

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Sports shorts

Logano wins Daytona 500

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Joey Logano had a shot to win the NASCAR championship last year. A flawed late pit stop cost him the chance, and he went into the offseason determined to get back into contention again.

A win in the season-opening Daytona 500 on Sunday gave Logano the head start he wanted. His victory earned him an automatic berth into the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship, and put him at the front of the field after a week dominated by the biggest names in NASCAR.

He was motivated by a sign in the Team Penske gymnasium that reads, "Effort equals results." That one phrase inspired Logano to put in countless hours watching video of past superspeedway races with his crew chief and his spotter.

More than two years after nearly washing out of one of NASCAR's top rides, Logano won the biggest race of his career by outlasting the field over a white-knuckle final 50 miles of three-wide racing.

No. 8 Louisville dropped by No. 4 Notre Dame

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — Jewell Loyd scored 20 points, Taya Reimer added 16 and fourth-ranked Notre Dame took control with a 16-0 second-half run to beat Jude Schimmel and No. 8 Louisville 68-52 Monday.

Notre Dame took control after the Cardinals used a 9-4 spurt early in the second half to open a 37-35 lead on a layup by Mariya Moore.

Notre Dame (26-2, 13-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) remained alone in first-place in league standings, while the Cardinals (23-4, 11-3) fell to third place.

The Cardinals went scoreless for 5:40 during the decisive run, missing eight straight attempts as they repeatedly put up bad shots.

Schimmel played 37 minutes in the contest — the most on the team — scoring 5 points, dishing out 7 assists and nabbing 4 steals.

The Cardinals next game is Thursday vs. Boston College.

"We've gotten significantly better in a lot of areas, or we hope that we have."

— Lloyd McClendon
Seattle Mariners manager before first spring training workouts

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1967 — Wilt Chamberlain of Philadelphia shoots 18-for-18 from the field against the Baltimore Bullets, an NBA record for field goals in a game without a miss.

1980 — The U.S. hockey team wins the gold medal with a 4-2 victory over Finland at the Lake Placid Olympics.

2008 — Tiger Woods wins the Accenture Match Play Championship, his fifth straight tournament victory. Woods had 14 birdies in 29 holes.

Contact us at 541-966-0838 or sports@eastoregonian.com

Growing into his size

Pendleton senior center reaching enormous potential

By ERIK SKOPIK
East Oregonian

After Brian Broaddus accepted the Pendleton boys basketball coaching job last April, he did what most coaches do when making the move to a new school. He asked around to find out what he had on the roster.

Those he spoke with told him there were a few certainties. The backcourt seemed set. Returning guards Kai Quinn and Caden Smith were All-Columbia River Conference performers last season. A few other key rotation players were back, too. But the season would hinge, they told him, on the play of 6-foot-6 senior center Wes Persinger.

At a school of PHS's size, kids that height were few and far between. And having a player that tall was plenty intriguing. The rest of the report wasn't as encouraging, however.

"He was described as not having a great motor, being kind of lazy," Broaddus remembered. "They all told me there's glimpses. He'd make a great play and then he'd be gone for the next three minutes."

Persinger started his junior season on varsity, made a few starts and because of inconsistent play on the court plummeted to a JV-varsity swing player.

After a few summer workouts Broaddus saw why. Although tall,



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Six-foot-six center Wes Persinger has become a dominate force down low for the Bucks this season. After a mediocre performance on the varsity roster last year, Persinger has elevated his game averaging 15.8 points per game, 10.5 rebounds and 2.5 blocks for Pendleton.

long and exceptionally agile for a player his size, Persinger was anything but dominant against players half a foot shorter than him.

He had a reputation for being flaky, too. His attendance at sessions was anything but a guarantee. When he was there, he didn't leave a big impression.

"Last year, he wasn't usually the last kid to leave the gym," Quinn, the Buckaroos starting point guard said.

The first-year coach weighed all

of it after summer training ended.

"To be honest, I didn't know if he'd make the team," Broaddus said. "A couple of the other coaches said 'You can't cut a kids who's 6-6 or 6-7.' I was like, 'Well, if he's not going to do what we're asking him to do and play hard, then we can and we will.'"

Persinger didn't give him the chance to make that decision. Something clicked. Persinger himself can't say just what, but he found his groove.

In a season-opening win over Sandpoint he scored 15 points and grabbed 17 rebounds. It set the tone for what has been a transformative year for the towering Persinger.

"I feel like I've grown more as a person than physically," he said. "(Broaddus) made me a better basketball player but also a better individual. He works with us. He tries to make us better in the classroom ... I'm trying to get everything up to coach's standards."

See PERSINGER/2B



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pilot Rock's McKayla Deist shoots over Weston-McEwen's Madison Carlin on Saturday in the Rockets' 45-22 win against the TigerScots in Pendleton.

Columbia Basin Conference girls championship Pilot Rock shuts down Weston-McEwen for title

Rocket D doesn't allow second half field goal

By ERIK SKOPIK
East Oregonian

The Pilot Rock girls basketball team didn't leave much up for debate Saturday.

