

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2018

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @EOSPORTS | FACEBOOK.COM/EOSPORTS

B1

Tri-Cities Prep edges Heppner

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

Tri-Cities Prep escaped with a 62-58 win over the Heppner Mustangs in the opening round of the Irrigon Invite on Thursday.

“Our defensive execution and energy wasn’t where it needed to be for about three quarters,” said Heppner coach Jeremy Rosenbalm. “If it was stronger from the start, we could’ve had a different outcome. I felt like we were going to take it coming out of our last timeout.”

Heppner led 7-6 with two minutes left in the first quarter until Jaguars junior Landon Amato hit a bucket to turn things around for good. The Mustangs stumbled to a 31-24 deficit going into the half, but came out of the locker room ready to fight.

Heppner senior Gibson McCurry kept his team alive with three straight field goals to bring them within eight points of Tri-Cities with 4:11 left in the third quarter.

In the fourth, the Mustangs rallied to outscore the Jaguars 20-18. With less than four minutes to play, senior Derek Howard scored two baskets to get his team within four points of the lead. But Jaguars junior Logan Mercado, who led the Tri-Cities with 20 points, hit two baskets of his own to hold Heppner off.

“Tri-Cities is a great, tough team to play,” said Howard, a 6-foot-2 center. “But we were down by 13 and battled back — we stopped ‘em and made sure not to foul.”

Mustangs senior Tyler Carter rang up another bucket and made a free throw to reduce the Jaguars’ advantage to just three points with a minute left. But a free throw from Mercado kept things in the Tri-Cities’ favor.

“I gotta give it to our boys — they flipped the switch and picked up the intensity down the stretch,” Rosenbalm said of his team’s performance in the second half. “As a coach, that’s all I could ask for.”

Although Heppner fell to 7-6 overall, they remain at the top of the Blue Mountain Conference, sitting undefeated in league play. They’ll finish off the Irrigon Invite with a Friday game against Liberty City, Wash. The Mustangs pick up league play again at Weston-McEwen on Saturday, Jan. 5.

“These tight games are good for us going into league play,” Rosenbalm said. “Teams at this Invite are quick and will spread you out offensively, like the teams in our conference. We can lean on this game.”



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Heppner’s Derek Howard goes to the hoop despite pressure from Max Nelson, of Tri-Cities Prep, during Thursday’s game at Irrigon High School.

Bucks fall in day one of Bend tournament, 70-61

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

Bend handed the Buckaroo boys their season’s third loss on Thursday, turning them away 70-61 on day one of the Summit Holiday Tournament in Bend.

The Lava Bears shot ahead early after Pendleton suffered some defensive lapses.

“It happened to us at the end of the first quarter and in the middle of the fourth,” said coach Zach Dong on his team’s defensive mistakes. “That hurt us, but other than that, we played a really good game.”

Bend led 23-13 at the end of the first quarter, but the Bucks would go on to outscore them 14-12 and 17-14 in the second and third.

Tyler Newsom posted a team-high 34 points to lead Pendleton.

“Tyler played lights-out for us tonight,” Dong said.

Pendleton came within one point of claiming the lead in the fourth quarter, but Bend hit two back-to-back 3’s to stay ahead down the stretch.

See Bucks, Page B2

Lillard’s 3-pointer in OT lifts Blazers over Warriors

By JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Damian Lillard hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 6.3 seconds left in overtime and scored 21 points in his final regular-season game at home in Oakland, sending the Portland Trail Blazers past the Golden State Warriors 110-109 in a wild one Thursday night.

Kevin Durant missed a 13-footer off the front rim as the final buzzer sounded but finished with his second triple-double of the season: 26 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds.

Jusuf Nurkic had 27 points and 12 rebounds for the Blazers.

Durant hit a tying 3-pointer with 19 seconds left in regulation following a driving one-handed dunk the previous possession, but the Warriors couldn’t overcome a comedy of errors in losing a second straight at home. They took a 127-101 beating from the Lakers on Christmas night.

Seth Curry largely outplayed big brother and Golden State star Stephen down the stretch, scoring 11 straight points. In fact, their sister, Sydel posted on Twitter:

See Portland, Page B2

SPORTS SHORTS

Austria’s Vincent Kriechmayr speeds down the course during a ski World Cup Men’s Downhill training in Bormio, Italy, on Thursday.



AP Photo/Marco Trovati

Kriechmayr leads Kilde in final Bormio downhill training

BORMIO, Italy (AP) — Austria skier Vincent Kriechmayr led the second and final training session Thursday for the World Cup downhill on the Stelvio course.

Kriechmayr finished a slim 0.04 seconds ahead of Aleksander Aamodt Kilde, the Norwegian who won the previous downhill in Val Gardena.

Daniel Hemetsberger of Austria was third, 0.19 behind, in very icy conditions.

Kriechmayr has won three World Cup races in his career, two super-Gs and one downhill.

The annual downhill race is scheduled for Friday, followed by a super-G on Saturday.