

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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A10

Pendleton's dance team ranks superior

Rhythmic Mode has 5 dancers earn all-state honors

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton High School's Rhythmic Mode dance team has been highly successful over the years, and the dancers did not let COVID-19 get in their way of keeping the program ranked as one of the best in the state.

Five dancers — Elissa Franks, Cortney Herrera, Abi McFetridge, Kirsten Mendel and Lily Volger — earned all-state honors, and the team earned a superior rating when it performed in front of a panel of judges on May 8.

"Five of 11, that is really impressive," said Pendleton dance coach Debbie Kishpaugh, who had seven dancers compete. "It's never been done before. To think if they would have auditioned in person. Your personality shows better without a mask and in person."

Despite the challenges, Volger, a team captain, appreciated the opportunity to compete.

"I am ecstatic to have been honored by becoming a member of the 2021 All-State team, and to do so with four of the girls I grew up dancing with was an even bigger excitement," Volger said in a statement to the



Debbie Kishpaugh/Contributed Photo

Pendleton's Rhythmic Mode poses for a photo at Pendleton High School earlier in 2021. Pendleton was one of only five teams throughout the state that won a superior rating this spring.



Franks



Herrera



McFetridge



Mendel



Volger

Oregon School Activities Association. "I am so grateful for this opportunity to be recognized, along with so many other members of my Rhythmic Mode family, on the 5A All-State team."

Each of the 102 senior dancers who submitted auditions had to learn a specific routine, then tape their performance. Even though they performed solo, and had to tape their own performance, each dancer had to wear a mask.

"That was incredibly

hard on them," said Kishpaugh, who has directed the Pendleton program for 35 years. "They had to either do it outside, in the garage, the living room or their bedroom, but we used my dance studio. My girls truly did have an advantage because we could use my studio. They went one at a time. They had a small advantage. Only thing I did was give them the key and let them in."

Since they had time to perfect their performance,

the dancers would send their videos to Kishpaugh for critique.

"They kept sending me videos and I would tell them what could be better. It was super stressful on them."

Once the videos were to their liking, the dancers sent them off to the Dance Drill Coaches Association, which spent weeks going through the auditions. The judges only knew the dancers by name. They were not allowed to say which school they were from.

"A lot of credit goes to the judges association," Kishpaugh said. "If they wouldn't have been willing

to do this, there would have been no state this year."

During a normal year, dancers throughout the state would have convened at one school and performed in a group of four (only one per school in the group). From there, judges might ask a select group of dancers to perform again.

"Your showmanship, your entire body, is telling your story," Kishpaugh said. "I have been preaching that since they were little. Use those arms, use those hips. All of these kids but one I have had since they were 3-5 years old."

For the team competition, a group of judges traveled to schools to watch teams compete.

"Only one other 5A team got a superior rating, and

there were only five (teams) in the state that got a superior rating," Kishpaugh said. "I really, really applaud the judges association. They traveled around the state, came to watch our state routine, then they went to the next school. We actually got to be at the school gym, and we got to have 200 spectators. That was a really big deal."

While COVID-19 altered the sports scene throughout the country, Rhythmic Mode was fortunate to be able to compete in Nampa earlier this year.

"We were in the Civic Center and you performed by yourself," Kishpaugh said. "Eighty percent of the teams were from Idaho, only one from Oregon and two from Washington. There were about 635 dance numbers from kindergarten through high school, and every genre there is."

Pendleton's jazz performance ranked second.

"With what little we had to work with, we did exceptional," Kishpaugh said. "The only problem was that no one got to see it."

Rhythmic Mode has won nine state titles since 2001, and could have added two more if not for COVID-19.

"We got as much that was possible," Kishpaugh said. "You can't compare this to any other year. What was possible, we nabbed up what we could."

Pac-12 Conference to increase, strengthen wrestling programs

Mid-Valley Media

SAN FRANCISCO — The Pac-12 Conference announced Thursday, June 3, a series of measures to strengthen and grow the sport of wrestling in the conference, including an initiative to add members to its wrestling ranks beyond the current membership of six programs for the first time in more than a decade.

With the recent reinstatement of the Stanford program, the Pac-12 is committed to building upon the foundation of success earned this past season, which included an individual NCAA champion, a fourth-place team finish at NCAA championships and eight All-American honors.

The decision to seek additional wrestling members represents a significant commitment to both bolster competitive opportunities and success for Pac-12 wrestling student-athletes, and strengthen collegiate wrestling on the West Coast.

To support the growth of Pac-12 wrestling, the conference recently adjusted some of its wrestling policies, including the following:



Keith Srakocic/The Associated Press, File

Oregon State's Ronnie Bresser, left, takes on Ohio's Christian Moody in their 125-pound match in the first round of the NCAA wrestling championship March 21, 2019, in Pittsburgh. The Pac-12 Conference announced a series of measures to strengthen and grow the sport of wrestling in the conference, including an initiative to add members to its wrestling ranks beyond the current membership of six programs for the first time in more than a decade.

- Eliminated a restriction that capped the number of wrestling affiliates to the minimum number needed to keep NCAA AQ status.

