

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022

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A10

TROPHY HUNTING



LEFT: Heppner's Caden George (3) puts up a shot during the first half Friday, Feb. 25, 2022, as the Mustangs defeated the Bandon Loggers 62-49 in the first round of the Oregon School Activities Association 2A State Tournament at Heppner High School. Heppner on Thursday, March 3, plays Knappa in the 2A state basketball tournament in Pendleton. **RIGHT:** Stanfield's Maggie Sharp (21) drives toward the basket Feb. 1, 2022, on the way to defeating the Enterprise Outlaws 40-31 in Stanfield. The Tigers on Thursday, March 3, play No. 1 Salem Academy in the 2A state basketball tournament in Pendleton.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Heppner boys, Stanfield girls go to state

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The 2A state basketball tournament will invade Pendleton this week, with two local teams among those battling for a state title.

The Heppner boys and the Stanfield girls will test their luck, starting Thursday, March 3.

The girls' quarterfinal games on Thursday will be played at the Pendleton Convention Center, while the boys will be at Pendleton High School.

Tickets for the tournament are 100% digital and can be purchased at www.osaa.org/shop/tickets.

The Blue Mountain Conference district champion Mustangs (21-3) will open play at 8:15 p.m. against No. 2-ranked Knappa at Pendleton High School.

The Loggers (25-1) are the top team out of the Northwest League, finishing 15-0 in league play. Their lone loss was their season opener against Western Christian on Dec. 3.

"This is in our backyard," Heppner coach Jeremy Rosenbalm said. "We are up to the challenge. These kids have been in high profile games before. At the end of the day, they realize we are in the final eight and we are playing against an extremely talented team. Once the ball goes up, it's anyone's game. They know what it takes to get the job done. I'm excited to go on this experience with them."

Other games in the quarterfinals include Kennedy vs. Western Christian, East Linn Christian Academy vs. Bonanza and Regis vs. Salem Academy.

"Everybody there is good and they deserve to be there," Rosenbalm said. "At some point, you



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File
Heppner's David Cribbs (1) looks to pass during the first half Friday, Feb. 25, 2022, against the Bandon Loggers in the first round of the Oregon School Activities Association 2A State Tournament at Heppner High School. Heppner won 62-49 and on Thursday, March 3, faces Knappa in the 2A state basketball tournament in Pendleton.

are going to get matched up with really good teams. We are excited to have the opportunity to be where we are at."

The Mustangs are led by seniors Kason

Cimmijotti, Joe Sherman and Brock Hisler, along with junior Tucker Ashbeck and sophomore Landon Mitchell, but they also have talent on the bench that rotates in.

Heppner has outscored opponents 63-42 this season, and prides itself on its defense. The Mustangs don't have a lot of height, which might make Thursday's game interesting, but they have plenty of weapons.

"We have done what we have had to do to get to this point," Rosenbalm said. "There are some personnel issues we might be able to take advantage of. We have some 6-1, 6-2 kids who play bigger than what they are. We are quick across the board and can throw some different schemes out on the floor. They are going to have to rotate their defense and maybe we can take advantage."

Knapp coach Paul Isom said they will not take the Mustangs for granted.

"Heppner seems like a really good team," said Isom, a 2007 Knappa graduate who played on the Loggers' third-place state team in 2007. "I have watched them a couple of times, and it seems like they always have a different guy who is leading the way. Also, being Heppner, you know they will be physical and athletic. Jeremy and the staff there do a really nice job of keeping teams off balance with their changing defenses."

Two of Knappa's big weapons this season have been twin towers in seniors Carter Morrill (6-7) and Logan Morrill (6-9). Logan starts for the Loggers, while Carter comes off the bench.

Forward Brandon Gale, is deadly from 3-point range, Drew Miller is the off guard, while guards Shane McMahan and Tanner Jackson control the flow of the game out front.

"Similar to Heppner, we are a really balanced team offensively," Isom said. "Our calling card

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Hermiston rallies to knock off Everett

Simmons hits shot at the buzzer to keep Bulldogs alive

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

EVERETT, Wash. — Freshman Izzy Simmons scored 12 of her 16 points in the fourth quarter — including the game-winner at the buzzer — as Hermiston rallied to beat Everett 53-51 in a 3A regional basketball game Saturday, Feb. 26, at Everett Community College.

