

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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SOFTBALL DISTRICT PLAYOFFS

Hermiston drops title game to Southridge, 4-2

Bailee Noland pitched a complete game and had three hits for Hermiston

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

Bailee Noland pitched a four-hitter, and her defense backed her with stellar play, but Hermiston could not make up for the lack of production at the plate as Southridge escaped with a 4-2 victory on Wednesday in the District 8 championship game in Kennewick.

"They played great defense, but two runs is not enough," Hermiston coach Kate Greenough said. "Bailey threw great; she had two earned runs. Earned run for earned run, it was an even game."

UP NEXT

Hermiston plays the winner of the Shadle Park-Kennewick game at 5 p.m. Friday. The winner of Friday's game advances to the 3A state tournament. The game is at Rocky Heights Elementary School, 650 W Standard Ave, Hermiston.

The Bulldogs' season is not over. They will play the winner of the Shadle Park-Kennewick game at 5 p.m. Friday, with the winner advancing to the 3A state tournament. Both games will be at Rocky Heights Elementary.

With the win, the Suns advance to the state tournament for the first time since 2008.

"It has been a while," Southridge coach Eric Weisgerber said. "We have had some good players and good teams, but for whatever reason it has not gone our way. The girls did a fabulous job (last) Friday to get us past Mt. Spokane."

Southridge starter Bailey Rose struck out 14 and limited the Bulldogs to three hits — all by Noland — but Hermiston managed to put a run on the board in the first inning.

With two out, Ashley Cameron drew a full-count walk, then scored on a Noland single to deep center. Cameron just beat the throw to home plate for the game's first run.

The Bulldogs played solid defense the first two innings, allowing just one base runner.

In the third, the Suns came to life. Rylee Vasquez drew a walk, Raelynn Nesary

reached base on an error, McKenna Crum flew out, and Rose singled, driving in Vasquez to tie the score.

Catcher Emmee Ball then blasted an 0-1 pitch over the fence in left-center to give Southridge a 4-1 lead.

"You just know when it comes off the bat," Ball said of her first homer this season.

The Suns would only get two more base runners the rest of the game, but the damage had been done.

The Bulldogs got a solo home run from Janelle Almaguer in the top of the seventh — her first of the year — but that would be it.

"It was really nerve-racking when they got that first run," Ball said. "Once our hits came along, our defense backed us up. Their pitcher can hit, and their shortstop (Sydney Stefani) is amazing."

1A STATE TRACK



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Griswold High School senior Hannah Christman will defend her 1A state championship title in the 800-meter run on Saturday in Monmouth.

GOING FOR GOLD

Griswold senior looks to defend her 1A state title in the 800 meters

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

The 800-meter run is not for the faint of heart.

Basically, it's an all-out sprint for two laps around the track, and hopefully you have saved enough energy for a kick at the end.

Griswold High School senior Hannah Christman has only run the event the past two years, but she has become one of the best among 1A runners in the state.

"My freshman and sophomore years, I did the 400 and the 300 hurdles," Christman said. "When it came to districts, I would be third or fourth. My distance coach (Jeff Newton) said I should try the 800."

Christman was hesitant at first, but as she started working with the distance crew, the 800 quickly grew on her.

"My first meet, I didn't even know where to cut in," she said. "After my first race my junior year, I was ranked first in the district. It's really cool to find something that is your event."

Christman won her second consecutive 1A Special District 3 title last Saturday in Moro, and is headed to state this weekend to defend her state title.

"That was the goal, to go back (to state) and win it again," Christman said.

With University of Oregon's Hayward Field under renovation, the 1A meet has been moved to Western Oregon University.

"Just being there takes a couple of seconds off your time," Christman said of Hayward Field. "It is awesome. Last year, the seniors were reminiscing, and the rest of us were like, 'dang.'"

Learning curve

The more Christman runs the 800, the more she breaks it down to work for her.

"I always think the first lap you are full of adrenaline and maybe going too fast for your pace," she said. "Between 400 and 600 meters, is where you make all of your decisions. That is your make or break point. Last year at state, that's where I started to speed up, then you realize you have sprint at the end."

