

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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ALL-AREA BOYS BASKETBALL

Pendleton's newest star

Tyler Newsom is the 2018 All-EO Player of the Year

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It's 2 a.m. on a Tuesday and nearly every high schooler is asleep in their own bed, except for Pendleton's Tyler Newsom.

Instead, he is just getting home after a three-plus hour drive from Portland.

Newsom and his father make the trip to and from a gym smack dab in the middle of Tigard and Lake Oswego every Monday and Wednesday evening so he can practice with Team Fly, an AAU team that features players mostly from the west side of the state and competition unlike anything Newsom faces during the winter.

Team Fly also allows Newsom to play all year round, and the time spent outside of Pendleton has been the key to his breakout 2017-18 season.

"I feel like AAU (has) made me a well-rounded player, more than just scoring," the soft spoken junior said.

In his sophomore season, Newsom averaged six points, five rebounds and two blocks per game. This past year, his numbers improved to 21 points, nine rebound, four assists, one steal and two blocks over the 26-game season. The improvement made and his dominance on the court this season earned him the 2018 *East Oregonian* All-Area Boys Basketball Player of the Year selection.

But it's not just Team Fly that has contributed to in Newsom's development. He was able turn to a familiar face for tips and tricks to pull out come game time.

"Caden (Smith) helped me with my game too," Newsom said, "learning moves and stuff."

Smith, the reigning All-EO Player of the Year and Pendleton's all-time leading scorer, helped lay the groundwork for a player like Newsom. He was a two-time Columbia River Conference MVP, and prior to Smith earning the recognition in back-to-back years Pendleton's Wes Persinger was given the same honor in 2015.

Newsom has continued that legacy and is the fourth See ALL-AREA/3B



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton junior Tyler Newsom has been named the All-EO boys basketball player of the year.

ALL-AREA FIRST TEAM



G
Kaden Webb, sr.
Umatilla



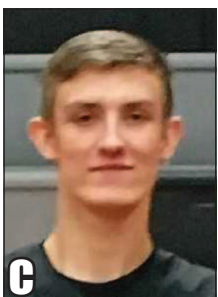
G
Mick Schimmel, so.
Nixyaawii



G
Ryne Andreason, jr.
Hermiston



F
Bryson Pierce, sr.
Pilot Rock



C
Johnny Phillips, sr.
Irrigon

Season superlatives

Top Team: Pilot Rock

The Pilot Rock Rockets took the Columbia Basin Conference by storm in 2017-18. Behind talented seniors Bryson Pierce, Chris Weinke, Levi Thieme and Riley Lankford, the Rockets went a perfect 8-0 in the CBC during the regular season and then defeated Stanfield by 15 points to capture the district championship.

The season locked up the Rockets first playoff berth for the Rockets since the 2012-13 season.

Top newcomer: Dakota Sams, Pendleton, fr.

With the likes of Caden Smith, Wyatt Morris and Johnny Stuvland lost to graduation, the Pendleton Buckaroos needed some new faces to make a big impact in 2017-18 season, and freshman guard Dakota Sams did that. Sams played his way into the starting lineup for the Buckaroos for the bulk of the season and proved himself as a sharpshooter and slick ball handler this season, averaging more than 11 points per game in conference play and earning first team all-conference honors.

Top Game: Irrigon vs. Umatilla

Umatilla and Irrigon played three times this season and all three games were classics. All three games were decided by a combined 10 points with one ending in overtime and the outcome of the remaining two coming down to the final shot.

Umatilla won the first meeting 42-39 on Jan. 12 in front of a jam-packed gymnasium in Umatilla, where the Vikings used a 9-0 run in the final three minutes to win. Thirteen days later the teams met in Irrigon where the home Knights got revenge, winning a back-and-forth affair 50-48.

And then to wrap things up, the teams met in the district championship on Feb. 16 in Umatilla, the Knights claimed the district crown with an epic 53-48 victory in overtime.

Coach of the Year: Devin Bailey, Stanfield

On the surface, it may seem odd to be awarding our Coach of the Year to the person whose team finished 12-16 overall and 3-5 in its league. But considering the circumstances Devin Bailey walked into in his first year as the Tigers head man, Bailey deserves a nod.

The 2017-18 Tigers 12-man varsity roster was comprised of just one player with any meaningful varsity experience in senior forward Brody Woods, along with 11 other first-timers. And through the course of the season, Bailey molded his group into a team that earned its way back to the district championship and a spot in the Class 2A postseason.

PENDLETON

Weather uncooperative for Buck Track Classic

Meet ends early due to inclement weather

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — For the past few years, Mother Nature has been quite cooperative on the day of the annual Buck Track Classic at Pendleton High, gracing the 20-plus area schools in attendance with blue skies and sunshine for a great day of competition.

This year, however, Mother Nature was not quite so nice. After roughly three hours of competing in chilly, windy weather, the Buck Track Classic had to be called off early due to inclement weather after a heavy, steady rain shower rolled through Pendleton and wrecked havoc at the track facility. The rains made the surfaces slick and hard to gain traction, but it also



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Hermiston's Isaac Sanchez and Hunter Nichols, of Heppner, fight for the lead in the 1500-meter run Thursday at the Buck Track Classic. Nichols surged ahead to win on the final straightaway.

watter-logged the timing system for the running events and rendered it useless. It was a disappointing end

to the day for the Buckaroo coaches, who were not able to fully utilize the brand-new track surface, better-quality jumping pits, and lights on the field.

"We have this brand-new facility, and it's all a wash," Pendleton head track coach Larry Brizendine said.

The only running events that were completed were the 4x100 relays, 1500 meter run, 100 meter dash, 400 meter dash and the 100/110 meter hurdle races, and most of the field events were able to get through the bulk of the flights. The meet was roughly halfway through the flights of the 800 meter runs before the meet was called.

Though the competition was not fully complete, the Hermiston Bulldogs ended atop both the boys and girls team leaderboards. The Bulldog boys scored 102 points, and led La Grande (84.9), Heppner (54.8), Pendleton (50.8) and Umatilla (32.2). The Bulldog girls netted 70.66 points and See TRACK/3B

UMATILLA

Pendleton sweeps low medalists at Big River

Megan George, Jared Geier pace the field in season-opening tournament

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ
East Oregonian

In less than favorable conditions Thursday morning, Hermiston welcomed Pendleton and a handful of other schools to Big River Golf Course in Umatilla for the Hermiston High School Invitational.

The Bulldogs' girls team placed first out of the five-team field after shooting 405, led by Grace Blackhurst. Blackhurst played solid golf despite the heavy winds and light rain. She carded two pars and only one triple bogey and finished in second place shooting 90.

Sonja Peterson carded a 96, which was good for fifth place. A handful of par-4 and -5's caused Peterson some trouble but she was able to recover to be the only other Bulldog to shoot under 100.

"I think they played great steady golf," head coach Josh Browning said. "They didn't get out of control, didn't get inside their own heads and were out to shoot a low round."

Pendleton's Megan George took home the individual title after a one-hole playoff against Blackhurst. The two finished the round of 18 carding 89, and a two-put on the par-3 first hole from George gave her a one-stroke edge over Blackhurst.

It was George's first-ever playoff and from the time See BIG RIVER/2B