

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## Sports shorts

### Pendleton boys kick off 5A state tourney

The Pendleton boys basketball team kicks off state tournament play Tuesday in Corvallis at 1:30 p.m. against top seed Mountain View.



The Cougars (20-5) were nearly upset in their qualifying win, squeaking by No. 16 Parkrose 63-61 to make the quarterfinals.

The No. 8 Buckaroos (18-7) dispatched No. 9 Corvallis last week, earning the Bucks a quarterfinal berth for just the fourth time in 45 years.

The winner of the game will play March 12 at 1:30 p.m. against the winner of No. 4 Silverton and No. 12 Churchill. The loser plays at 9 a.m. Wednesday. All games are at Gill Coliseum in Corvallis.

Listen to a livestream of the game at [osaa.org](http://osaa.org) and visit [eastoregonian.com](http://eastoregonian.com) for coverage from the scene.

### Ducks are named both player, coach of year in Pac-12

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Oregon's Joseph Young has been named the Pac-12

## FACES



Young

player of the year and Ducks coach Dana Altman has been named coach of the year.

Arizona's Stanley Johnson was the freshman of the year, Oregon State's Gary Payton II the defensive player and Washington State's Josh Hawkinson was the most improved player.



Altman

Arizona, which won the Pac-12 regular-season title, was the only team with more than one player on the Pac-12 first team, with Johnson, point guard T.J. McConnell and forward Rondae Hollis-Jefferson earning honors.

Young and Payton also were named to the first team, with Washington State's DaVonte Lacy, UCLA's Norman Powell, Stanford's Chasson Randle, California's Tyrone Wallace and Utah's Delon Wright.

**"I'm pretty happy they are going to pull it off. There's been a lot of races that have been canceled."**

— Aliy Zirkle

Musher in the Iditarod, which started Sunday on a new course that allows the race to go on despite warm temperatures and lack of snow.

## THIS DATE IN SPORTS

**1913** — The Quebec Bulldogs win the Stanley Cup in two games over Sydney.

**2002** — John Stockton, the NBA's career assist leader, has 13 assists in Utah's 95-92 loss at Houston to give him exactly 15,000 for his career.

**2012** — Portland's Ashton Eaton sets a heptathlon world record and wins the gold at the world indoor championships in Istanbul.

The American dominates the two-day competition, capping it with an overwhelming 1,000 meters. He breaks the record he set in 2011 by 77 points with a total of 6,645.

Contact us at 541-966-0838 or [sports@eastoregonian.com](mailto:sports@eastoregonian.com)

# Twice knighted



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The Irrigon boys basketball team celebrate their 65-53 state championship win in the 2A title game against Toledo on Saturday in Pendleton.

## Irrigon dispatches Toledo to win second-straight state 2A title

By MATT ENTRUP  
East Oregonian

With 36.6 seconds left in Saturday's 2A boys basketball championship, smiles finally started to appear on the faces of Irrigon players.

After holding off the best Toledo had to offer in a physical second half, the Knights were finally feeling a sense of security with a nine-point lead and senior Anthony Landeros headed to the free throw line to shoot two.

As teammates Fredy Vera and A.J. Timpy enjoyed one of the game's few light moments near midcourt, Landeros sank his first shot to push Irrigon's lead

back into double digits.

But even that wasn't enough for senior Adrian Romero, who wasn't able to relax until Vera sent the standing-room only crowd into a tizzy with the last of his game-high 23 points to punctuate a 65-53 win and Irrigon's second straight state title.

"I actually didn't feel comfortable until there was like seven seconds left, when the crowd started going crazy. That's when I felt most comfortable because I watch basketball and anything can happen," said Romero, who scored 10 points to go with six rebounds and six assists.

Going off the game's last eight

minutes, Romero's hesitance was certainly understandable.

He'd just watched Toledo cut an 18-point lead in half in the first four minutes of the fourth quarter, then trim the margin to seven when David Ammons continued his second-half scoring spree with 1:42 to play. Ammons scored 17 of his team-high 23 points in the second half as Toledo refused to go the way of Irrigon's prior two tournament opponents, which lost by a combined 57 points.

