

TRACK: Foley wins dead heat in girls 800 meters

Continued from 1B

Valley walked away with the district title as they squeezed out a three-point win over Hermiston. The Eagles finished the meet with 99 points and Hermiston was second with 96 points, which was a lot closer than Strot had expected.

"I went through the projections before and if we did everything we were supposed to I thought we'd be in second place by a wider margin," she said. "I'm just so proud of the boys ... they did phenomenal."

Pendleton finished third in the boys standings with 59 points and The Dalles came in fourth with 10 points to round out the teams.

The Bulldogs earned 13 spots in 12 events for the state meet, led by senior Tre Neal who earned Athlete of the Meet award for field events, as he qualified in the shot put, discus and javelin.

Xavier Rambo had a big day in the jumping pits for Hermiston, as he earned a first place finish in the triple jump with a personal record of 43-2.00, and a second place finish in the long jump.

Also qualifying for state in the triple jump was Pendleton's Dylan Clemons as he jumped a personal record of 42-04.00 in the finals, beating out Hermiston's Vaemu Ena by a very slim margin.

Clemons has been to the state meet in each of the last two years as an alternate and



Delaney Clem, of Pendleton, led the entire way Thursday during the 1500 meter run at the Columbia River Conference Track and Field Championships, winning with a time of 5:05.89. Melany Solorio, on Clem's shoulder, came in second.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

a competitor in Pendleton's 4x400 relay, and says that he is happy to cap off his high school career with yet another trip back.

"Oh man I feel really good," he said. "I'm very thankful ... my friends have been pushing me to do better for myself and for my team and when you get individual sports like these there's almost more of a sense of unity than in team sports because everyone works to get the team to the next level and it feels great to be a part of something so great."

Nolan Bylenga was strong as usual for Pendleton in the boys 800 meter run, taking first with a time of 1:55.85, which was just off the pace of

his CRC record of 1:55-flat set last year. Bylenga said he was pushed more than he expected to be by Hermiston's Hayden Earl, who finished in second place.

"In that first lap, Hayden was right on my tail ... and then he took the lead from me and I knew the finish would be difficult," he said. "I was thinking today about a really good seed time today, and Hayden pushed me and ran out of his mind today. We're friends and I'm proud of him."

The Buckaroo boys earned seven spots at state, behind both relay teams and on the back of senior Garison Alger who qualified in both the 110 meter and 300 meter hurdles.

Two of the best races of the evening came within the last hour of competition, as the girls 800 meter run and the boys 4x400 relay brought great excitement for the hundreds of fans in attendance.

In the 800 meter run, Hermiston's Macey Foley and Pendleton's Sokoloski battled neck-and-neck throughout much of the race, and were dead even as they came around the last turn to finish out the remaining 100 meters. The finish was too close to call as both appeared dead even at the line, and after looking at the finish line photos, it was determined that Foley was the winner with a time of 2:24.75 — one one-hundredth of a second over Sokoloski's 2:24.76.

And then in the boys 4x400, which was the last event of the meet, Pendleton's team of Soren Wolf, Andrew Porter, Garison Alger and Nolan Bylenga blew the doors off the competition, winning by eight seconds over second place with a time of 3:23.97. But the excitement came at the second place battle, as Hermiston anchor Alexis Mercado overtook Hood River Valley within the last 30 meters to grab the second place finish.

"What a way to end the night," Strot said.

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NBA Playoffs

Thunder return to conference finals

By CLIFF BRUNT Associated Press



Thunder win series 4-2

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Thunder flipped the script, and now they're heading to the Western Conference finals.

Tim Duncan doesn't know yet where he's headed as the San Antonio Spurs face an uncertain future.

Kevin Durant scored 37 points, Russell Westbrook added 28, and Oklahoma City beat San Antonio 113-99 on Thursday night to win the Western Conference semifinal series 4-2.

Oklahoma City lost 124-92 in Game 1, but first-year coach Billy Donovan led the Thunder to victory in four of the next five. Oklahoma City controlled Game 6, leading by as many as 28 points.

Westbrook said the Thunder never lost confidence.

"We had that game, and we left it behind us," he said. "We came out after that and had a different mindset. We knew what we had to do to win the series. They're a great team. They've been winning for 10-plus years, same pace. I'm just proud of our guys."

Steven Adams had 15 points and 11 rebounds, and Andre Roberson added

14 points for the Thunder. Oklahoma City now will face defending NBA champion Golden State, starting Monday in Oakland, California.

"Golden State's a great team," Donovan said. "It will be a great challenge. We've got a little bit of time to prepare before we play, but right now, for us, it's just to enjoy the opportunity to move on, get a chance to continue to play and get as prepared as we can going into Game 1."

The Spurs were trying to extend the winningest season in franchise history after going 67-15. The 40-year-old Duncan struggled for much of the series before scoring 19 points as San Antonio tried to fight back in the fourth quarter.

Duncan didn't clear anything up about his future after the game. He has a player option for next season.

"I'll get to that after I get out of here and figure life out," he said.

TOVEY: State semifinals produced favorite moment

Continued from 1B

Harry is the other Hermiston coach to be named NWCA Assistant Coach of the Year (2006-07).

"Tovey's an awesome guy, tons of help, very enthusiastic and a lot of passion about wrestling," Larson said. "He's a great person to be around and a great person for kids to be around."

"He's trying to work with kids to help them grow as young men, help get these kids into college. That's what Hermiston wrestling is about and he embodies it."