The top-seeded Rockets put down rival and second-seeded Weston-McEwen for the third time this season to capture their fourth district tournament championship in five years in a 45-22 triumph at the Pendleton Convention Center.

For the first time in five years the Rockets are regular season league and district tournament champions, and they'll be heading into next week's state tournament as one of eight opening round hosts.

But nothing cemented their dominance more than how they defended on Saturday.

The Rockets (15-6) defense was plenty stifling in Friday's opening round win over Stanfield — the Tigers shot just 6-for-40

GIRLS HOOPS

Pilot Rock
56

WMHS
37

from the field — but Saturday's second half took the cake. The TigerScots (16-8) went 0-for from the field in the final 16 minutes. During that span PRHS grew its nine-point halftime edge into the 23-point winning margin.

"Our defense has been on the last two days, and that's what's taken over," junior forward Madison

Dave said.

All and all, Pilot Rock opponents shot just 11-for-93 in two days of CBC district tournament play. The display left Pilot Rock coach Butch Wilson confident about his team's postseason prospectus.

"We're peaked and we're healthy. I'm 100-percent confident that we're going to be playing back here in two weeks (for the state quarterfinals)," he said.

The TigerScots showed their resolve in

See GIRLS BBALL/2B

Columbia Basin Conference boys championship Knights run league table to title

By ERIK SKOPIK
East Oregonian

The Irrigon Knights couldn't ask for better positioning in their quest for a second straight Class 2A state title.

The Knights added to a perfect Columbia Basin Conference regular season Saturday with a 67-36 run-away win over Heppner in the district tournament championship game at the Pendleton Convention Center.

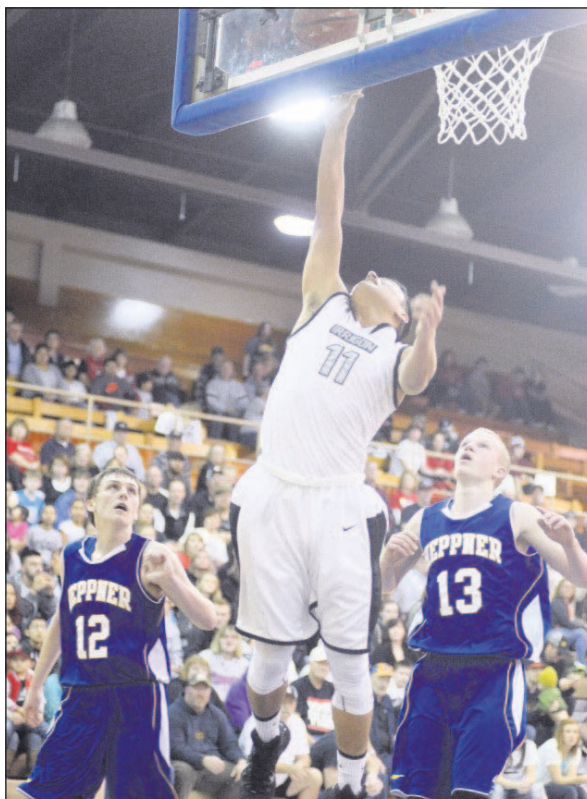
The win puts Irrigon (23-1) in a familiar spot atop of the 2A tournament bracket.

Saturday result also provided an occurrence which has become more and more common in the recent years: a third straight district tournament title.

"It just felt good to come back and knowing that we're being good and finish it off," said senior Adrian Romero, who's started on the last three district title teams. "We did it in good style. We won by 30 points. We played a solid game, defended well, played as a team."

"It's a good thing to accomplish," added fellow senior Anthony Landeros, who scored a

See BOYS BBALL/2B



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Irrigon's Anthony Landeros lays the ball in over Heppner's Caden Hedman (12) and Jerimiah Petzoldt in the Knights' 67-36 win against the Mustangs on Saturday in Pendleton.

Bucks finish fifth at state swimming

East Oregonian

GRESHAM — Paced by the performance of its 200-yard freestyle relay, the Pendleton boys placed fifth at the 5A state swimming championships at Mt. Hood Community College on Saturday.

In one of the best races of the evening the Buckaroos were barely edged at the wall by Corvallis to earn silver.

Corvallis anchor Trevor Gourley touched to stop the clock in 1:30.41 with Pendleton's Jon Jennings right there with him at 1:30.66.

It was the third of four events for Jennings in the finals, and he also placed fourth in the 100 freestyle (50.33), fifth in the 100 backstroke (57.31) and fourth as the lead-off for the 200 medley relay (1:43.94).

Joining hum on both relays were Nate Rickman and Layton Kirsch. Dylan Clemens filled out the medley relay team and Lukas Johnson was the fourth member of the freestyle team.

Rickman also had a solo placing and was fourth in the 50 freestyle with a time of 22.75.

Summit won the team title with 74 points, Bend was second with 65, Corvallis was third with 37 and Lebanon fourth with 25. Pendleton finished with 24.