

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Hermiston has eyes on wrestling title

Bulldogs have top-ranked wrestlers in Cadenas and Larson

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — When Hermiston's Sam Cadenas and teammate Dominic Echeverria went out onto the mat for the district championship match at 285 pounds, they played a friendly game of rock-paper-scissors before Cadenas pinned his teammate in 46 seconds.

Cadenas' opponents at the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association Region 4 Regional Tournament on Saturday, Feb. 12, in Hermiston might want to opt for a few games of rock-paper-scissors than take the mat against the top-ranked Cadenas, who is 28-3 on the season with 22 pins.

"He's not really one to let the rankings get in his head," Hermiston coach Kyle Larson said of Cadenas. "He takes it one match at a time, stays focused and does what he's supposed to do. He's no nonsense."

The Region 4 tournament will begin at 10 a.m. All tickets must be purchased online.

The tournament will include the four Mid-Columbia Conference 3A schools, seven schools from the Greater Spokane League and seven schools from



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Hermiston senior Sam Cadenas, top, shushes freshman teammate Dominic Escheverria in the 285-pound first place match Saturday, Feb. 5, 2022, at the Mid-Columbia Conference 3A District wrestling tournament in Hermiston. Cadenas won by a pin in 46 seconds.

HERMISTON'S REGIONAL WRESTLERS

106 — Carlos Cervantes; Isiah Havins.

113 — Eddie Cervantes; Pedro Pacheco.

120 — Aiden Favorite.

126 — Jaysen Rodriguez; Jeshaiha Garza.

132 — Daniel Garza; Isaac Ruiz.

138 — Hunter Dyer; Trevor Kirkpatrick.

152 — Tama Tuia.

160 — Ben Larson; Zane Estes.

170 — Javier Garcia; Joe Gutierrez.

182 — Jaxson Gribskov; Javier Echeverria.

195 — Logan Royer.

220 — Jesse Vassey.

285 — Sam Cadenas; Dominic Echeverria.

the KingCo.

The top five competitors from each weight class will advance to Mat Clasico XXXIII Feb. 18-19 at the Tacoma Dome in Tacoma, Washington.

Hermiston counts itself as a team to contend for the regional team title. The Bulldogs won the district title with

414.5 points, with Southridge second with 212.

"District was a testament to our language all year," Larson said. We are always talking about bonus points. If you are facing a two-time state champion, we are talking about not getting pinned. We are looking to get the bonus points,

getting pins."

The Bulldogs will have 22 wrestlers sprinkled throughout the regional brackets, including nine district champions. Each bracket has 16 wrestlers.

"Across the board, we have guys in every weight class except 145," Larson said. "This is what we have been

battling for all year. I wouldn't trade any of my 22 for anyone else. We are going to war. We have some young guys in the bottom who are starting to come through. We are counting on them and we believe in them."

Even though his team steamrolled its way through district, Larson knows the GSL and KingCo are formidable opponents.

"The GSL is sending some phenomenal teams. Four of the top five teams will be here. Mead is ranked No. 1, we are No. 2, U-Hi is No. 3 and Mt. Spokane is No. 4. They are trying to win regionals like we are. Mead is tough, we have some work to do to beat those guys."

Along with Cadenas, the Bulldogs have solid wrestlers throughout the lineup.

Aiden Favorite won the district title at 120 pounds, as did Eddie Cervantes (113), Jaysen Rodriguez (126), Daniel Garza (132), Hunter Dyer (138), Ben Larson (160), Jaxson Gribskov (182) and Jesse Vassey (220).

Rodriguez, just a freshman, is 27-6 this season, and has impressed Larson.

"Jaysen has been phenomenal all year," Larson said.

Larson, who is just a sophomore, is ranked No. 1 in his weight class. He is 29-5 this season with 11 pins.

"Ben is doing awesome," Coach Larson said. "He is a workhorse. He isn't flashy or fancy. He sticks to the fundamentals. He is going to get you tired, and he is going to wrestle you tough in the third period."

ON THE SLATE

Schedule subject to change

SATURDAY, FEB. 12

Prep girls basketball

Condon at Echo, 2 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Heppner, 4 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Enterprise, 4 p.m.
Griswold at Joseph, 4 p.m.
Stanfield at Grant Union, 4 p.m.

Prep boys basketball

MCC/GSL District 8 Tournament:
Hermiston at GSL No. 2, TBD
Condon at Echo, 3:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Heppner, 5:30 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Enterprise, 5:30 p.m.
Griswold at Joseph, 5:30 p.m.
Stanfield at Grant Union, 5:30 p.m.