Hermiston went 17-2 in 2015-16, including a 5-1 record at The Clash National Wrestling Duals in Minnesota, and then won its 10th OSAA state championship. It was the third in a row and Tovey's ninth between his 27 years with Hermiston and Roseburg.

He said the state tournament produced his favorite moment of the season following a disappointing first day of competition at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

"We were nervous. We do our homework ahead of time and try to map out as much as possible," he said. "We did not have a good first day. We thought our role players would have done more, scored more points."

The Bulldogs had seven wrestlers still in the semifinals, but Tovey said his many years of experience has taught him to expect about a 50 percent loss rate each round.

"Going into the semifinals we were nervous, then we went seven for seven," he said. "I'd never seen that happen before, 100 percent. The tournament was over, you know what I mean?"

"I think that was kind of

a cool reward as a coaching staff. He just did a great job pulling guys that were in the community."

Tovey said he's honored to represent the Bulldogs staff, paid and volunteer alike — Joe Delgado, Jase Houston, Clayton Cook, Kenny Valdez, Brian Tarvin, Jason Lambert — who Tovey says all deserve credit for his award.

"As a coaching staff we really gelled and figured it out this year," he said. "Kyle did a tremendous job as a first-year coach filling out a coaching staff."

Tovey said he also owes a debt of gratitude to his wife Melinda.

"I've been coaching forever and she's had to share me for a long time, and she is just a great support," he said.

As a wrestler at Portland State, Tovey was part of the Vikings' 1989 NCAA Division II championship team

under Marlin Grahn.

Pat Simpson of Father Ryan High School in Nashville, Tennessee, was named NWCA Head Coach of the Year. The Irish posted a 22-0 record and claimed state championships at the Division II individual and dual tournaments.

"Both Coach Simpson and Coach Tovey have long careers in coaching at the high school level and have served as tremendous mentors for our next generation of teachers and coaches," said NWCA Executive Director Mike Moyer. "One of the hardest things about recognizing great scholastic coaches is there are so many viable and deserving coaches to consider."

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BLAZERS: Front office pushing for long-term deal with Stotts

Continued from 1B

that's very common in the NBA now," Lillard said.

From a preseason bonding trip to San Diego, where the team hammed for photos on the beach, to Lillard's team dinners and trips to a roller skating rink, the young Blazers became a cohesive group.

Lillard was the lone starter to return from the 2014-15 Blazers, after LaMarcus Aldridge, Nicolas Batum, Robin Lopez and Wesley Matthews departed in the offseason.

The group that was assembled was the third-youngest in the NBA and included players who, for whatever reason, hadn't really caught on elsewhere. Many never thought the Blazers would win more than 30 games, let alone make the playoffs, but Portland went on to finish 44-38 with the fifth seed in the Western Conference.

The Blazers beat the injury-depleted Clippers in the first round.

Portland had a daunting task in the defending NBA champion Warriors and MVP Stephen Curry in the second round but put up a fight. After dropping the first two in Oakland, Portland claimed the third at home but lost the fourth in overtime — with Curry coming back from a knee injury and scoring 40 points, including 17 in the OT. The Warriors closed out the series with a nail-biter in Oakland on Wednesday night.

Lillard averaged a career-high 25.1 points in the regular season, becoming just the third Portland player to average more than 25. He also averaged 6.8 assists.

CJ McCollum averaged 20.8 points in his first year as a starter, giving the Blazers their first backcourt duo with an average of 20 or more points apiece in a single season.

McCollum was named the league's Most Improved Player for more than tripling his scoring average from the

2014-15 season.

Those two will almost certainly be back next season, as will fellow starters Al-Farouq Aminu and Mason Plumlee. Forward Maurice Harkless, who started all 11 postseason games, backup guard Allen Crabbe and reserve forward Meyers Leonard are all restricted free agents.

Gerald Henderson and Chris Kaman and Brian Roberts are unrestricted free agents.

Leonard injured his shoulder late in the season and required surgery. He was still wearing a sling Thursday.

"To be honest, I haven't had a conversation with my agent about this (free agency)," said Leonard, who said his focus was on rehab. He and Crabbe said they'd like to stay in Portland.

The Blazers have a team option on coach Terry Stotts for the coming season, but the team is looking to

quickly firm up a long-term deal. The 58-year-old coach has a 182-146 record in four seasons with the team. He's led the Blazers to the playoffs in each of the last three years, and to the conference semifinals twice.

Stotts finished second to Golden State's Steve Kerr in NBA Coach of the Year voting.

"You just look at what he got out of his guys all year," Plumlee said. "He should have been coach of the year."

Lillard and McCollum, meanwhile, are already planning the team's collective offseason getaway.

"Coming into this season we weren't even expected to be a playoff team. We didn't accept what everybody expected of us. We had our own goals, we had our own plan in mind," Lillard said. "I think the next step is not accepting, 'All right, let's just get there, let's get there and compete.' Now it's 'Let's get there and let's go win it.'"

Local Slate table with columns for Prep Baseball, Prep Softball, Prep Track & Field, and Prep Tennis.

Scoreboard table listing various sports events including Prep Lacrosse, Prep Rugby, College Baseball, College Softball, Basketball, and Baseball.

Scoreboard table listing NHL Playoffs (Eastern Conference), Hockey, and Baseball (American League).

Scoreboard table listing NBA Playoffs (Western Conference), Soccer, and MLB.

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