

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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1B



EO File Photos
MAIN: Hermiston head coach David Faeteete hugs AJ Fernandez after the Bulldogs' 38-35 win against Churchill in the 5A state championship game on Nov. 25. **RIGHT TOP:** Nixyaawii's Kaitlynn Melton cuts down the net after Nixyaawii's 1A state championship victory over Country Christian on Mar. 4. **RIGHT BOTTOM:** Riverside Pirate players celebrate after defeating Catlin Gabel to capture the 3A/2A/1A boys soccer state championship on Nov. 11.

AN ENTERTAINING YEAR

Counting down the Top 10 local sports stories of 2017

East Oregonian

State championship victories, new facilities opening and heart-breaking losses filled the sports slate of the high schools in Umatilla and Morrow Counties in 2017. Here is our Top 10 stories of the year:

1. Hermiston wins final 5A football title

The Hermiston Bulldogs' final season competing in football in the OSAA was a memorable one. In fact, several players at the end of the season described their triumph as a storybook ending or even something from the movies, which in a way, it did.

Ever since it was announced in late spring that Hermiston High would depart the OSAA after the 2017-18 school year to join the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association, the Hermiston football team knew it wanted to complete its 'OSAA Farewell Tour' on top. And after 13 weeks of play, the Bulldogs followed through. Following a slow start to the season, Hermiston went on to win 10 consecutive games and capped it off with a 37-34 victory over Churchill to bring home the school's second-ever football state championship in front of a large contingent of Bulldog fans on Nov. 25 at Hillsboro Stadium.



Staff photo E.J. Harris
Rodeo announcer Randy Corley watches Brady Nicholes of Hoysville, Utah, ride saddle bronc on Aug. 9 in the new Farm-City Pro Rodeo Arena in Hermiston.

teete improved his squad from a 9-11 combined record

and two straight playoff one-and-dones in his first two seasons into the best team in Class 5A and picked up an Oregon Coach of the Year award from the USA Today for it. The Bulldogs had five all-state selections, with quarterback Andrew James, running back/linebacker Jonathan Hinkle, wide receiver/defensive back Dayshawn Neal, offensive lineman Beau Blake and defensive back Joey Gutierrez being chosen by the state's coaches, with Neal as the state's offensive player of the year and James as the *East Oregonian* player of the year.

2. Hermiston announces

jump from OSAA to WIAA

The rapid growth in Hermiston's enrollment ensured a move up to the largest classification in the OSAA beginning in 2018, and with that brought placement into a league with Portland and Bend-area schools.

Those placements would have meant upwards trips that totaled 400 miles round-trip for each of Hermiston's school-sponsored teams, resulting in numerous hours of missed class time for the student-athletes. The school decided to look for alternative options and found one north of the state border, and petitioned to join the WIAA

See TOP 10/4B

Prep Roundup

Vikings roll to another victory

East Oregonian

SALEM — The Umatilla Vikings advanced to the championship game of the Salem Academy Tournament on Friday as they defeated the host Salam Academy 59-54.

The Vikings (11-1) had four players in double figures for the game, led by Trent Durfey with 15 points and 11 rebounds. Behind him, Sebastian Garcia had 14 points, Kaden Webb had 10 points and seven assists and Seth Cranston had 10 points and five rebounds.

Umatilla plays Portland Adventist Academy on Saturday for the tournament championship at 8 p.m.

UHS 16 13 15 15 — 59
SA 16 10 11 17 — 54
 UMATILLA — T. Durfey 15, S. Garcia 14, K. Webb 10, S. Cranston 10, U. Garcia 6, G. Armenta 2.
 SALEM ACADEMY — L. Miller 20, C. Hardy 9, B. Boss 6, H. Wakefield 5, G. Cuanaas 4, B. Dobson 2, J. Miller 2.
 3-pointers — UHS 3, SA 5. Free throws — UHS 12-15, SA 9-11.
 Fouls — UHS 13, SA 16.