Prep boys wrestling

Pendleton at Intermountain Conference District Championships, Crook County, 9 a.m.
La Grande, McLoughlin at 4A Special District 4 Championships, Sisters, 10 a.m.
WIAA Region 4 Regional Tournament at Hermiston, 10 a.m.
Heppner at Pine Eagle, 10 a.m.

Prep Swimming

Pendleton at Intermountain Conference District Championships, Hood River, 9 a.m.

College men's basketball

Blue Mountain at North Idaho, 4 p.m.
Northwest at Eastern Oregon, 5 p.m.

College women's basketball

Blue Mountain at North Idaho, 2 p.m.
Northwest at Eastern Oregon, 3 p.m.

College track and field

Eastern Oregon at Whitworth Invitational, 8 a.m.

College baseball

Eastern Oregon at Pacific (2), noon

College softball

Eastern Oregon at Willamette, 2 p.m.

College women's lacrosse

Eastern Oregon at Whitworth, noon

SUNDAY, FEB. 13

College baseball

Eastern Oregon at Pacific (2), noon

College softball

Eastern Oregon at Willamette (2), 11 a.m.

TUESDAY, FEB. 15

Prep boys basketball

Pendleton at Crook County, 6:30 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Crook County at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 16

College men's basketball

Treasure Valley at Blue Mountain, 7:30 p.m.

College women's basketball

Treasure Valley at Blue Mountain, 5:30 p.m.

4A tourney moves to Coos Bay area

OSAA boss talked with Pendleton officials before making decision

By JOHN GUNTHER
OSAAtoday

COOS BAY — The Coos Bay area will be pulling double duty next month, hosting a pair of basketball state championship tournaments.

In addition to the 3A tournament jointly hosted by Marshfield and North Bend high schools each winter, the two schools also will host the 4A event a week later.

The Oregon School Activities Association executive board voted to have the Bay Area host the latter event at its meeting Monday, Feb. 7, after Forest Grove High School requested not to be home for the event this year. The school plans to go back to hosting it next year.

"I think it's great," said North Bend Athletic Director Mike Forrester, who committed to the event along with Marshfield Athletic Director Greg Mulkey. "If it's good for our community, then it's a good deal."

The 3A tournament, which first came to the Bay Area a little more than a decade ago, has been a shot in the arm for the South Coast economy each winter, as well as an event to bring the host schools and community together.

When it became clear Forest Grove might not be

able to host the 4A event, OSAA Executive Director Peter Weber contacted Mulkey about the possibility of the Bay Area playing host.

"My first reaction was, absolutely, why wouldn't we want to do it?" Mulkey said, echoing Forrester's thoughts. "It's great for the community."

He noted it also will be a big challenge, putting on the two events in back-to-back weeks.

"It's a daunting task," Mulkey said.

But it's one he feels the community is up for, given its track record hosting the 3A event.

"That's what's so great about our tournament," Mulkey said. "Because of our community's support and our reputation for putting on the (3A) tournament — that's why he called us."

Weber said he also talked with officials in Pendleton, which hosts the 2A tournament each year.

"Those are sites with the infrastructure built in to run these three-day tournaments," Weber said, noting each uses two facilities. In Pendleton's case it's Pendleton High School and the Pendleton Convention Center.

One thing that tipped things in the Bay Area's favor was that many of the schools that might be participating are geographically closer to Coos Bay than Pendleton, being in or near the Willamette Valley or

southern Oregon.

One of those schools, obviously, is Marshfield, which won the 4A Showcase event last June on its home floor in the Pirate Palace.

Weber said he understands how some people might be concerned about Marshfield getting to host and play in the event.

"Obviously, it's not an ideal situation," he said. "We've had it come up in a few other circumstances."

Those include Liberty hosting and participating in the state volleyball tournament and Central Catholic being able to play in the championship football game at Hillsboro Stadium, where it also plays its home games.

"It's not ideal, but at the end of the day, the board focused on being able to put the tournament on," Weber said, again referring to being able to provide a positive experience for the student-athletes.

That's something the Bay Area has shined at with the 3A event, and Mulkey is hoping to provide the same features for the 4A tournament, including each team having a greeter to help during the event and also a community member who will provide a meal for the team during the tournament.

Also in the plans, just like the 3A event, is a dinner for the coaches and separate meal for all the players on the eve of the tournament, followed by a three-point shootout at North Bend High School.

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WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET VACCINATED.

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Sweet Sally:
Time goes so fast and I don't want to waste a second without being with you.
Happy Valentine's Day
Sweetheart
I Love You JHD