

# SPORTS



The Dalles wrestlers Dusty Dodge and Steven Preston, both kneeling in the middle, Dodge with white hat in front, were two of 13 all-star wrestlers to participate in the Oregon Wrestling Culture Exchange dual on Jan. 13 at Hood River Valley High School. Both Preston and Dodge finished 0-1 on the night. Contributed photo

## Preston, Dodge give TD wrestling program a big boost

**Duo celebrated state bids and were selected to take part in Culture Exchange dual**

■ Ray Rodriguez  
The Dalles Chronicle

The Dalles wrestlers Steven Preston and Dusty Dodge were two of 13 all-star wrestlers to participate in the Oregon Wrestling Culture Exchange friendly dual on Jan. 13 at Hood River Valley High School.

Oregon's wrestlers hosted Japan's top 13 wrestlers for matches and exchanged gifts such as kendama toys and komas chiyogami (high-quality origami paper), country flag pins and t-shirts.

Both Preston and Dodge finished 0-1 on the night, but head coach Paul Beasley applauded his two athletes for representing the school,

program and community well.

"Steven is a four-year varsity letterman, who has a high level of experience. He was selected as a reward to his commitment and leadership," Beasley said. "Dusty is new to our program, but certainly not to the sport of wrestling. He has an immense amount of tournament experience and represented the best opportunity, along with Steven, to have success against a group of fantastic Japanese athletes."

This event was originally organized in the 1960s, and in that time, the Oregon Wrestling Association has conducted cultural exchanges with Japan, Russia and South Africa.

Before Preston and Dodge, Joe Lineberger was the last TD wrestler to earn an invitation back in 2016.

"In wrestling, you learn so much about yourself and how to handle the good moments and the adversity, but you also get a chance to watch other wrestlers and

how they approach their training and preparation for each match and work to mix in different things to a more well-rounded competitor," Preston said in an earlier interview.

Oregon's all-star team was comprised of HRV's Carson Farlow, Jayton Muenzer, Chad Muenzer, Preston Armstrong, Maverick Geller, Abraham Tinajero, Cody Durham and coaches Tony Rolan and Lynn Miller, Chas Peterson, Ernest Stranz, Brad Keely and Rich Rolan.

Anthony Hood, Wyatt Corwin and Lane Downing represented Culver High School, Pendleton's Isaac Urbina and Dodge and Preston were from TD.

Preston (21-7 record), a 160-pound senior, added a win and two losses in his final state appearance and Dodge placed fifth and finish with a 26-2 overall record (25 pins, one decision) on Feb. 28-29 in Portland.

Dodge, a junior, totaled five tournament firsts and claimed a district

championship during the season.

This season, Preston had limited training time, and suffered through a separated shoulder and broken nose on two occasions, he sprained his ankle three times, dealt with two knee strains and pulled his back muscle several times in football and wrestling.

"It really hit me today that the true victory has been this year," his father Elijah Preston said. "Seeing how hard he's fought through so many setbacks and injuries and disappointment, it becomes clear. He's taken so many beatings this year that it's hard to believe. That being said, he never stopped fighting. He's always stood back up bloody and broken for one more round. That's the victory. Thank you coaches and friends that have pushed him to be the man he is."

As for the future, Steven plans to work for an oil drilling company in Wyoming, then he'll attend Western Wyoming Community

College and battle for a spot on the wrestling squad. On Feb. 22, Western Wyoming captured the Rocky Mountain District title with 102 points, crowned six district champions and qualified all 10 wrestlers for the NJCAA Wrestling Championships.

Over the years, Preston, a two-time state qualifier, has attained the knowledge and skills needed for success at the next stage of his life, so by overcoming the odds and building character through injuries and everything else thrown his way, he can be equipped to handle whatever is thrown his way.

"I think the main things that I learned because of wrestling are self-discipline, being able to go to practice every day and being able to keep my weight down and how to maintain a strict diet throughout the season," Steven said. "I think that is going to help me a lot as I get older."

Dodge, a two-time state placer at Goldendale (third place in 2018 and second last season at 160 pounds), won

all three of his 170-pound matches by pin to take first place at the OSAA 5A Special District 4 Championships in Redmond.

Dodge will return for the 2020-2021 season and join state qualifiers, Taylor Morehouse and Ian Preston, and Conor Blair, Zak Tackett, Angel Oregon, Lance Parke, Nathan Ganders, Aaron and Nathan Pyles, Ayden Orion, Marquies Sagapolutele, Aiden Marx, Isaac Baker, Austin Music, a handful of middle school wrestlers and females Elejah Sutton-Lott, Megan Lenardson and Kai Hoff.