- Approved a policy change that will allow affiliate members to host the conference championships in future years.

- Approved the hiring of an officials assigner for conference matches and the

conference championships, starting with the 2021-22 academic year.

- Establish a wrestling schedule rotation so as to evenly balance home and away matches during the conference season.

It is the hope of the conference and its wrestling members that this effort will not only lead to more wrestling affiliates but will also

help create additional interest in the sport for the next generation of young athletes on the West Coast.

"This is an exciting initiative that not only stabilizes wrestling on the West Coast, but shows the Pac-12 Conference's commitment to expanding Division 1 wrestling," Oregon State coach Chris Pendleton said. "I'm looking forward to adding more teams, and together we can all push the Pac-12 Conference to new heights."

"It is our pleasure to join the Pac-12 Conference and its wrestling community in this important initiative to add future league affiliates," added Ray Anderson, Arizona State vice president for university athletics. "These measures outlined by the conference are an important first step in making this happen. The sport of wrestling has always been an important part of Sun Devil athletics legend and lore. We must do everything in our power to strengthen and grow the sport of wrestling, especially on the West Coast where it is so essential to our stability. Arizona State University will do everything it can to assist in this effort."

ON THE SLATE

TUESDAY, JUNE 8

Prep boys basketball
Pendleton at Crook County, 7 p.m.
Ione/Arlington at Sherman, 7:30 p.m.
Mitchell/Spray at Echo, 7:30 p.m.
Umatilla at Nixyaawii, 7:30 p.m.
Stanfield at Riverside, 7:30 p.m.
McLoughlin at Irrigon, 7:30 p.m.
Prep girls basketball
Crook County at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.
McLoughlin at Irrigon, 6 p.m.
Stanfield at Riverside, 6 p.m.
Umatilla at Nixyaawii, 6 p.m.
Ione/Arlington at Sherman, 6 p.m.
Joseph at Echo, 6 p.m.
Prep wrestling
Heppner, Irrigon at Riverside, 5 p.m.
Prep bowling
Walla Walla at Hermiston, 3:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9

Prep boys basketball
Nixyaawii at Baker, 7:30 p.m.
Umatilla JV at Griswold, 6 p.m.
Prep girls basketball
Nixyaawii at Baker, 6 p.m.
Prep wrestling
Hanford, Chiawana at Hermiston, 5 p.m.
Pendleton, McLoughlin at La Grande, TBD

THURSDAY, JUNE 10

Prep boys basketball
Kennewick at Hermiston, 7 p.m.
Riverside at Heppner, 7:30 p.m.
Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 7:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Stanfield, 7:30 p.m.
Prep girls basketball
Hermiston at Kennewick, 7 p.m.

Riverside at Heppner, 6 p.m.
Irrigon at Stanfield, 6 p.m.
Powder Valley at Nixyaawii, 6 p.m.
Prep wrestling
Heppner at Riverside, 5 p.m.
Prep bowling
Hermiston at Richland, 3:30 p.m.
Prep swimming
Hermiston at MCC Championships, Richland, TBD
IMC meet at Pendleton, noon

FRIDAY, JUNE 11

Prep boys basketball
Ridgeview at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.
Echo at Ione/Arlington, 7:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Heppner, 7:30 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Stanfield, 7:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Umatilla, 7:30 p.m.
McLoughlin at Riverside, 7:30 p.m.
Prep girls basketball
Pendleton at Ridgeview, 7 p.m.
McLoughlin at Riverside, 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

Prep boys basketball
Crosshill Christian at Nixyaawii, 12:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Grant Union, 3 p.m.
Umatilla at McLoughlin, 6 p.m.
Prep girls basketball
Umatilla at McLoughlin, 4:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Grant Union, 1:30 p.m.
Prep wrestling
Heppner at Pine Eagle, 11 a.m.
Hood River, The Dalles at Pendleton, at Happy Canyon Arena, 5 p.m.

SPORTS SHORT

Kidd removes himself from consideration for vacant Trail Blazers coaching job

The Oregonian

PORTLAND — Los Angeles Lakers assistant coach Jason Kidd has removed his name from consideration for the vacant head coaching position with the Portland Trail Blazers, according to a report from ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski.

"Portland's a first-class organization and will have

great candidates ... but I've decided not to be one of them," Kidd said, according to Wojnarowski.

According to a report from Yahoo Sports on Friday, June 4, Blazers star Damian Lillard identified Kidd as someone he would want to see replace Terry Stotts.

Stotts and the franchise mutually agreed to part ways after nine seasons.

Kidd, a Hall of Fame point guard and former 10-time All-Star, has solid head coaching experience with stints at Brooklyn and Milwaukee with a 183-190 combined record.

Four other candidates have emerged as potential replacements for Stotts: Juwan Howard, Chauncey Billups, Jeff Van Gundy and Mike D'Antoni.



Kevin C. Cox/The Associated Press, File

Los Angeles' LeBron James (23) talks with Jason Kidd during Game 4 of the Lakers' first-round playoff series against Portland Aug. 24, 2020, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.