

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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DARK HORSE SHINES

CHRIS CHAMBERS

The 138-pound Pendleton senior is going to his first state wrestling tournament.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Senior Chris Chambers wins IMC district title, earns trip to state

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

Chris Chambers still is trying to wrap his head around winning a district wrestling title two weeks ago.

The gold medal and framed bracket help remind the Pendleton senior that it is not a dream.

"It was kind of one of those things you don't believe," Chambers said. "At the start of the season if you would have said I would be a district champion, I would not have believed it. Everything went perfect."

Chambers, who won the 138-pound title at the Intermountain Conference District Tournament, will be joined by 13 of his teammates at the 5A state tournament Friday and Saturday at Veterans

Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

"I've been there before, but I haven't competed," Chambers said. "They took me last year as an extra workout partner. When I was a freshman and sophomore, I went to watch my brother (Scott) wrestle."

Scott will not be able to repay the favor, as he is serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Mexico.

Chambers has made sure to keep his older brother in the loop on his recent success.

"I've been rubbing it in his face that he didn't win a district title," Chambers said with a laugh. "It's always about one-upping your brother."

And if there is a state medal won this weekend?

"Oh, yeah, I'll tell him all about it," Chambers said.

Hard work pays off

Brian Chambers wrestled for Washington Hall of Fame coach Ron Seibel at Moses Lake High School, and he had his boys in the sport at a young age.

"I started wrestling in the third grade," Chris Chambers said. "When I got into high school, I started doing it all year around. I'm not a naturally gifted athlete. I was just thinking about my freshman year when I didn't win a match at district, and now I'm a district champion."

Pendleton coach Fred Phillips said Chambers has worked hard for everything he's achieved.

"He's worked harder than any other guy the past four years," Phillips said. "He's not a natural athlete like some of the other guys. He did not hit the coaches' radar when he was younger."

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"HE'S WORKED HARDER THAN ANY OTHER GUY THE PAST FOUR YEARS ... HE'S ONE OF THOSE BOYS WHO MAKES COACHING WORTHWHILE."

Fred Phillips, Pendleton High School wrestling coach

Pendleton basketball teams set for IMC tourney

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

This winter hasn't been kind to the Intermountain Conference.

Nearly a week's worth of school days have been canceled due to inclement weather all across the league, and with that, their accompanying basketball games. The entire second half of the regular season has yet to be completed, and the Feb. 27 cutoff date is quickly approaching. Because it would be nearly impossible to finish six games for every school in the next seven days, something had to be done.

Luckily, the IMC's athletic directors have a solution.

Starting on Thursday, Feb. 21, a league tournament will be held to close out the regular season. Teams that win on Thursday will move to round two on Saturday, Feb. 23, and the district championship game will follow on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

Losing teams from Thursday's games will compete for third place starting Feb. 25.

The higher-seeded team from each matchup will host.

The Pendleton girls (8-12, 4-2 IMC), currently ranked at No. 3 in the IMC, will host the bottom-ranked Hood River Valley Eagles to kick off the tournament on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at Warberg Court.

The No. 2 Pendleton boys (15-5, 5-1 IMC) will bypass the day-one contest and play the winner of Thursday's Dalles/Ridgeview matchup on Saturday at Blue Mountain Community College. The tip-off time has yet to be scheduled.

New players could help Trail Blazers in stretch run

Enes Kanter, Rodney Hood join the team

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Portland Trail Blazers find themselves in much the same position as last season heading into the post-All-Star break stretch run.

They're coming off a confidence-boosting win over Golden State.

One thing is new this year, however. The Blazers made a couple of key moves before the break to shore up their bench and to help propel them into the playoffs.

Portland resumes its season on Thursday at the Brooklyn Nets, the first of a grueling seven-game road swing.

The game will likely mark the Blazers debut of Enes Kanter, signed just before the break.

Kanter was waived by the Knicks following the trade deadline. He was once a starter in New York but he fell out of the rotation when the team turned its focus to younger players.

The center from Turkey averaged 14 points and 10.8 rebounds in 115 games over two seasons.

"As far as the rotation, that should be pretty seamless. He'll get the backup five minutes,"

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