

NBA Playoffs

# Spurs advance to Western Conference final

By KRISTIE RIEKEN  
Associated Press

HOUSTON — The San Antonio Spurs eliminated the sluggish James Harden and Houston Rockets with a 114-75 victory in Game 6 on Thursday night, and they didn't even need Kawhi Leonard to do it.

LaMarcus Aldridge had a season-high 34 points and added 12 rebounds in his second big game of the of the Western Conference semifinal series to pick up the scoring slack with Leonard out after rolling his ankle in San Antonio's overtime victory in Game 5 on

Tuesday night.

The Spurs were up by 19 by halftime in a game that was over quickly, and didn't let up to reach the Western Conference finals for the first time since winning the title in 2014. The 4-2 series win sends them to conference finals against the Golden State Warriors.

Trevor Ariza led Houston with 20 points on a night when MVP hopeful Harden capped his stellar season by tying a season low with 10 points on 2-of-11 shooting before fouling out with 3:15



Rockets on defense. San Antonio was up by 23 after the third quarter and scored the first seven points of the fourth to make it 94-64 and send many of the home fans streaming to the exits.

Already without veteran Tony Parker, who suffered a season-ending quadriceps injury in Game 2, the Spurs looked to be the underdog without Leonard's scoring

and defense.

Instead, things went wrong early for the Rockets with Aldridge scoring 10 points in the first quarter as San Antonio dashed out to a 31-24. Houston was already down 50-29 when Harden took his first shot midway through the second quarter.

Houston, which relied on its 3-point shooting to get this far, couldn't make shots from long-range going 13 of 40. But the Rockets also had trouble scoring in general, making just 28.6 percent (22 of 77) of their shots overall.

**UP NEXT**  
Game 1 of the West finals is Sunday at Golden State.



AP Photo/Eric Christian Smith  
San Antonio Spurs center Pau Gasol (16) blocks the shot of Houston Rockets guard James Harden (13) as forward LaMarcus Aldridge defends during the second half in Game 6 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series, Thursday, May 11, 2017, in Houston.

## DISTRICT: Pendleton earns five state berths

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4x400 relay team's win in a time of 4 minutes, 13.03 seconds.

She leaned past Wilson for the 100 win in 12.41 with a strong tailwind, and was a step ahead of teammate Elsa Torres to win the 200 in 26.34.

"All year round our girls have been super strong. Without a doubt the best team I've had," she said. "Our state team is going to be better than ever I think. We're going to go out there to take it."

Wilson added a triple jump title to her haul on Thursday, and also ran for both relays. She had already claimed the long jump gold on Wednesday. Madison Wilson took both hurdles races for the Bulldogs, and Audrey Lincoln finished second in the 300 hurdles while also winning the 400 in close race with teammate Elsa Torres. Stephanie Miears and Madelyn Juul added lots of points in the throwing events and finished 1-2 in the discus and shot put. Juul won the discus with a throw of 105-0.5 and Miears earned her first state berth with a winning 37-9 in shot put that tied her personal best.

"That was the ultimate goal," Miears said of state. "Last year I didn't make it so this year I was pushing myself to get there. I was two inches off, so I pushed myself."

Juul said she's hoping for big things when the Bulldogs get to the OSAA championships next week in Eugene.

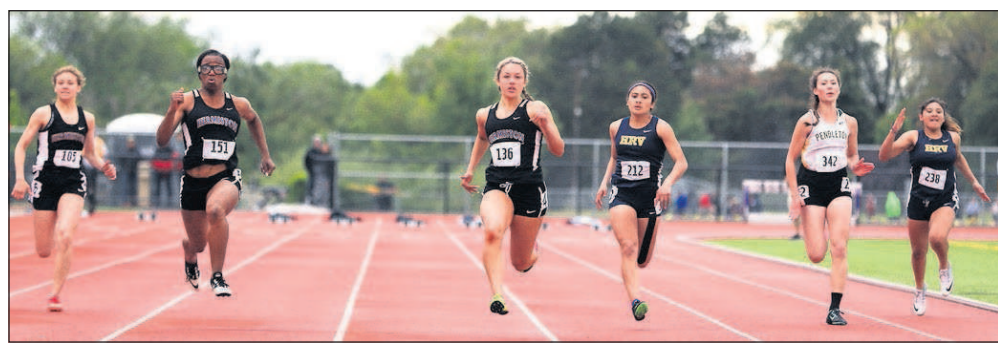
"We came into this knowing that this sets us up for the state meet, and we have goals there too. So this is where it started," she said.

