

NATIONAL FINALS RODEO

Knowles takes steer wrestling bronze

Heppner cowboys has great run in Vegas; Brazile wins all-around

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

It's been a year to remember for Heppner's Blake Knowles.

Fresh off a third-place finish in the steer wrestling at the National Finals Rodeo, Knowles said he enjoyed every minute of his time in Las Vegas.

"We had a fun time," said Knowles, who was competing in his fourth NFR. "There is never a guy down there who appreciates it more than me. I will meet with fans, sign autographs. You are excited for the opportunity to compete — it's a sense of accomplishment."

Knowles, 33, placed in two rounds at the NFR, and finishing third, he pocketed a nice chunk of change. When it was all said and done, he finished ninth in the world standings with a career-high in earnings of

\$162,669.

"I'm happy. It turned out pretty well," said Knowles, who also qualified for the NFR in 2009, 2011 and 2015. "I was fortunate to have good year. Now, you pick it apart to see where you could have done better. You can always make it better."

Knowles started his run at the NFR with a 3.8-second performance in the first round at Thomas & Mack Center — good enough for second place and a check for \$20,730.

In the fourth round, he split third and fourth place with Blake Mindemann, good for \$13,326.

In the seventh round, he broke the barrier. If not, his time of 3.7 seconds would have landed him in a tie for third/fourth and another nice payday.

He was fifth overall after eight rounds, but runs of 5.3 and 8.3 seconds in the final two rounds bumped him up to third.

"There is an opportunity to win each night," Knowles said. "It's a pretty good crown for the guy who wins the average. I

See Knowles, Page B2



Courtesy of James Phifer/PRCA

Heppner cowboy Blake Knowles (right) slides down onto his steer during the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas. Knowles finished third at the NFR in steer wrestling and ninth in the world standings. At left is hazer Matt Reeves.

Umatilla boys run win streak to 7 games

Heppner girls overcome early deficit for 51-41 win

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

The Umatilla boys basketball team is off to a hot start.

The Vikings improved to 8-1 on Monday with a 64-51 nonleague home win over Heppner.

"Defense is our emphasis," said Vikings coach Scott Bow, whose team gives up an average of 34 points per game. "Every team we have played, we have held them to double digits below their average. We have to be one of the better defensive teams out there."

The Mustangs kept pace with the Vikings in the first half, trailing just 26-22 at the half.

"They came out and hit some pretty good shots and got after it," Bow said.

Umatilla, which has won seven games in a row, took over in the second half, leading by 15 at one point.

Sebastian Garcia had four 3-pointers in the second half and finished with 20 points, six assists and five steals for the Vikings.

"He took after it," Bow said. "For someone who was face-guarded all night, he played fantastic."

Andrew Earl added 12 points and four assist, while Trent Durfey had 10 points and seven rebounds.

Trent Carter led the

Mustangs with 19 points — 15 of which came in the second half — and 11 rebounds.

The Vikings held Heppner's 6-foot-10 Justin McAninch to five points. He did have two blocked shots.

"Hats off to our big guys at 6-2 to outworking him," Bow said.

The Mustangs (5-5) will host Grant Union in their Blue Mountain Conference opener on Friday.

Umatilla will host River View, Wash. (4-2), in a nonleague game at 4:30 p.m. Friday, then will play in the Salem Academy Classic Jan. 3-5.

"That's a good tournament for us before we start league play," Bow said.

Girls

HEPPNER 51, UMATILLA 41: Sydney Wilson poured in a game-high 22 points, and added five rebounds, three assists and three steals as the Mustangs beat the Vikings in a nonleague game in Umatilla.

The Vikings led 11-9 after the first quarter, but a 23-11 run by Heppner in the second was more than Umatilla could overcome.

Jacee Currin added 15 points and six assists for the Mustangs (6-4), which will open Blue Mountain Conference play Friday against visiting Grant Union.

Freshman Taylor Durfey had 16 points and 10 rebounds for Umatilla (3-7), which will host River View, Wash., on Saturday.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Umatilla's Jakeb Cook blocks a shot from Heppner's Gibson McCurry in the Vikings' 64-51 win over the Mustangs on Monday in Umatilla.

Blazers defeat Clippers 131-127

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Damian Lillard scored 22 of his 39 points in a dominant third quarter and the Portland Trail Blazers defeated the Los Angeles Clippers 131-127 on Monday night.

Lillard hit five of his six 3-pointers in the third when the Blazers outscored the Clippers 42-28. Portland was 10 of 20 from 3-point range in the game.

C.J. McCollum added 27 points and Jusuf Nurkic had 20.

Tobias Harris matched Lillard with a career-high 39 points and rookie Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 24 for the Clippers, who have lost four in a row for the first time this season.

Los Angeles trailed by 15 in the first quarter but erased the deficit in the second when the Clippers took their first lead, only to fall behind by 15 again in the third.

Lillard's fifth 3 left the Clippers down 95-80. Portland made seven 3s in the period and stretched its lead to 18 points early in the fourth.

The Clippers chipped away and got to 125-123 after Harris hit three of four free throws. McCollum's jumper kept Portland ahead 127-123.

Danilo Gallinari, who finished with 22 points, missed a 3-pointer, but after a scramble got the ball back and made

See Blazers, Page B2

SPORTS SHORTS

Pacers hire NBA's first female assistant GM

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The Indiana Pacers have hired Kelly Krauskopf as their new assistant general manager, making her the first woman in league history to hold the title.

Krauskopf has a long history with the franchise.

She spent 19 seasons as the top executive of the WNBA's Indiana Fever and helped oversee Indiana's new NBA2K league team. She also served as the WNBA's first director of basketball operations, as an assistant commissioner for the Southwest Conference and on USA Basketball's women's senior national team committee.

"My past experience has shown me that building winning teams and elite level culture is not based on gender — it is based on people and processes," Krauskopf said in a statement released by the team. "I am excited to join the Pacers as we continue building the best NBA franchise in the business."

Kelly Krauskopf, left, president and general manager of the Indiana Fever in 2016, has been hired by the Indiana Pacers as the first female assistant general manager.

AP Photo/Darron Cummings, File

