



HRV baseball wins first conference title in 22 years

With Columbia River Conference title in hand, HRV looks to secure home-field advantage in playoffs



Photos by Ben Mitchell

EAGLES BASEBALL got its first conference title in 22 years with a win over Pendleton on Friday in Hood River. From left to right: members of the team mug for the camera after the win; first baseman Montana Kurahara gets ready to send another Buckaroo back to the dugout; and Ryan Ward, who gave up only one hit during the game, throws a pitch from the mound at Traner Field.

By BEN MITCHELL
News staff writer

They've been gunning for it all season and on Friday, they finally got it.

The HRV Eagles boys baseball team locked up its first conference title in 22 years after defeating Columbia River Conference opponent Pendleton, 6-1, at Traner Field. With two league games left in the season, the Buckaroos, who were nipping at the Eagles' heels before Friday's game, can no longer catch HRV, along with The Dalles and Hermiston.

After coaching last year's underdog team to a second-place finish in the state tournament, Erich Harjo has been saying all season that his players had their eyes set on winning the CRC title. And thanks to what Harjo characterized as a well-rounded team, they did.

"They were really excited to see one of their goals be accomplished," he said. "They feel like everybody has their role on the team. There hasn't been one guy carrying us

all year; it's been a team effort."

The last time the program won a title was in 1993, when the team wasn't even in the CRC, according to outgoing HRVHS Athletic Director Keith Bassham. That year, HRV was a 3A team in the Tri-Valley Conference, which included Sherwood, La Salle, Estacada, Banks, Gladstone, and The Dalles. This is the fifth season HRV has played in the CRC.

The win marked HRV's best outing this season against the Buckaroos, who have played the Eagles tight, including two games that were decided by a single run — one of which resulted in one of the two league-game losses HRV has sustained this season. Harjo said that on Friday, HRV "took that game under control," in the early innings, putting up three runs against the Buckaroos in the bottom of the first and two more in the bottom of the second, which he felt took a psychological toll on Pendleton.

"They immediately get down three runs — that's a tough thing to bounce back from mentally as a high school team," he noted.

And thanks to HRV's efficient fielding, as well as what Harjo called an "electric" pitching performance by Ryan Ward, the Eagles were able to keep the Buckaroos scoreless until the fifth inning, when they scored their sole run.

"It's a lot of practice, a lot of repetition. They know each other; the guys communicate with each other really well," Harjo remarked on how the team has been able to field so well this season.

Ward had one of his best games of the year on the mound, giving up only one hit in seven innings, with no earned runs, walking four batters, and striking out eight. He was productive on offense as well, getting two hits in three at-bats (single, double) and leading the team with two RBI. Other hitters included Skyler Hunter (2 for 4, singles), who scored two runs, and Adam Cameron (1 for 3, single), who also had a RBI. Patrick Harvey and Dallas Buckley were each credited with one RBI; scoring runs for HRV (besides Hunter), were Kam Walker, Kellan Duffy, An-

drew Roberts, and Chase Lariza, all with one run apiece.

With three games left in the season for HRV — including a non-league contest against Central Catholic (No. 3 in 6A), which Harjo said was added to give the team extra practice against a competitive squad — the Eagles will look to continue their winning ways in order to get a good spot in the post-season.

"We want to win out for sure," he said. "If we don't win, then our ranking slides, then we don't host a playoff game."

Currently, HRV is ranked eighth, which is the lowest ranking the team can have and still be able to host a playoff game.

After playing a road game in Hermiston on Tuesday (results not available as of press time), HRV will host its final league game of the season on Friday at 4:30 p.m. against The Dalles. The final game of the regular season, against Central Catholic, will be Wednesday, May 20 at 5 p.m. in Hood River.

HRV 14, Marist 2



Eagles fight through a downpour and make it rain goals during decisive first-round playoff win

By BEN MITCHELL
News staff writer

For a program that has only made the playoffs twice in its history, on Monday night, the HRV girls lacrosse team sure acted like it had been there before.

The cold and wet weather couldn't dampen the Eagles' spirits, who cruised to a 14-2 victory over the No. 19 Marist Catholic High School Spartans during a first-round playoff game held in Hood River.

Coach Andrew McElderry had nothing but good things to say about his players, who outshot, outscored, out-saved, and wholly outplayed their opponents.

"The girls played well; they were solid, they were controlled," he said immediately after the game. "We possessed the ball for a hell of a lot of time. Just great possessions. They saw each other so well. It was just pass, pass, pass, pass, shoot. I don't think we (isolated) the ball twice, the rest were all assists, ball movements."

McElderry noted that the "rain and the wet ground were tough on the sticks," although it would be hard to tell that information from the stat sheet. The Eagles never trailed in the game, who, after a slow start, opened up with a goal from Savannah Brentlinger, assisted by Ellen Hudon, with just over 16 minutes remaining in the half.

Marist responded with a goal less than three minutes later to knot things up at 1-1. HRV regained control with less than eight minutes left in the half when Brentlinger gained control of the ball at midfield, and tore through the driving rain, nearly untouched by Marist defenders and fired one in to make it 2-1.

That goal seemed to open the flood gates, so to speak, for HRV, who poured in another

three goals — two of which came in the final two minutes — to go up 5-1 at the half.