The Bulldogs boys will be poised to bring back some state hardware was well, and Rohrman and Mercado both won four district titles on Thursday.

Like the girls, both Hermiston relays won their races and Rohrman and Mercado were on each of those teams. Rohrman added individual titles in 110 and 300 hurdles, and Mercado picked up his in the 200 and 400.

The teammates' seasons may be finishing in similar places, but Mercado said it wasn't long ago he wasn't sure he would make it back to another state meet after qualifying in the 200 as a junior.

"I started the season going in with some mental blocks and doubts, because the first couple events of



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
Scout Reagan, of Hermiston, races to first place in the 100-meter dash Thursday during the Columbia River Conference track-and-field championships at Hermiston High School with a time of 12.41 seconds.

the year everyone came in running these great times and I was running worse times than I ran since I got into high school," he said.

He said self-applied pressure was his problem, and it took a few coaches to remind him that he was supposed to be having fun to finally snap him out of it.

"I came in last week at one of our last meets and decided I'm just going to have fun. And I ran like two PRs," he said. "I'm going to go out and give it everything I've got (at state). It doesn't really matter where I place, I just want to do the best that I can do. As many PRs before I go off to college."

Pendleton's state contingent was much smaller after the Buckaroos finished fourth in team points. The Bucks won two event titles and earned five state berths.

Senior Kiara Glover was the only Buckaroo to win an event on Thursday, and will be competing in her third state meet after a winning high jump of 5-2. She was also second in triple jump, and third in both the long jump and 100 hurdles. With ice bags strapped to the front and back of her legs, she needed help going up and down the medal podium so many times.

"It's my first time doing four events in one meet," she said. "This meet I just had no idea, so getting first in high jump, that felt pretty nice."

She only made one attempt in the triple jump finals when she tweaked an ankle, her distance was more than enough to get her into state for the first time in that event.

"I was just doing something to power up my legs, and then I jumped up and I landed and I twisted my ankle," she said. "Always going injured to state."

Soren Wolf de Gavia also earned a state berth on Thursday placing second in the boys 400, and Hailey Kendrick had earned the Bucks' other title on Wednesday in the girls' pole vault.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
Kiara Glover, of Pendleton, triple jumps Thursday during the Columbia River Conference track-and-field championships at Hermiston High School.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
**UP NEXT**  
The state meet will be held May 19-20 at University of Oregon's Hayward Field in Eugene.

**Team Points**  
**BOYS**  
1, Hermiston 108; 2, Hood River 95; 3, The Dalles 32; 4, Pendleton 25.  
**GIRLS**  
1, Hermiston 126.5; 2, Hood River 64.5; 3, The Dalles 36; 4, Pendleton 33.

## MARINERS: Cano scratched from lineup Thursday

Continued from 1B

After scoring 21 runs in their previous two games, the Mariners jumped on Estrada in the opening frame. Jean Segura led off with a double and Cruz drilled a one-out homer into the center field party deck, his eighth.

"That first inning was kind of tough," Estrada said. "Even the outs were kind of hit pretty hard. I'm glad I was able to turn things around and make better pitches after that."

Smoak halved the deficit with an RBI single off Chase De Jong in the bottom half.

Toronto took the lead by scoring five times in a two-out rally in the fifth. Smoak lined a bases-loaded

single over the head of shortstop Segura, who had shifted out behind second base, and Pearce followed with his fourth home run.

"It kind of got away from us pretty quickly there," De Jong said.

Aaron Loup, Jason Grilli and Leonel Campos each worked one inning of relief for the Blue Jays.

De Jong (0-3) allowed six runs in five innings.

"I really wasn't as crisp as I'd like to have been," De Jong said.

Seattle dropped one game below .500. The Mariners have not had a winning record at any point this season.

