

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2022

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A10

LEARNING FROM THE BEST



Above: Tyler Berger, left, demonstrates wrestling techniques Thursday, June 30, 2022, at Hermiston High School during a youth wrestling camp. Left: Wrestler Tyler Berger poses with youths Thursday, June 30, 2022, at a wrestling camp at Hermiston High School. Berger wrestled three years at Hermiston before moving to Prineville, where he wrestled his senior year at Crook County High School. He was a four-time state champion in high school. Berger went on to wrestle at Nebraska, where he qualified for the NCAA Championships four times, and placed three times — second (2019), third (2018) and fifth (2017).
Photos By Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

STANFIELD BOYS BASKETBALL



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Stanfield Jr./Sr. High School's new basketball coach Rylie Smith poses for a photo Thursday, June 30, 2022, on the school's basketball court.

Smith a solid hire for Stanfield

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — Sometimes, a little nudge from a trusted friend is all it takes to open a door to a new opportunity.

In Rylie Smith's case, former Irrigon boys basketball coach Mitch Thompson let him know the boys basketball job was open at Stanfield, and suggested he should apply.

Smith threw his hat in the ring, went through the interview process and was hired.

"People have told me I could be a head coach," he said. "As soon as it popped up, it seemed like it was the right moment. Things aligned perfectly."

Smith replaces Devin Bailey, who took a job with the Morrow County School District, teaching in the STEM program at the Sage Center in Boardman. Bailey taught middle school and high school science in Stanfield.

Smith inherits a team that finished second in the Blue Mountain Conference last season with a 10-2 record and 17-11 overall.

The Tigers lost to Heppner in the

Blue Mountain Conference district finals, then lost an 89-60 game to Western Christian in the first round of the 2A state playoffs.

"There are a lot of kids coming back and a lot of new kids coming in," Smith said. "I'm coming into it pretty blind. I didn't watch too many of the small schools. I have high expectations, but we also have a long way to go to be where I want to be."

The Tigers lost three seniors from last year's team, but return leading scorer Gator Goodrich, Pablo Arellano, Connor Logan, Landon Bailey, Michael Odell and others.

"One thing that is awesome is that Gator went to Hermiston his freshman year and we know each other," Smith said. "We have had some summer games and he has become a leader. Gator is tough as all get-out. Knowing him and having a relationship with him, he has rallied the troops a little bit, bringing them in to meet me."

Smith moved to Hermiston in the sixth grade, and Thompson was quick to add the new kid on the block to his circle of friends.

They played basketball together

in middle and high school, and Smith also played tight end and on the defensive line for the Bulldogs on the football team.

"I played all four years at Hermiston and graduated in 2010," said Smith, who was a 6-foot-4 post player. "I didn't play college basketball. I had the opportunity to play football, but at the next level you really have to love the sport. I didn't love it with that much of a passion."

Smith turned his interest to coaching basketball. He was an assistant for Thompson at Irrigon, then coached under Casey Arstein and Drew Preuninger at Hermiston.

"I didn't coach basketball this past year," Smith said. "It was nice to have time off, but I missed it. It was nice to get this job."

Smith, who works for the West Umatilla Mosquito Control District, and is a substitute teacher, will continue to coach the boys tennis team at Hermiston.

"When I was in high school, my partner (Ben Millard) and I won the IMC district title and finished third at state our senior," he said. "The Hermiston boys won the IMC title that year."



Kris James/Contributed Photo

The Columbia All-Stars display their championship banner after winning the District 3 8-10 Little League title Thursday, June 30, 2022, in Burns. Columbia draws players from Stanfield, Echo, Heppner, Ione and Umatilla.

Area Little League teams headed to state

Hermiston hosts the 9-11 and 10-12 state baseball tournaments

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

BURNS — The Columbia All-Stars defeated Hermiston 19-3 on Thursday, June 30, to win the District 3 8-10 Little League baseball title.

Columbia advances to the state tournament starting Saturday, July 9, in Turner. The All-Stars will play their first game at 10 a.m. The final bracket has not been set.

Columbia, which draws players from Stanfield, Echo, Heppner, Ione and Umatilla, opened district play with a win over host Harney County. It then beat Hermiston before losing to Baker.

The All-Stars had to come through the loser-out portion of the bracket to reach the championship game. They beat Hermiston once again to reach the first final game against Baker.

Columbia topped Baker 20-8 to force the final game.