"Coach told us at the half that they were going to make runs and we just needed to be patient," said Vera, who shot 9-of-12 from the field and added five rebounds and three steals as Irrigon's Moda Health Player of the Game. "Sticking together, that was our plan all year and we did that."

It wouldn't take long for the Knights' patience to be tested when both teams went on a three-minute scoreless stretch during the third quarter, during which the game's physical nature and the crowd's fervor reached their peaks.

"They gave us a run the last time and we knew we were going to have a dogfight and we just brought it," said Landeros, referencing Irrigon's 76-73 double-overtime win over Toledo in the preseason. "I thought (the refs) were really going to let us play and we just came in prepared for it, and we just worked hard."

If one player could have benefited from a tightly called contest, it was Landeros.

See IRRIGON/2B

## Boys hoops



Irrigon  
65



Toledo  
53

## Boys prep basketball

# Nixyaawii loses in title tilt

By ERIK SKOPIL  
East Oregonian

BAKER CITY — Nixyaawii arrived in Baker City as dark horses. The Golden Eagles rode the underdog role to quarterfinal and semifinal demolitions of better seeded Hosanna Christian and Horizon Christian and into Saturday's state final against yet another favorite.

The final upset bid lost its legs down the final stretch, however, sputtering out versus second-ranked Country Christian in the fourth quarter to fall 61-53 in the state championship game.

"I felt like we were underdogs coming into this tournament, by what people said, you could tell," Golden Eagle guard Hunter Melton said. "I think we upset more people than we were supposed to."

The fifth-seeded Golden Eagles were eight minutes from making it a third and snagging the school's first state boys basketball title. Instead they'll settle for second place — the best finish in program history.

Nixyaawii led for

the game's majority. Ira Ashley completed an old-fashioned three-point play to give the Golden Eagles an 11-9 lead first quarter edge. The advantage would hold for the next 18 plus minutes of game time. During that span the upstarts would push the lead to as much as ten.

They weathered several Cougar spurts and held a 42-40 edge with eight minutes separating them from a state title. The horsepower wasn't there for the underdogs in the final period. Country Christian used a 12-1 run in the fourth to grab a stranglehold at 56-47 with 1:24 to play in regulation. The Cougars out-dogs scored Nixyaawii 21-11 in the fourth period.

"It just slipped away faster than you can even realize it," said Melton, who finished with 10 points.

"We were really close, really close," Nixyaawii coach Shane Rivera said. "I think their physicality — they're mostly seniors, we're mostly juniors. That played a part in it."

No Golden Eagle was eye level with the Cougars starting front court



Will Phinney/CUJ

Nixyaawii's Elijah Bevis goes up for a shot in the state title game against Country Christian. The Golden Eagles left in the fourth quarter, but Country Christian won 61-53.

of Luke Carter and Ben Grandle. The pair stands 6-foot-6 and 6-foot-5 respectively. They duo was kept in check for the first 16 minutes, but exploded in the second half. Carter and Grandle combined for 24 second-half points and 12 rebounds.

Carter finished with 20 points and 12 rebounds,

Grandle with 13 and six rebounds.

"They're the biggest team (we've faced) by far," Rivera said. "They have height, we have speed."

The speed and perimeter shooting was the biggest reason the Eagles

See EAGLES/2B

## Girls prep basketball

# Bucks back to state tourney

East Oregonian

BEND — The Pendleton Buckaroos advanced to the girls basketball final site for the first time since 2006 with a 62-43 win over Summit on Saturday.

Led by its senior class, the Bucks opened an early lead and extended it in every quarter of play to earn another shot at Columbia River Conference and cross-county rival Hermiston in the state quarterfinals.

Pendleton's Kiana Sperl posted a double-double with 16 points and 10 rebounds, and frontcourt running mate Kristin Williams added a team-high 18 points to go with her eight rebounds and three blocks.

"The seniors really came out and showed a lot of leadership," said Pendleton coach Michelle Gomez, who coached Pilot Rock's girls to the 2A third-place

See BUCKS/2B

## Girls hoops



Pendleton  
62



Summit  
43