**BORDER BLUES**  
Mariners OF Guillermo

Heredia and LHP Ariel Miranda did not travel with the team on its flight from Philadelphia to Toronto on Wednesday night because of visa issues. The players, both from Cuba, arrived in Toronto during the game.

**FINALLY MADE IT**  
De Jong was excited to face Toronto, the team that drafted him out of high school in 2012, and the team his cousin Jordan pitched for in 2007. "Ever since I started my baseball career, I thought I was going to get up here," De Jong said.

**TRAINER'S ROOM**  
Mariners: 2B Robinson Cano (right quadriceps) was scratched from the starting lineup. Cano left Tuesday's win at Philadelphia after

four innings with the same injury. ... LHP James Paxton (left forearm) played catch at 60 feet at Safeco Field on Thursday and will be reevaluated Friday. ... Seattle claimed RHP Casey Lawrence on waivers from Toronto, recalled LHP Zac Curtis from Double-A Arkansas and optioned RHP Dan Altavilla to Triple-A Tacoma. To make room for Lawrence, RHP Evan Scribner was moved from the 10-day to the 60-day DL.

**UP NEXT**  
Mariners: RHP Christian Bergman (0-0, 2.45 ERA) will make his first start of the season.

Blue Jays: RHP Joe Biagini (0-1, 2.78) makes his second start.

### Athlete of the Week

## Twenty questions with Helix's Erik Jones

East Oregonian

HELIX — Erik Jones dominated the competition at last weekend's Special District 4 sub-district tennis tournament in Kennewick.

Jones, a senior from Helix, won the boys singles bracket by being victorious in 48 of the 58 sets over four matches with his closest match coming in the finals where he held off teammate Cody Dunn 6-3, 6-4. The win clinched a No. 1 seeding at this weekend's district tournament.

For his efforts, Jones is the East Oregonian Athlete of the Week for May 1-6.

**EO: What was the first sport you played and how old were you at the time?**

EJ: Soccer, I was about 8-year-old and played for a little team in Walla Walla.

**How many sports do you play currently?**

I only play tennis about year round

**What drew you to want to play tennis?**

It was a sport I had never tried and always had an interest in it.

**What's your favorite part about tennis?**

It's a gentleman's sport and you can befriend most players and most are honest people who are there to just have fun.

**Do you have a favorite professional sport you like to watch or follow?**

Not really, I'm not one to watch sports on TV. I'm much more of a get out there and play type of person.

**Do you have any hobbies outside of sports?**

I enjoy building computers and spending time with friends and family. I also enjoy just listening to music and relaxing.

**What is your favorite class in school?**

My teachers assistant period. I get along with the teacher well and enjoy joking around with him.

**Who is your favorite teacher you've had?**

My seventh grade

teacher Mrs. Cibert. She helped me work a lot of things out and kept me going down the right path.

**What are your post-high school plans?**

Attend community college for two years then to a university to start working towards a degree in computer science.

**If you were in charge of your school and could change any one thing, what would you pick?**

I would re-do the tennis courts and update the facilities.

**Do you have any pets?**

I have one dog named Zeke. He's an old, klutzy chocolate lab that always keeps me awake at night with his snoring, and I wouldn't give him up for anything.

**What is your favorite part about growing up in Eastern Oregon?**

All the beautiful views and the warm summer days.

**What is your favorite place to visit in the Pacific Northwest?**

I really enjoy Portland and just walking around downtown and seeing all the sights.

**What is your favorite food?**

Definitely my dad's barbecued mushrooms.

**What is your least-favorite food?**

Boiled spinach.

**What is your favorite restaurant?**

Cracker Barrel.

**What is the last book you read?**

Fires of Heaven, part of the Wheel of time series.

**What is your favorite movie?**

Interstellar.

**What is your favorite musical artist?**

Blackmill.

**What would it mean if you're able to win a district title this weekend?**

It has been my dream since freshman year to make it to state. It would be a huge accomplishment to me and be something that I know I worked hard for as well as fought for.

# ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

## Erik Jones

Helix - Tennis Player

Jones won the Special District 4 sub-district boys singles tournament over the weekend by winning 48 of the the 58 total sets in his four matches. His win clinched the No. 1 seed at the district tournament.

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