

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022

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A8

Keeping the winning tradition alive

Nixyaawii players follow footsteps of their brothers

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

MISSION—One group of brothers forged the path. The other is keeping the tradition alive.

Basketball at the Nixyaawii Community School is a family affair. For the boys basketball team, everyone from the smallest of fans to the elders pack the gym to watch the Golden Eagles work their magic.

The 2019 Golden Eagles put the team on the map, winning the 1A state title and posting a 28-2 record.

The team featured players Mick Schimmel, Moses Moses and Tyasin Burns, and won the 1A state title — the first for the school that put its first team on the court in 2004.

Fast forward to the present, the younger brothers and cousins of the 2019 team are headed to state Wednesday, March 2, through Saturday, March 5, in Baker City with visions of a championship in their eyes.

“I think it sets a high standard,” Nixyaawii coach Jeremy Barkley said. “They want to be winners like their brothers. There have been a lot of good teams at Nixyaawii, they just didn’t get it done. It was nice to have the leadership in that (2019) group to push them over the top.”

In addition to Schimmel, Moses and Burns, the 2019 team also had Deven Barkley, Magi Moses, Dazon Sigo and Quannah Picard.

The following year, minus Barkley and Sigo, the Golden Eagles returned to the state tournament and finished third.

Nixyaawii won the 1A culminating week tournament last year, but the Oregon School Activities Association does not recognize that as a state title.

This year’s team features Baron Moses, brother to Magi and cousin to Moses; Dylan Abrahamson, brother to Burns; Aaron Barkley, brother to Deven; Saint



Members of the 2018 Nixyaawii boys basketball team pose for a photo with their younger brothers after winning the Old Oregon League district tournament. The younger brothers now are the core group of the 2022 Golden Eagles. Front left — Deven and Aaron Barkley, Mick and Saint Schimmel, Magi and Baron Moses, Dazon Sigo and Tommy Moore, and Tyasin Burns and Dylan Abrahamson.



Nixyaawii's Aaron Barkley (20) drives toward the basket Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, against the Lone/Arlington Cardinals in the second round of the Oregon School Activities Association Class 1A State Tournament at Nixyaawii Community School in Mission. Nixyaawii defeated the Lone/Arlington Cardinals 68-54.

Schimmel, brother to Mick; Tommy Moore, brother to Sigo; and Symon Picard, brother to Quannah.

Going one step further, former WNBA player Shoni Schimmel — sister to Mick and Saint — stops by occasionally to offer insight and advice to the players.

“All these kids come from big family groups,” coach Barkley said. “Shoni had a talk with Baron (her cousin) before the district title game. It’s good to have her give him advice. She’s a legend. The cool thing about Shoni is that she has always been around.”

The Golden Eagles (23-6)

won the Old Oregon League district title last month with a win over Powder Valley, and earned a spot in the final eight with a victory over Lone/Arlington last week. Both games were decided in the fourth quarter.

“When you are on the same level and have that

team chemistry, you get those wins,” Barkley said. “It showed against Lone. We banded together to get that win.”

First up for Nixyaawii at state is OOL foe Powder Valley at 8:15 p.m. Wednesday.

“We have shown we can

NIXYAAWII'S OSAA 1A STATE APPEARANCES

- 2007:** Lost in the first round.
- 2009:** Lost in the second round.
- 2010:** Placed 4th.
- 2014:** Lost in the second round.
- 2015:** Placed 2nd.
- 2016:** Placed 3rd.
- 2018:** Went 0-2.
- 2019:** Won state title.
- 2020:** Placed 3rd.

play with anybody,” Barkley said. “To get to the final eight, you can expect to play a great team. We play Powder again. Hopefully we play our game. We are not looking past this game. Win or lose, the next opponent will be good too.”

Nixyaawii may have one player who lights up the scoreboard every now and again, but most of the Golden Eagles’ wins have been a team effort.

“They feed off each other,” Barkley said. “If someone is having a tough night, they pick each other up. Dylan may have eight points, but 16 assists. It’s good to see them have a complete game. I have three kids who average double figures. They are doing a good job distributing the ball.”

Sophomore Baron Moses leads the Golden Eagles in scoring with 22.8 points and 8.6 rebounds per game.

“Baron has really grown this year as a player,” Barkley said. “Mentally, and he’s blossomed on the floor. He has learned to keep his poise and has been a tough player out there. He played a year up in AAU and did good things. I think that really helped him.”

Juniors Aaron Barkley (13.1 points, 5.7 rebounds, 4.6 assists, 4.2 steals) and Abrahamson (12.8 points, 6.4 assists, 3.4 steals) round out the players who score in double figures, while 6-foot-5 junior Coyote Jackson battles inside and averages 8.9 points and 5.6 rebounds a game.

Rounding out the starting five is 6-1 senior Kirk Houle, whose value goes beyond the score sheet.

“He’s a hard worker,” Barkley said. “He gets rebounds, plays tough D and makes a shot when he needs to. He’s that great role player that teams need.”

ON THE SLATE

Schedule subject to change

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, Pendleton 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

1A state tournament: Umatilla vs. Cascade Christian, North Bend High School, 3:15 p.m.
2A 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: Nixyaawii vs.TBD
1A state tournament: Echo vs. TBD
2A state tournament: Stanfield vs. TBD

Prep boys basketball

1A state tournament: Nixyaawii vs.TBD
2A state tournament: Hep-

pner 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.

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