See PREP ROUNDUP/3B

Sports shorts

US rallies to 4-3 shootout win over Canada in outdoor game

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — Brady Tkachuk and Kieffer Bellows found enough traction in the snow to score shootout goals and cap the United States' 4-3 victory over Canada on Friday in international hockey's first outdoor game.

Tkachuk and Ron Perunovich scored 34 seconds apart in the third period to rally the United States from a 3-1 deficit in the world junior championship game played in a steady snowfall at the NFL Buffalo Bills' New Era Field.

Casey Mittelstadt set up all three goals for the United States (1-1-1), which rebounded from a 3-2 loss to Slovakia less than 24 hours earlier.

Bellows also scored in regulation, and goalie Jake Oettinger stopped 19 shots through overtime and all four he faced in the shootout.



Tkachuk

"I always look at those as indicators of who's determined and who's getting things done with their activity, and we obviously didn't get much done in those two areas."

— Dana Altman

Oregon head coach said of Utah's 16-4 edge in points off turnovers and its 11-3 margin in second-chance points as the difference in the game. The Utes went on to defeat the Ducks 66-56 to open Pac-12 play.

Thompson scores 24 as Oregon State beats Colorado

CORVALLIS (AP) — Stephen Thompson Jr. scored 22 of his 24 points in the second half and Oregon State cruised to a 76-57 win over Colorado on Friday night in the Pac-12 opener for both teams.

Tres Tinkle had 23 points, six assists and three steals and Ethan Thompson added 14 points, seven rebounds, five assists and four steals for the Beavers (9-4).

Tyler Bey scored 14 points and McKinley Wright IV added seven points, six rebounds and six assists for the Buffaloes (8-5), who have lost four of their last five.

Oregon State shot 51.9 percent, compared to 34.5 percent for Colorado.

The Beavers forced four turnovers early, and jumped out to an 8-0 lead after a Tinkle slam. The Beavers' first four field goals were dunks.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1990 — Orlando point guard Scott Skiles dishes out an NBA-record 30 assists in a 155-116 victory against the Denver Nuggets. Skiles breaks the record of 29 assists set by the Nets.

2010 — Top-ranked Connecticut's record 90-game winning streak in women's basketball ends when No. 9 Stanford outplays the Huskies from the start in a 71-59 victory at Maples Pavilion where the Cardinal have their own streak going. Stanford hasn't lost in 52 games at home. The Cardinal took an early 13-point lead, never trailed and didn't let the mighty Huskies back in it.

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IRRIGON Knights stay unbeaten with thrilling victory

Irrigon uses big second half to take down Rockets

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ
 East Oregonian



IRRIGON — In Irrigon, Friday was the Knights first appearance in their own invitational despite the fact play began on Thursday.

Due to inclement weather, both the boys and girls games were canceled and the teams would have to wait until Friday to take the court again.

It was certainly worth the wait as the host school swept Pilot Rock in a doubleheader on Day 2 of the invitational. The girls handed Pilot Rock its first loss at the invite, while the boys ran away with a 81-71 after Pilot Rock was unable to execute an upset.

After the girls bested the Rockets 47-41, the boys took the court at

Boys Basketball

| | |
|---|---|
|  Pilot Rock 71 |  Irrigon 81 |
|---|---|

Irrigon Elementary.

The change in venue occurred earlier in the day when the high school gym roof began to leak. All games were moved to the elementary school gym across the street.

The packed house witnessed quite possibly the Knight's most electrifying game of the season, as they outlasted the Rockets to remain perfect on the season.

"It's an emotional game," head coach Davie Salas said. "I'm sure Pilot Rock always wants to beat the Irrigon kids and vice versa."

The opening quarter was a good indication of how close the game would be, as the teams ended the

See KNIGHTS/3B



Irrigon's Johnny Phillips shoots the ball guarded by Pilot Rock's Levi Thieme in the Knights' 81-71 win against the Rockets on Friday in Irrigon.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris