

KNIGHTS: Both teams travel in first round of state

Continued from 1B

Weston-McEwen guard and CBC Player of the Year Chelsea Quaempts was strapped to the bench with three fouls for most of the second quarter, but the TigerScots looked poised to take a nice lead into the locker room until Burns and Beatriz Aguilera hit three-pointers in the final minute to make it a one-score game, 20-18, at intermission.

That made all the difference for the Knights.

“We went into halftime knowing that we were only down by two and it was possible, we could do it,” said Burns, who also finished with six rebounds, five steals and four assists.

“We felt very lucky at halftime only being down two points,” Royer said. “But that gave the girls, they started thinking, ‘As poorly as we played offensively in the first half and we’re down two. We’ve got a shot.’ And they believed it.”

Davis, Burns and Aguilera all scored quickly in the third quarter to give the Knights their first lead, which extended to 27-22 during a scoreless span for the TigerScots that lasted more than five minutes.

But like the Knights had in the second, the TigerScots finished the third quarter with a burst to knot the score headed into the fourth.

Sarah Finifrock took a long pass from Ammarae Broncheau and converted a runner in the lane to end the scoring drought with :55 left in the frame, and Broncheau then drilled a three-pointer from the corner just before the buzzer.

Finifrock hit a three-pointer from nearly the same spot to start the fourth quarter but two straight trips to the free throw line for Burns brought the score back to equal at 30-30 with 5:23 to play.

The teams traded buckets over the next five minutes with one other tie. The Knights didn’t regain the lead until Davis’ three-point play with less than a minute left, but Quaempts answered right away with a layup in traffic to tie the score 36-36 with :38 to go.

Irrigon held out for the final shot, but Burns’ hurried leaner at the top of the key was off target.

Burns hit a free throw to break the tie early in the overtime period, and the lead then changed hands four more times, that last coming when Lily Mills hit an eight-footer to put Irrigon up 41-40 with 1:45



Chelsea Quaempts (32), of Weston-McEwen, gets pressure from Irrigon's Briana Rice during Saturday's Columbia Basin Conference Basketball Tournament at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

left in the extra period. She then added a pair of freebies with 49 seconds left to make it 43-40.

Weston-McEwen got three looks at the rim on their next time down the court but couldn’t make them count, and Burns pounded in the final nail at the other end. Two more free throws made it a 46-40 game before Broncheau hit a three-pointer at the very end.

Broncheau led Weston-McEwen with 12 points and four steals, Quaempts added nine points and eight rebounds, Sarah Finifrock had eight points and eight rebounds, and Alyssa Finifrock had 11 rebounds to go with five points.

“We fought really hard and I’m proud to be a part of this team. We represent ourselves really well,” Quaempts said. “I just feel like we learned a lot, and never underestimate anybody. This is postseason so this is where it all counts.”

TigerScots coach Amber Doremus said she wasn’t necessarily surprised by the outcome.

“Irrigon’s no pushover and we’ve know all season long that they have this ability to do what they did today,” she said. “They just kept coming and kept coming and coming and coming.”

“It’s obviously tough but I’m so proud of the girls. They had a great season and today wasn’t all bad.”

Aguilera added nine points and

eight rebounds for Irrigon, and both teams move on to the state playoffs for their next action.

No. 10 Weston-McEwen will play at No. 7 Lost River on Friday at 6 p.m.

“By Monday they’ll be back focused and they’ll know who we’re playing and they’ll be hunting for information, and they’ll be hungry for we can give them on the next opponent,” Doremus said. “It’s been a great season so far, we’re grateful for all the support that we get. It’s time to go on a road trip and hopefully they’ll join us. Usually Weston-McEwen travels well so that would be neat.”

No. 16 Irrigon will also be on the road for the first round against No. 1 overall seed Kennedy on Friday at 6 p.m.

“It’s a little unusual for Irrigon to have the girls win the district title and not the boys,” Royer said. “I’m happy for the girls. It’s some great experience for us, and with the momentum that we have, who knows what’ll happen now?”

