

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

New league, new adventures and state gold

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

1. OVER THE RIVER AND INTO THE MCC

Word came down in June of 2017 from the OSAA and WIAA, which governs high school sports in Washington, that Hermiston would be competing in another state. But that change did not take effect until the start of the 2018-19 school year.

With the move to the MCC came changes for the Bulldogs. Boys soccer now is in the spring, and girls swimming is in the fall. Hermiston also was able to add girls bowling and girls wrestling, both of which are WIAA-sanctioned sports.

But the biggest benefit to Hermiston has been keeping students in the classroom. No MCC school is more



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

1 Hermiston's Andrew James gets tackled by Pasco's Oscar Rodriguez in the Dawgs' 45-0 win against the Bulldogs in their Aug. 31, 2018, season opener.

than an hour away, reducing travel time and lost time in the classroom for students and teachers.

"I think overall, it's what's best for the kids," Hermiston boys basketball coach Casey Arstein said,

"They are in school more, and they don't get home late. We had a 7:30 p.m. game in Kennewick and I was home by 10. The JV kids, with their games starting at 4, miss about an hour of school, but the varsity kids haven't missed any."

The Bulldogs also face a different level of scheduling in the MCC. The football team played each league opponent once, and though they finished 5-3 in league play, they missed the playoffs because they lost to two of the other 3A teams in the league.

The Hermiston girls and boys basketball teams play on the same night at the same venue, no longer splitting fans and families. They

play each team in the league twice, home and on the road.

"We get to play two or three times a week," Arstein said. "I've never had a kid who would rather practice than play. Every team has talent you have to prepare for. It's been a blessing for the community, and it brings fans to Hermiston for games. I have heard so many positive things from the community."

With Hermiston jumping leagues and states, it takes away the Bulldogs' annual games against rival Pendleton.

"People who coached enough know the rivalry wasn't really a rivalry

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Golden Eagles fly high over Cardinals

Schimmel posts 20 points to lead the victory at Echo tourney

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

It didn't take long for Nixyaawii to claim the game over Ione on Friday.

The Golden Eagles scored a resounding 79-32 win to ring in day one of Echo's Bouncin' Cancer Tournament — an invite that raises money for families of cancer patients in Umatilla County.

"We're fundamentally a stronger team all-around," said Nixyaawii coach Shane Rivera. "I can't say we were faster — Ione has speed — but our kids probably have a little more experience."

Ione brought the pressure to open the game, keeping within one point of the Golden Eagles for the opening 4 1/2 minutes. But Nixyaawii hit a 10-point streak at the end of the first quarter to leave Ione in the dust.

Junior Mick Schimmel, who posted a game-high 20 points, sank two straight shots from the inside for a 32-15 halftime lead.

But it was in the second half that the game really got away from the Cardinals. Nixyaawii scored 19 points and only allowed four in the third quarter. Schimmel scored six points, including two on a turnover early on. The Golden Eagles took a 51-19 advantage by the end of the quarter.

"I think we just got ourselves together and realized what we had to do to win," said Schimmel, a 6-foot guard, on his team's second half. "We just ran from there."

The fourth quarter was Ione's strongest — the Cardinals fought their way into double digits for 13 points, including four from sophomore Hunter Padberg. But Nixyaawii still dominated with 28 points in the game's final eight minutes. Sophomore Reuben Bronson hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer to end the Golden Eagles' game on a high note.

Nixyaawii (9-1) will face Echo to close the tourney before opening the Old Oregon League on Jan. 4.

"This was an easy win for us," Schimmel said. "Games like this help us sharpen and execute our plays before going into the league."

Sophomore Tyasin Burns followed Schimmel in scoring with 18 points. Senior Nestor Ramirez had seven for Ione (1-8, 0-3), which will play Pine Eagle on Saturday to close out the Echo tourney.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Nixyaawii's Tyasin Burns breaks past Ione's Jake Heideman in the Golden Eagles' 79-32 win against the Cardinals on Friday in Echo.

Pendleton Bucks lose 79-76 to South Eugene in OT

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

The Pendleton boys basketball team dropped their second Summit Holiday Tournament game on Friday, losing to South Eugene 79-76 in overtime.

The Bucks were up 18-7 at the end of the first quarter before things took a turn for the worse. Starters Tyler Newsom and Kason Broncheau got into foul trou-

ble in the second quarter, as South Eugene edged past Pendleton for a 29-28 lead at the half.

"That hurt us," coach Zach Dong said of his players' foul trouble. "But the bench did a good job filling in, and Dakota Sams had an awesome game — he really stepped up for Tyler and Kason."

Sams led the Bucks with 26 points, and Newsom, who returned to the court for

second half, had 21.

The two teams were neck-and-neck for the final two quarters until the score ended up tied 69-69 at the end of regulation. South Eugene scored 10 points over Pendleton's seven in overtime, taking the lead with free throws down the stretch.

"We had some chances to take it, but didn't follow through," Dong said. "And we had some turnovers

towards the end when it got tight. It's a growing and learning experience for us as a team."

Pendleton (6-4) plays Ridgeview to finish the Summit tournament on Saturday.

Girls

The Buckaroo girls had a rough night at the Summit Holiday Tournament, falling to host Summit Storm 56-34.

"It was just one of those days," said coach Kevin Porter. "We just got off a road

trip, we're staying at a different house, and the girls had no classes — it wasn't a routine day."

Summit jumped out early with a 21-9 advantage at the end of the first quarter, and took a 30-14 lead into the locker room at the half. Pendleton came close to matching their scoring 14-10 in the final quarter, but couldn't keep pace.

Natalie Neveau had 10 points and seven rebounds,

and Katie Bradt posted eight points and five rebounds to lead the Bucks.

"I know one thing: my girls gave it their best on this day," Porter said. "It just wasn't good enough for Summit. They came ready to play. I don't doubt the abilities of my team — it just wasn't our day."

Pendleton (3-7) will close the Summit tournament against Hockinson, Wash., on Saturday.