"I'm going to start calling them the Cardiac Kids," Hermiston coach Jay Ego said. "They have no give up in them. Everett is a good team and their length really caused us trouble. They started 5-5, 5-11, 5-11, 5-10 and 6-1 players. Someone asked us if we were a soccer team."

Hermiston (16-10) will play Kelso at 3:45 p.m. on March 2 at the Tacoma Dome in a state loser-out game. The winner will advance to the final eight.

It's the first Hardwood Classic appearance for Hermiston, who joined the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association in 2018.

Everett, which hasn't been to the state tournament in more than 25 years, finished its season 12-8.

The Bulldogs trailed 33-41 heading into the fourth quarter, where they outscored the Seagulls 20-10.

Hermiston trailed by seven points with 5 minutes left in the game, but pulled with 49-47 down the stretch.

Ella Sylvester scored to give the Seagulls a 51-49 lead with 1:47 to go, but Simmons scored a game-tying layup with 30 seconds left to even the score.

With 13.8 seconds left on the clock, Everett turned the ball over and the Bulldogs went to work.

Hermiston brought the ball up the court, and with time running out, Dri Coleman drove the lane but did not have a shot. She kicked the ball out to Simmons, who drove the key for a layup as time expired.

"It was really exciting," Simmons said. "This has never happened to a Hermiston team before. We are headed to the Tacoma Dome. We are proving everyone wrong who said we couldn't do it. We like to make things exciting."

Though she is just a freshman, Simmons said she is adjusting to be a team leader.

"It's like a dream," she said. "I never thought I'd be in this position, or getting the game-winning shot, or being the one who leads us to the Tacoma Dome. It's amazing."

The Seagulls led 17-13 after the first quarter, but extended their lead to 29-19 at the half.

"We trailed the whole game until it was zeros," Ego said.

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ON THE SLATE

Schedule subject to change

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2

Prep girls basketball

3A state tournament: Hermiston vs. Kelso, Tacoma Dome, 3:45 p.m.

Prep boys basketball

1A state tournament: Nixyaawii vs. Powder Valley, Baker High School, 8:15 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

Prep girls basketball

1A state tournament: Nixyaawii vs. Country Christian, Baker High School, 3:15 p.m.

1A state tournament: Echo vs. North

Douglas, Baker High School, 8:15 p.m.

2A state state tournament, Pendleton Convention Center

Stanfield vs. Salem Academy, 1:30 p.m.
Gervais vs. Bandon, 3:15 p.m.
Faith Bible vs. Union, 6:30 p.m.
Lakeview vs. Central Linn, 8:15 p.m.

Prep boys basketball

3A state tournament: Umatilla vs. Cascade Christian, North Bend High School, 3:15 p.m.

2A state state tournament, Pendleton High School

Kennedy vs. Western Christian, 1:30 p.m.
East Linn Christian Academy vs.

Bonanza, 3:35 p.m.

Regis vs. Salem Academy, 6:30 p.m.
Heppner vs. Knappa, 8:15 p.m.

College track and field

Eastern Oregon at NAIA Indoor Championships, Brookings, South Dakota, TBA

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

Prep girls basketball

1A state tournament: ECHO vs. TBD
1A state tournament: Nixyaawii vs. TBD
2A state tournament: Stanfield vs. TBD

Prep boys basketball

1A state tournament: Nixyaawii vs. TBD
2A state tournament: Heppner vs. TBD
3A state tournament: Umatilla, vs. TBD

College track and field

Eastern Oregon at NAIA Indoor Championships, Brookings, South Dakota, TBA

College softball

Eastern Oregon at Bushnell (2), 1 p.m.
Clackamas at Blue Mountain (2), 2 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5

College men's wrestling

Eastern Oregon at NAIA National Championships, Wichita, Kansas, TBA

College track and field

Eastern Oregon at NAIA Indoor Championships, Brookings, South Dakota, TBA

College baseball

College of Idaho at Eastern Oregon (2), 11 a.m.
Columbia Basin at Blue Mountain (2), 11 a.m.

College softball

Eastern Oregon at Bushnell (2), 11 a.m.
Mt. Hood at Blue Mountain (2), noon

College women's lacrosse

Eastern Oregon at Corban, 1 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 6

College baseball

College of Idaho at Eastern Oregon (2), 11 a.m.
Blue Mountain at Columbia Basin (2), 11 a.m.