lead in the opening minutes of the first quarter. After Sherman trimmed the margin to 10-6, Davis and Bloomster combined to score 10 straight points to extend the Hawks lead to 20-6. A driving layup by Davis helped the Hawks hold onto a double-digit 22-11 lead at the end of the first quarter.

"We just weren't in synch defensively in the first half and they (Sherman) outrebounded us too," said Davis. Horizon's leading scorer who averages 21.3 points a game. "We killed them on the boards in the second half though, and we played tougher defense too. Sherman has some guys that can really shoot well, but we were able to score well by driving to the hoop better than they did."

Sherman came out strong after the half and trimmed their margin to five points. Momentum then quickly shifted in favor of the Hawks, who took control of the game with a 14-2 run to build a 50-33 lead with 4:12 left in the quarter. Bloomster's three-point play and baskets by Hicks, Ryan Aldrich (six



LEADING SCORERS: Mason Bloomster (left) and Jared Davis were a deadly duo Tuesday as they racked up 25 and 22 points, respectively.

Photo by Adam Lapierre

the Huskies pulled away in the fourth quarter.

"The girls did play pretty well, but we struggled because we were missing our starting point guard, Hannah Kempf," said Stevens. "The girls played hard for as long as they could and then we had some freshmen (Paulina Finn, Sammi Halseh, Miranda Roberts) come in to help make some good contributions that helped make it a competitive game until the last six minutes. We have a long way to go and a lot of work to do. Our defense (2-3 zone) was solid today and I'm really impressed with the way the girls played. We just need to play a little more aggressively."

After three early deadlocks, Sherman went up 9-6 at the end of the first quarter. After Sherman built a 23-10 margin in the second, the Hawks came back to get within 24-15 at halftime.

A steal and breakaway layup by

senior Trista Hicks (five pts.) narrowed the margin to just six points early in the third. The Hawks were within striking distance in the third quarter when Finn (season-high 10 pts.) sank two free throws to maintain the five-point margin. Sherman outscored Horizon 7-1 over the final 1:58 of the quarter to take a 36-23 lead going into the fourth. The Huskies remained in control of the momentum for the remainder of the game to extend their lead at the end.

On Monday, the Hawks had a fun and exciting opportunity to play on the Portland Trailblazers NBA homecourt at the Moda Center. The Hawks lost 28-23 to South Wasco, but the game was a milestone, as it marked the first time Horizon's girls had ever played there. Following the game, the Hawks enjoyed watching the Blazers defeat the Los Angeles Lakers.

pts.) and Davis fueled an offensive surge as Horizon led 57-42 after three.

"We really picked up the pace in the second half," said Bloomster, who is averaging 20.2 points and 11.5 rebounds per game. "Once we were able to break through their triangle and two defense, they had trouble switching to a different scheme and we were able to just take off from that point on. Playing with Jared, who is one of the best guards I've ever played basketball with, it's pretty easy to get lots of layups with him feeding the ball to me."

An 8-4 Hawk run at the outset of the fourth, including Bloomster's defensive rebound and length of the court drive on a layup, extended Horizon's lead to 19 points. Sophomore Ethan Evans (four pts.) sank two free throws on a Sherman technical foul by Sherman's Jacob Justesen for the Hawks' largest lead of the game, 65-46, with 4:42 left in the game.

"We played well, we're getting

better and it's nice to start league play with a win," said Lingel.

Horizon had one of its most proficient offensive games this year as the boys shot 63.9 percent (23-for-36). The Hawks exceeded 70 points for the fourth time this year. The contest marked the first of 14 total Big Sky regular season games.

Girls fall short vs. Huskies

Horizon Christian's varsity girls team opened its 14-game Big Sky Conference schedule with a 46-28 loss at home to the Sherman Huskies Tuesday. The Hawks (0-1 Big Sky, 3-6 overall), who played Friday at Dufur (results unavailable at press time), will try to bounce back and get a win in their next contest at home Saturday, 4 p.m., against the Arlington Honkers (7-3).

For first-year coach Brian Stevens and his Hawks, the game was much closer than indicated by the final score. Horizon played strong and trailed by just single digits for most of the game before



PAULINA FINN scored ten points for the Hawks Tuesday night in the team's 46-28 loss against the Sherman Huskies.

Photo by Adam Lapierre



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KELSEY WELLS led the varsity girls team against South Albany Tuesday night with 18 points and 14 rebounds. The girls return home Jan. 23 to host Pendleton.

Eagles look for momentum before CRC schedule

By ADAM LAPIERRE
News staff writer

In the words of the late, great Stuart Scott, Kelsey Wells was as cool as the other side of the pillow Tuesday night. The senior iced 18 points and 14 rebounds in a Hood River Valley High School varsity girls basketball matchup against South Albany. Despite the game-leading double-double, however, the Eagles were unable to overcome an eight-point first half deficit and the visiting Rebels claimed a 42-35 victory.

The loss puts the Eagles at 3-9 going into the final weeks of nonleague play. The girls traveled to St. Helens Friday, then Heritage and Stevenson the following week before returning home Jan. 23 to host Pendleton in their Columbia River Conference opener. Current CRC standings (as of Friday morning) have Hermiston at 11-2, ranked 5A No. 1 and riding a nine-game winning

streak. Pendleton is second at 8-5 (ranked No. 7), The Dalles is 5-6 (ranked No. 13) and HRV is fourth with a No. 29 ranking.

HRV finished strong in Tuesday's matchup, outscoring the Rebels 18-17 in the second half and keeping the opposing offense from running away with the game. The effort fell short, however, and the Eagles simply ran out of time before they could mount a comeback. Jestina Mattson chipped in with seven points, three assists and five rebounds, Lauren Winans had six points, four boards, a block and a steal, Cassidy Davidson chipped in with two points, two assists and three rebounds and Mykan Malone scored two.

A big fourth quarter and a big performance by Dominick Crittenden gave South Albany the boost they needed to get past the HRV boys in a varsity basketball matchup Tuesday evening. The traveling Eagles were led by Parker Kennedy and

Dallas Buckley, who had 12 points each in the 72-61 loss. Scottie Ziegner and Skylar Hunter aided in the effort with 10 and nine points respectively. Crittenden had 21 points and 13 rebounds to lead his team in the win.

Although not the result they wanted, the game marks the ninth of the season in which the Eagles have scored 60 or more points – a stark improvement from last season when the team met that benchmark just once; an 83-64 loss vs. Pendleton in the Eagles' final game of the season. At 5-6 (as of Friday morning), HRV sits in second place in the CRC going into the end of non-league play. The team hosted Woodburn Friday and Heritage (Wash.) Saturday (6 p.m.) and hosts Stevenson next Friday before traveling to Pendleton and Hermiston to open its CRC schedule. Pendleton currently has the best CRC record and ranking at 6-4, No. 8. Hermiston is third with a 3-8 record and The Dalles fourth at 1-12.