

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2019

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Bucks hold off West Albany for trip to state championships

By **BRETT KANE**
East Oregonian

Gabe Umbarger's early home run put the Pendleton Buckaroos to the 5A state championships.

On Tuesday, the senior centerfielder drove a fly ball over the right field fence to score three runs and overcome a 2-1 deficit against their West Albany hosts in a 5A semifinals matchup. The Bulldogs would put just one more run on the board, and couldn't stop Pendleton from taking home a 4-3 victory.

The Bucks will travel to Keizer on Saturday to challenge the 5A's top-ranked Central Panthers in a state championship game. It will be their

first championship appearance since 1992.

"We've had good teams that have been to the quarters and semis," said Pendleton coach TJ Haguewood, "but it's been a long time. We're honored to be that team."

Not only did Umbarger seal the game for the Bucks, but he also got things going in the top of the first inning as he scored on Ty Beers' single to put Pendleton up 1-0.

Ryan Stahl let two runs slip after walking two Bulldogs and hitting another to load the bases. West Albany's Kellan Soriano drew a walk to put their first run on the board, and Carson Van Dyke singled on the next at-bat to drive in another run.

It would be the only Bulldog lead, and it wouldn't last.

With Tanner Sweek and Kyle Field both on base, Umbarger sent a 1-2 pitch out of the park for what would end up being the game-winning hit in the top of the second.

"That's the difference," Haguewood said. "Gabe crushed it — that's it."

Central's Porter Phillips singled on a line drive to left field to drive in Blake Bowers, but neither team would score another run for the remainder of the game, leaving Pendleton ahead for good.

Stahl tallied three strikeouts, but allowed five walks and three runs over four innings spent on the mound. Chris Large threw three innings of relief and kept

the Bulldogs away from home.

"Ryan was our ace, but he started to struggle," Haguewood said. "He battled and gave us enough innings before turning it over to Large. (Large) threw a heck of a game and finished strong."

Umbarger's 2-for-3 showing at the plate scored two runs and generated three RBIs — enough to lead Pendleton's offense. Bowers went 2-for-4 for West Albany, but only put one run on the board. Chase Reynolds fanned seven Buckaroos, but surrendered all four of Pendleton's runs.

Pendleton's Saturday opponents are coming off a 1-0 semifinals win over Thurston. The Panthers are coming in as the No. 1 seed in the 5A divi-

sion, while the Bucks are the underdogs at No. 9.

"I've had two teams while I coached at Weston-McEwen play (at Keizer)," Haguewood said. "It's a different feeling — it's almost like you're on an island, away from the highways. It's different than your typical high school ball park."

The two teams will contend for the state title at the Salem-Keizer Volcano Stadium. The last time the Bucks played in a title game, they lost to McNary 7-4 in the 4A championships.

"It's not just a varsity win — it's a program win," Haguewood said. "The boys have played their butts off all season, and I can't say enough about the assistant coaches and what they do."

NBA Finals are set: WARRIORS VS. RAPTORS

Toronto swept regular season matchup against Golden State

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
Associated Press

The first NBA game was in Toronto.

And now, the NBA Finals are headed there.

Finally.

The NBA Finals are set after the Toronto Raptors won the Eastern Conference championship on Saturday night and earned the right to play the Western Conference champion Golden State Warriors. For the Raptors, it'll be the first time on this stage; for the Warriors, it'll be an 11th trip to the finals and fifth in a row, as they look for a fourth crown in the last five seasons.

Game 1 is Thursday night in Toronto, which will become the first city outside the U.S. to play host to a finals game — a milestone that comes just about 73 years after Toronto was the site of the first game in NBA history.

The Raptors weren't around then: Toronto's first NBA team was called the Huskies, a club that went 22-38 in its only season. The Raptors have been around since 1995, and in their 24th season they're finally going to play for a ring.

"They're the champions," Raptors star Kawhi Leonard said of the Warriors. "We've got to go in, have the mental focus, enjoy the moment and take the challenge."



AP Photo/Morry Gash

Toronto Raptors' Kawhi Leonard looks to pass during the second half of Game 5 of the NBA Eastern Conference Finals against the Milwaukee Bucks on May 23, 2019.

While it is the first finals trip for the Raptors franchise, many players on the team have been there. Leonard and Danny Green got there with San Antonio in 2013 and 2014, with Leonard winning MVP of the series against Miami five years ago. Serge Ibaka was with Oklahoma City for its appearance in 2012 and Raptors reserve Patrick McCaw was part of the Warriors for their title runs in each of

the past two seasons.

"We're not satisfied," Raptors President Masai Ujiri said. "We want to win the championship."

For the Warriors, this has almost become an annual rite.

Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green, Andre Iguodala and Shaun Livingston have been part of each of these five runs to the finals by Golden State. Kevin Durant is going to

his third in a row and fourth overall; if he wins Finals MVP — that would seem unlikely at this point, because he isn't expected to play in Game 1 and it's unknown if he'll actually appear in the series at all because of a calf injury — he would join Michael Jordan and Shaquille O'Neal as the only players to win that trophy in three con-

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Blues must try to slow down Bruins in Stanley Cup Final

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

BOSTON — Jake DeBrusk got a step on Robert Bortuzzo and he was off to the races.

Despite missing the net on the breakaway, the message was already sent.

Two minutes into the Stanley Cup Final, the Boston Bruins flashed the speed and skill that got them to this point and exploited it to beat the St. Louis Blues in the series opener. If the Blues have any hope in Game 2 Wednesday night and beyond, they will have to slow down the Bruins somehow, some way.

"There's different ways that you can wear guys down whether it's physicality or speed," DeBrusk said. "That's the game now. That's

how you have to play. It's just races to loose pucks and then playing physical when the opportunity presents itself."

Game 1 will be remembered for 5-foot-9 Boston defenseman Torey Krug's helmetless hit on Robert Thomas, but the Bruins won because they came at the Blues in waves. They got contributions up and down the lineup and played a style that flustered St. Louis into turnovers and a 30-12 shot disadvantage in the final two periods.

The fact that 77.2% of teams that win Game 1 go on to capture the Cup doesn't much matter to Blues coach Craig Berube and his players. The Blues, after all, climbed from last place in the NHL on Jan. 3 all the way to the final. They also responded well after a similar, sluggish start to the Western Con-

ference final against San Jose.

Armed with that confidence, the Blues understand the key to earning a split in Boston is stunting their opponents' relentless rush.

"It's not feeding into their transition as much," center Ryan O'Reilly said. "When we have an opportunity to put it behind them and play that 200-foot game, we need to because you give them the opportunities, they can come the puck real quick and they come at you full speed. It's not giving them any real easy opportunities."

Boston's top line of Brad Marchand, Patrice Bergeron and David Pastrnak had zero points at even strength, but in the end the Bruins didn't need them on the score sheet. Coach Bruce Cassidy credited



AP Photo/Bruce Bennett

The puck slides toward the net behind goaltender Jordan Binnington (50) as Boston Bruins' Patrice Bergeron, right, approaches during the first period in Game 1 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final on Monday in Boston.

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