



THE UNTOUCHABLES



Photos by Ben Mitchell

EAGLES BASEBALL stayed perfect in the playoffs, defeating Liberty, 2-0, in the finals on Saturday in Keizer. At top left, players dive into the dogpile that formed at the end of the game; at bottom left, friends, fans and loved ones congratulate players; at center, ace Ryan Ward and third baseman Kellen Duffy (left side of photo) hoist the championship trophy with teammates; at top right, designated hitter Chase Lariza hugs his mother, Kris; at bottom right, senior reserve Austin Van Riper embraces coach Erich Harjo, who hold the trophy under his left arm. For in-game photos, turn to page A11.

HRV holds opponents scoreless in playoffs; defeats Liberty, 2-0, to win 5A state title

By BEN MITCHELL
News staff writer

Not Dallas. Not Putnam. Not Pendleton. And finally, not even No. 1 Liberty. Nobody could touch HRV.

The Eagles, who shut down and shut out every team they had faced in the 5A State Tournament thus far, stayed true to form in the finals on Saturday, knocking off the top-ranked Falcons, 2-0, at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer to claim the school's first baseball state title in a quarter century. They were the only team to shut out all their opponents in the OSAA playoffs in any classification, giving up a total of just 10 hits in four games.

"It's going to be a long time before I come down off of this one," HRV coach Erich Harjo said after the game. "These kids work, and they work, and they work, and they work, and this type of performance, this type of win, completely validates the bad hops off the chest, the scrapes, the bumps, the bruises, the tears, the broken jaws — it just completely validates everything that we do."

On paper, No. 7 HRV had a tough matchup, not only playing against the top-ranked team overall, but Liberty's top-ranked defense (51 runs allowed) and the No. 5 offense (213 runs scored) in 5A as well.

After the game, however, HRV's ace, Ryan Ward, felt those rankings were immaterial.

"They're the number one team in the state," he said of the Falcons, and then, after a brief pause: "I think we're the number one team in the state."

How about you, Coach Harjo?

"They hadn't faced the number one pitcher yet," he noted, referring to Ward.

The Eagles exuded as much confidence during the game as they did in their post-game interviews, controlling the action from beginning to end and establishing an early lead that was never threatened by the Falcons. Earlier in the week, both teams had come off semifinal games that went to extra innings — HRV defeated Pendleton, 1-0, in eight innings and

Liberty defeated Summit, 2-1, in 14 — but it was Liberty that looked the worse for wear, making mistakes at crucial points in the game.

After a quick first inning, with three batters up, then down for both teams, HRV capitalized on one of those mistakes in the top of the second. With bases loaded and two outs, designated hitter Chase Lariza popped one up to third base in what should have been a routine fly out. However, two Liberty infielders lost the ball in the scorching hot afternoon sun, allowing right fielder Patrick Harvey to score, much to the delight of HRV's dugout, as well as the sizable HRV contingent that had traveled to watch the Eagles play.

Up 1-0, HRV grabbed the insurance and final run of the game in the top of the fourth, thanks to back-to-back errors made by Liberty's infield with two outs on the board. Senior left fielder Riley Van Hoose scored the final run, courtesy of a hit from senior second baseman Kameron Walker. A pitching change for Liberty was made in the last inning, but it was too little and too late.

Liberty never looked like it could quite figure HRV out, Ward in particular. The senior pitched all seven innings in his final game for the Eagles, striking out 10 batters for his second game in a row and by the seventh inning, had pitched 64 consecutive innings without allowing an earned run. He gave up five hits in three of the four games he pitched in the playoffs, pitched a no-hitter in a 5-0 game over Dallas, and pitched a no-hitter through six innings of Saturday's game, giving up two in the seventh. In the team photo with the championship trophy, taken after athletes climbed out of a chaotic dogpile, most players put up their index fingers to make the traditional "No. 1" sign. Ward and Walker, however, made a "zero" sign, indicating the number of runs they gave up as pitchers in the playoffs this season.

But like rankings, the number of hits or the number of runs given up didn't matter that much to Ward, with the only meaningful statistic to him being the final score of the final game.

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"These kids work, and they work, and they work, and they work, and this type of win, this type of performance... it completely validates what we do."

ERICH HARJO



HRV Eagles are Cascade Cup champions

HRV outlasts LaSalle Catholic College Preparatory, 11-10, in brutal cup matchup in Hillsboro on Saturday

By BEN MITCHELL
News staff writer

The HRV boys lacrosse have been crowned the Cascade Cup kings, defeating LaSalle Catholic College Preparatory, 11-10 at Hillsboro Stadium on Saturday, winning the first cup in HRV history.

And like many other historical successions to thrones, this one was a battle.

Road accidents, hot weather; the SATs and multiple injuries conspired to keep HRV from winning the cup. Unsuccessfully, of course.

"In reality, all odds were against us," said coach Matt Luchsinger. "That's why I'm proud of these guys. To be able to win the Cascade Cup, which nobody thought we'd be able to do, is huge."

Getting to the game on time was a challenge, with the Rose Festival and an accident on I-84 putting HRV behind schedule. Top defender Torsenn Brown and top defender Alex Buschaver were tied with standardized testing, with Brown arriving after warmups, and Buschaver not arriving until after the game had started.

Luchsinger said LaSalle "came out charging and got the first goal of the game pretty fast," then added another to go up 2-0. HRV battled back and tied it up and the broke the game open in the second quarter, controlling the ball and outshooting the Falcons at a 2:1 ratio, although Luchsinger noted that "we were getting really unlucky with a lot of our shots," with balls bouncing off the pipes as well as other players.

Thanks to the strong second quarter, HRV was able to push out its lead to 7-4 by halftime, during which players stood around in buckets of ice, with the temperatures over 90 degrees and the turf field making conditions extremely uncomfortable.

"Everyone's feet were just on fire," Luchsinger noted.

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Contributed photo

HRV LACROSSE players pose with the Cascade Cup, t-shirts, and medals awarded to them following the team's 11-10 victory over LaSalle in Hillsboro on Saturday. The turf field and temperatures over 90 degrees made for an extremely hot game (notice the ice at bottom).