IHS (11-12) 4 14 9 9 10 — 46
W-M (15-9) 12 8 7 9 7 — 43
IRRIGON — J. Burns 17, T. Davis 12, B. Aguilera 9, L. Mills 5, A. Zaccarias 3, N. Romero, B. Rice, K. McLaughlin. (14-46)
WESTON-McEWEN — A. Broncheau 12, C. Quaempts 9, S. Finifrock 8, A. Finifrock 6, B. Hillmick 3, A. Hill 3, S. von Borstel 2, K. Vescio 1, A. Schroeder. (15-53)
3-pointers — IHS 3-15, W-M 3-17, Free throws — IHS 15-26, W-M 10-23. Fouls — IHS 19, W-M 23. Fouled out — K. McLaughlin (IHS), C. Quaempts (W-M).

HEPPNER: Vera 3-pointer ties score with one minute left

Continued from 1B

said. “We knew if we started rebounding and working extra hard on the offensive glass to give ourselves extra chances it would work out and it did.”

In that first half, Irrigon dictated the tempo right out of the gates. The Knights scored 10 of the first 13 points with a combination of quick hands on defense forcing four Mustang turnovers, as well as speed on offense led by Xavier Rambo with six of his 13 points coming in the frame. However, the Mustangs did find some offense towards the end of the quarter, as they went on a 7-0 run over the final 3:15 seconds closed the first quarter with a 12-12 tie.

In the second quarter, it was all Knights to start again as Irrigon busted out a 6-0 run to open up an 18-12 lead with only a few minutes off the clock. Once again, Heppner would put together a run of its own to cut the deficit to 18-17 before the Knights’ Fredy Vera took over and scored eight straight points to end the half with his team up 26-21.

During the break, Rosenbalm said he told the Mustangs they had gotten too far away from the game plan in the half, and that they needed to get back to what they had practiced if they wanted to win.

“We were playing a little cautious in the first half, not really attacking the basket like I know we can,” he said. “And in the second half the kids became more aggressive and stepped it up defensively, which is where I think we won this one.”

The second half started out with Heppner grabbing the momentum this time, with the Mustangs outscoring Irrigon 7-3 in the first three minutes to cut the lead to 29-28. A few minutes later, Heppner grabbed its first lead of the game at 34-33 on a reverse lay-in by Caden Hedman as the third quarter wound down.

The Knights scored just seven points in the third quarter, and were slowed by the absence of Vera on the floor as he picked up his fourth foul with 2:56 left in the third and sat for the remainder of the quarter and part of the fourth.

Heppner eventually grew its lead to the largest point at 39-33 with seven minutes left in the

fourth quarter before Irrigon clawed its way back. The Knights got the score to 41-39 and, with 4:11 left in the game, Daniel Vera hit a 3-pointer in the right corner to give the Knights a 42-41 lead and sent the Knights bench and fans into pandemonium.

Heppner would then grab the lead back and push it to 45-42, before Fredy Vera stepped up and also nailed a 3-pointer with one minute left to play to tie the game at 45-45. Vera led the Knights with 17 points and after the game was named CBC Player of the Year — a reward that Knights’ coach Mitch Thompson said he undoubtedly deserved.

“He’s a tremendous kid who is the epitome of hard work,” Thompson said. “Fredy is our cornerstone, and guys lean on him for leadership, points, and I couldn’t be more proud of him.”

After Vera tied the game, Collins came right back down the floor and missed a close shot inside, but grabbed the offensive board and put it back up to put his team on top for good at 47-45 with 30 seconds to play. Vera missed a last-second 3-pointer that had a chance to send the game to overtime.

Thompson said afterwards that he is really proud of the Knights’ second place trophy.

“I think these guys have over-achieved because this group has come so far, which is why I love coaching basketball because of things like this,” he said. “It feels good to coach a group of kids like that.”

Heppner and Irrigon both secured spots in the OSAA state tournament by playing on Saturday and both earned home games in the first round due to their OSAA ranking.

No. 3 Heppner will host No. 14 Lost River on Saturday at 2 p.m., then No. 8 Irrigon will host No. 9 Kennedy at 5 p.m.

IHS (17-7) 12 14 7 12 — 45
HHS (20-3) 12 9 15 14 — 50
IRRIGON — F Vera 17, X. Rambo 13, H. White 8, J. Phillips 4, D. Vera 3, A. Rice, O Vera, L. Covarrubia.
HEPPNER — P. Collins 21, W. Putman 12, L. Grieb 9, C.J. Kindle 4, C. Hedman 4, K. Clark, J. Lindsay, K. Murray.
3-pointers — IHS 2, HHS 3. Free throws — IHS 11-13, HHS 15-28. Fouls — IHS 22, HHS 11. Fouled out — H. White (IHS), O. Vera (IHS).

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