Softball 11-12

Hermiston beat Baker 11-1 to win the District 3 Little League title on June 30.

It was the second win over Baker, which Hermiston beat 13-1 in the third round.

Hermiston opened the tournament with a 15-0 win over the Columbia All-Stars, followed by wins over Wallowa (13-2) and Baker.

Baker battled back in the loser-out bracket, beating Harney County to reach the finals.

Hermiston, which won district last year and placed second at state, will open state play at 3 p.m. Friday, July 8 in Medford against Del Norte from District 8.

The team held a car wash Sunday and raised roughly \$3,000 to help offset expenses.

If you would like to support the teams, you can contact Hermiston Little League via Facebook, or send a donation to Hermiston Little League, Box 1034, Hermiston, OR, 97838.

Softball 8-10

Hermiston Purple won the District 3 Little League title with a 16-0 win over the Columbia All-Stars on June 30 in Burns.

Hermiston will play in the state tournament at the Portland Community College Rock Creek Campus, starting July 21.

Columbia, which was undefeated, needed just one win over Hermiston, but dropped a 17-1 game as Purple forced the second game.

Hermiston Purple opened district play with a win over Union County before losing to Columbia. In the loser-out bracket, Hermiston beat Union once again to reach the championship.

Columbia topped Hermiston Gold 20-6 to open district play, then beat Baker and Hermiston Purple 6-5 to reach the finals.

Baseball 9-11

Hermiston beat Grant County

DISTRICT CHAMPIONS

COLUMBIA ALL-STARS 8-10 BASEBALL

Players: Casyn Adams, Landry James, Gage Rosenbalm, Kaden Cline, Peyton Matheny, Carter Adams, Jack Allen, Joel Wilson, Lucas Matheny, JJ McDaniel, Cooper Stefani, Charlie Mullins, Cooper Harris.
Coaches: Nate James, Brad Adams, Austin Allen.

HERMISTON PURPLE 8-10 SOFTBALL

Players: Peyton Bennett, Kyla Edwards, Morgan Hays, Reese Headley, Carolyn Herman, Kamila Mendoza, Jazlyn Munoz, Aviana Ramirez, Jazlynn Ramirez, Keirah Randolph, Lanaiah Romig, Presley Waelty, Miah White.
Coaches: Neal Randolph, Dan Edwards, Jason Romig.

HERMISTON 10-12 SOFTBALL

Players: Avery Devin, Jaycee Moreno, Alysandra Munoz, Carly Rangel, Bridgett Romig, Lillian Rood, Lexi Sinor, Marli Stackhouse, Gracelyn Tyree, Kenley Venoy, Kylie Virgil, Thandi Weems.
Coaches: Travis Rood, Will Venoy, Sarah Rivera.

HERMISTON 9-11 BASEBALL

Players: Zachary Adair, Kolby Bither, Landon Cearn, Emilio Contreras, Reagan Funk, Samuel Godby, Mason Hughes, Blake Jarvis, Easton Larson, Jack Lathrop, Brecken Mills, Jackson Neighbors, Zlatan Ricardo-Blankenship.
Coaches: Marry Bither, Ryan Malmberg, John Adair.

HERMISTON 10-12 BASEBALL

Players: Harry Bither, Emanuel Cadenas, Trenton Carter, Brett Corey, Alejandro Cortez, Brody Depew, Brayden Haagenson, Maxton Hughes, Slater McAndrew, Wil Philippi, Nathan Tao, Dominick Wolf-Rummell, Cade Warner.
Coaches: Blake Philippi, Ryan Corey, Kirby Warner.

twice to win the District 3 Little League title.

With only three teams in the bracket, Grant County beat La Grande to earn a date with Hermiston, which came away with a 16-1 victory.

Grant County then beat La Grande again to reach the finals, which Hermiston won handily, 24-13 on June 28.

Hermiston will host the state tournament starting July 16. Hermiston will play District 2 in its opener at 6 p.m. on July 16 at Field of Dreams.

Baseball 10-12

Hermiston went 4-0 over the course of the five-day tournament, ending with a 6-4 victory July 1 over Wallowa to win the District 3 Little League 10-12 baseball title.

Hermiston opened play with a 9-1 win over La Grande, then followed with wins over the Baker Nationals and Wallowa to reach the championship game.

Hermiston will host the state tournament starting July 16. Hermiston will play District 1 in its opener at 6 p.m. on July 16 at Field of Dreams.

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