"We can't worry about what happened this year, because we have next year to focus on," Dodge said. "During the summer, I am just going to hit the gym hard and I know we will have more wrestlers doing the same. We all need to get in better shape and work out more besides practice and everything. If we can stay committed to that, we can have more kids make it to state."

## HRV alum wins national collegiate title in wrestling

**Along with her award and medal, Miller received a watch for her accomplishments**

■ By Gabriel Bravo  
News staff writer

Hood River Valley High School graduate and Umpqua Community College freshman Grace Miller won the National Collegiate Wrestling Association Northwest Conference Championship in the 143-pound division earlier this month in Aberdeen, Wash.

Added to her award, Miller, who finished her first season with a 22-10 record, earned a medal and received a watch for her athletic achievements.

"It felt amazing. Being national champion was something I've always wanted to do," Miller

said. "My coaches we're super proud of me. They believed in me so much that I could win. Having them be there for me was amazing."

In her last match, the freshman defeated Melissa Crane, from the University of Washington, by first-round pin and said that she did not anticipate such a fast bout.

"I've never wrestled a girl before and didn't know what she was going to bring to the match," Miller said. "She seemed very aggressive and trying to drop me down, but I just had to stay calm and wrestle the style I wrestle as. She shot inside for a single leg, I put her a whizzer and dropped her down to the mat. Then I sprawled, got behind her, put her in an arm bar and pinned her."

Miller said her family has been supportive, especially her father, Lynn Miller, an HRV assistant wrestling coach.

"It's the furthest the furthest that anybody in my family has placed so it feels really amazing," Grace said. All of my family has been supporting me. My dad's super proud of me and that feeling is amazing, to have my family be so proud."

Winning the title has also inspired her 7-year-old stepbrother, she said. She described him as admiring her trophies at home and has asked if he'll have room for his trophies.

As she inspired her stepbrother, Grace Miller said she also hopes to inspire high school wrestlers.

"Hood River Valley was a great experience," Grace Miller said. "We have a lot of girl wrestlers who have placed really well at state and have All-Americans in college. So, to be one of those different All-Americans and champions feels like a legacy going on for Hood River Valley High School."



Umpqua Community College freshman Grace Miller at the top of the 143-class podium Sunday, March first, in Aberdeen, Wash. The Hood River Valley graduate won an award, a medal and received a watch for her athletic achievements. She ended her season with a 22-10 record. Grace Miller/Contributed photos



Hood River Valley High School athletes Luka Paider, in white shirt on left, is jogging on the track, while Elian Sedano is stretching before his workout in photos taken earlier this month. Photos by Luke Southall/Hood River News

## Spring athletes are coping with COVID-19

**With track season up in the air, standouts are encouraged just keep running**

■ By Luke Southall  
News intern

The novel coronavirus has taken its toll on worldwide events including Hood River Valley High School's track and field program.

Athletes from HRVHS had two weeks of regularly scheduled spring practices before they were postponed on March 13 until April 28, according to the OSAA website.

However, some of the students have been outrunning the pandemic in order to maintain their fitness.

"I want to stay fit, and if we do get a track season later in the year, I want to be prepared," said Luka Paider.

She added that although it was doubtful this would

happen, it's still great exercise.

Paider qualified for the state meet last year in the 4-by-100-meter relay, and she also runs the 100-and-200-meter races. Elian Sedano, a senior, also keeps up with the practice routine. While he is usually a mid-distance sprinter, this year he decided to take on the 300-meter hurdles.

"We have to compensate for what's going on with the virus. But we're driven by self-motivation," Sedano said.

Many students have expressed their disappointment in not being able to achieve the goals they had set for themselves in the pre-season.

"I wanted to run under 13 (seconds) in the 100," Paider said.

The coronavirus has had a massive impact on every sport, and people have been finding ways to maintain their mental and physical shape.

Coaches send workouts to the group, and students have the option to go and

complete them, while maintaining a 6-foot distance from one another.

Social distancing makes it difficult to motivate, the athletes said.

"It's a lot easier to work out in the morning if you go with other people. Your day feels longer," said Paider.

Athletes such as Paider and

Sedano continued to practice until the track and all school district facilities were officially closed on Monday.

It is important to understand and follow the government regulations, but people can still recreate safely while keeping in mind the well-being of themselves and others.

### Dr. Cullen's Student of the week

**Shane Squires for the Perseverance Award at the Learning Center:**

Shane is a kind, hardworking and helpful student. Shane is polite to those around him and is always willing to work hard. He will stick with a task until completion.



Shane Squires, TDHS

**Congratulations**



**Columbia View Dental**

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