As bad as the first half was for Marist, the second half was even worse. HRV shelled the Spartans with another eight goals in the half, and led by 10 goals with 17 minutes remaining, which triggered a clock run off for the remainder of the game. The Spartans were finally able to respond with their second and final goal of the night with under six minutes remaining, but the damage had long been done.

HRV scored by committee, with seven players on the roster getting at least one goal Monday evening.

"It was excellent. It was nice to have a full team showing," said Bekah Rottenberg, the team's assistant coach. "We had a lot of swing players step up who had some goals and assists."

Leading in the goals category were Brentlinger and Lydia McElderry, who each had four, as well as one assist. Next was Erin Mayer, who had two goals and a team-high two assists. Following up were Riley Bauer (1), Sam Davies (1), and the aforementioned swing players: Kat McElderry and Lauren Orr, who each had a goal and an assist. Ellen Hudon also had an assist.

In net, Ella Rand picked a fantastic time to have her best game of the season, saving seven of nine shots, for what McElderry called an "awesome percentage" of 77.8.

With the first round out of the way, the No. 15 HRV Eagles will travel west to face the No. 2 Lake Oswego Lakers on Wednesday, May 13 at 8:30 p.m. for a second-round game.

"They're the number-two team in the state and they're an amazing team," McElderry noted. "It's going to be tough."



Photos by Ben Mitchell

HRV LAX PLAYERS Victoria Kohner-Flanagan, Ella Rand, Savannah Brentlinger, and Erin Mayer (from left to right) celebrate a goal in the top photo; at right, Erin Mayer catches a pass; at left, coach Andrew McElderry yells encouragement to his players.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Horizon track aims for district title

Horizon Christian's track and field team has a chance to earn the school its first-ever non-basketball district title Saturday, when the Big Sky Championships will be held in Moro. Both the Hawk boys and girls teams are among the favorites to win district team titles. Field events begin at 10:30 a.m. and running events start at 1 p.m. at Sherman County High School. Horizon tuned up for district by competing in Saturday's Arlington Invitational, which featured all 10 of the Big Sky teams. Horizon's boys finished second to Goldendale (the lone non-Big Sky squad) in the 11-team meet; the Hawk girls were ninth. Top placers for Horizon were Mason Bloomster, who won the discus throw with a school record 122-foot, 4-inch toss. Ryan Aldrich also surpassed the school record he had set two weeks ago, throwing 120-1 to finish second. Fellow senior Jared Davis was second in the long jump and third in the high jump. Sophomore Jony Nelson continued to lower his personal best in the 1500-meter run, finishing second in 4 minutes, 29.36 seconds. Freshman Andy Hung ran his way into the 800 conversation at district by cutting seven seconds off his personal best, clocking 2:22.69 in the two-lap race. Among the top marks for the Hawk girls were Haley Becnel's 400 (72.73 seconds) and both the third-place relay teams. The 4x100

team included Becnel, Kloe Brown, Miranda Roberts and Paulina Finn; Amy Requa replaced Roberts on the 4x400 squad.

Softball gets swept by Pendleton

The No. 1 Pendleton Buckaroos played like a No. 1 team when they came into town Friday for a game with No. 20 HRV, defeating the Eagles 14-1 and sweeping the four-game season series. As of Tuesday morning, the Buckaroos haven't lost to a Columbia River Conference opponent yet this season, posting a perfect 10-0 league record, 16-7 overall, thanks to the most productive bats in all of Class 5A. After Pendleton put up three runs to start the game, HRV (3-7 CRC, 10-14 overall) was able to limit Pendleton to one run in the second inning and another in the third, then gave up five in the fourth and four in the fifth, after which the game was ended due to the mercy rule. HRV managed three hits (all singles) to Pendleton's 14, and five errors to Pendleton's none. HRV's lone run came from Breanna Weekly, who scored off an RBI single from Makena Zeller in the bottom of the fourth inning. Weekly and JoJo Karr had the other two hits for HRV; Weekly also stole a base, as did Zoe Munn. Starting pitcher Kaylin Winans got the loss, pitching four innings in which she allowed 12 hits, 10 runs (seven earned), walked two batters, and struck

out one. Hannah McNeer pitched one in relief, giving up two hits, four runs (one earned), walking one batter, and striking out two. Second baseman Jessica DeHart led the team in putouts, with five and one assist on eight chances. HRV was scheduled to play at Hermiston Tuesday afternoon, and was two games up on the Bulldogs (1-9 CRC, 7-16 overall) heading into the game. With The Dalles now uncatchable due to a win over Hermiston on Friday, HRV was fighting with Hermiston for the final play-in game heading into Tuesday's conference; a win over Hermiston means HRV is in. The Eagles wrap up their regular season on Friday with a home game against The Dalles/Dufur (6-4 CRC, 14-9).

Baseball camp fundraiser this Saturday

Skyler Hunter, HRV baseball shortstop, along with other members of the HRV baseball team, will be putting on a baseball camp as a fundraiser for the high school team. The camp is Saturday, May 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the HRVHS baseball field and is open to kids in grades 3-8. Bring baseball gear and a sack lunch and get ready to have a fun time learning and improving your baseball fundamentals and skills. Cost of the camp is \$20; checks made payable to "HRV baseball." Parents with questions can call Skyler Hunter at 541-490-4994.