Christman won her first state title in a time of 2:26.51, nearly 4 seconds in front of Sahalie Crain of Chiloquin.

Last week, she won district in a time of 2:27.80, nearly 6 seconds ahead of Hailey Heideman of Ione.

Her personal best time of 2:25.25 was set May 3 at the Dick Horyna Invite in

Stanfield.

Christman has the second-best time in Oregon among 1A runners this spring, behind Ella Coughlan of Joseph, who clocked a 2:22.13 on May 3 at the Baker Invite.

"I have put in a lot of practice and effort to get where I am," Christman said. "I can keep working and bring my time down."

Griswold coach Rory Simpson has no doubt that Christman will succeed in what she sets out to do.

"It's kind of the way Hannah is," he said. "The harder it is, the more she's drawn to it. She is competitive. It will be great to see her run (at state)."

Christman also received an at-large bid to run the 3,000 at state, and she is part of the 4x400 relay team that won the district title.

The Grizzlies were third at state in the 4x400 last year, but with Emma Fehrenbacher and Lucy Case graduating, Christman and Kaylee Cope have had to break in sophomores Karalin Reynolds and Ryann Stahancyk. Their best time this year is 4:35.74 — quite a bit off their state time of 4:24.27 last year.

"We have new runners and there is

See Christman, Page A9

Warriors look to build off well-balanced Game 1 win

By JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Golden State Warriors displayed that familiar swagger, celebrated in front of the home crowd as they so love to do and got contributions on both ends of the floor from up and down the roster.

They were playing with the kind of joy coach Steve Kerr talks about when things just click.

"You see like the morale, like everybody's shoulders are up and smiles, and just aggressiveness all over the floor," Stephen Curry said. "Whether that's setting a screen, swing or cutting hard, all that type of stuff. When you create good shots that way, it's fun for everybody."

And he means everybody.

Before the Western Conference finals began, Kerr told his team this series against Portland might allow for more guys to play key minutes and have opportunities for the two-time defending champs.

Golden State's bench players provided the perfect complement to Curry, Klay Thompson and Draymond Green in Game 1 as the Warriors withstood the absence of Kevin Durant for another impressive win.

The Warriors lead the best-of-seven series 1-0 after beating the Trail Blazers 116-94 on Tuesday night.

"Strength in numbers has been the motto for this team, and it's been proven over the last couple of years," reserve guard Quinn Cook said Wednesday after contributing eight points and a pair of 3-pointers in the win. "Obviously, we have the star power. But I think what makes this team so special is the guys who don't get the recognition who come in off the bench and who put the work in daily."

Kerr reiterated that the Warriors expect to know more ahead of Game 2 at Oracle Arena on Thursday about whether Durant can return during this series once he is reevaluated.

The coach has said that until Durant can do significant on-court work to test the leg he will not be ready.

"It makes everything tougher for sure, when you lose a guy like Kevin," Green said.

The Warriors certainly looked more like themselves with the crisp ball movement — leading to 30 assists — with almost everyone finding a way to contribute to the victory.

SPORTS SHORTS



AP Photo/Charlie Riedel

Bob Baffert-trained Improbable listed as 5-2 favorite in Saturday's Preakness Stakes

BALTIMORE (AP) — Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert will seek his record-setting eighth Preakness victory Saturday with 5-2 morning line favorite Improbable, who will start from the No. 4 post in a field of 13 horses.

For the first time since 1951, the Preakness will not include the four horses that crossed the finish line first

in the Kentucky Derby.

Improbable finished fifth and was moved up to fourth following the disqualification of Maximum Security for interference.

It was the only time in six career races that Improbable failed to finish first or second.

War of Will, the second choice at

4-1, received the No. 1 post in Wednesday's draw. It's the same post position he had in the Kentucky Derby, when he finished eighth and was moved up to seventh.

Baffert and R.W. Walden, who saddled seven winners in the late 1800s, are currently tied atop the Preakness leaderboard.