

# COUGARS: Girls heading to state

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Wallowa coach Greg Oveson said his team calmly came back down the floor, made two or three quick passes, and found Makin open again for another try on goal.

This time around, with less than 10 seconds to play, Makin, who led WHS with 13 points, found nothing but net from three-point distance on the right wing and Wallowa, for the first time the entire game, was in the lead at 39-38.

Yet the final seconds were exciting too, said the Wallowa mentor, as Eagle players had two additional highly contested, unsuccessful shots on goal before time expired.

Nixyaawii senior Charlotte Barkley scored 19 of her 26 points in the first half, but was slowed when Wallowa adjusted with a concerted double team that forced other Eagle players to shoot the basketball.

After Makin (two) and Taylor Harshfield had boosted Wallowa's offense with a total of three treys in the third quarter, Wallowa outscored Nixyaawii 11-4 the final eight minutes to eke out the win.

Oveson said the game was almost a carbon copy of a game between the two teams Jan. 24 when WHS, playing on the road, erased a similar deficit to earn a one-point victory.

The victory sends the

Cougars to Adrian to face the No. 5-rated team in the state, the No. 2 team from the 1A-8 High Desert League that boasts a 21-5 season record.

Oveson says the game will be a challenge because Adrian exercises a full-court press the entire game and the Adrian gymnasium is "tiny."

Old Oregon League rules say six teams play in the district tournament with the losers sent home following Thursday night games. Three of the remaining four teams advance to state playoff action.

The girls from Joseph, after downing Pine Eagle 43-36 in a Tuesday night game to get into the district tournament, earned a shot at Wal-

lowa on Thursday at Baker City.

While downing PE, Lindsay Kemp scored 16 points and Alexis Sykora 10 to pace the E-Gals.

With their season on the line Thursday night, Joseph (7-15 on the season) was within two points of the Cougars at 23-21 before WHS senior Taylor Harshfield took over the game in the fourth quarter. Harshfield, who led all scorers with 15 points, scored 10 of her total in the final eight minutes when Wallowa outscored JoHi 13-5 en route to their 10-point, 36-26, team win.

Harshfield was the only double-digit scorer in Wallowa's Thursday evening

win over Joseph. Wallowa's Lauren Makin and Joseph's Satori Albee each scored eight points for their respective teams.

Joseph Coach Travis Huffman said, "I thought we played pretty flat. I think the girls were a little intimidated by the situation because so much was riding on the game. I kept waiting for someone to take charge, and no one ever did."

Wallowa's girls could have ensured a slot in the state tournament Friday, yet fell big to eventual district champion Echo by a 55-25 score.

Doing major damage for Echo were sisters Elizabeth and Hannah McCarty who

each scored 15 points. Elizabeth is a senior and Hannah a sophomore.

Calling the outing Wallowa's worst game since December, Oveson said his troops trailed 16-4 after eight minutes and never threatened the eventual league champs. Echo (9-3 in league and 19-6 overall) kept full-court pressure on the Cougars throughout most of the game.

In the opening minutes of the second half, Wallowa rebounders Calli Miller and Macey Frei picked up their fourth fouls and Oveson, seeing the handwriting on the wall, began pulling his starters to rest them for Saturday's showdown with Nixyaawii.

## STATE: Senior mat men make tournament

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Sophomore Clayne Miller, at 106 pounds, and freshman Cole Farwell, at 113 pounds, both came within one victory of advancing to state, but each fell short in bouts to claim second place. Interestingly, Miller lost early to Burns wrestler Kyran Simpson whom he lost to a second time in the second place match, and Farwell, far all practical purposes, did the same thing. Farwell lost early to another Burns wrestler, Dallon Higgins, then was bested by Higgins again when the second place/third place match was held.

EHS also received seven team points from freshman Dylan Staigle who, like Miller, wrestled in the 106-pound

weight class.

Also competing for Enterprise and receiving no points were Gotro Thanadkit, at 132 pounds, and Zyler Hermens, at 152 pounds.

Wallowa entered two grapplers in district competition, and both placed.

Fuller, the only individual champion from Wallowa County, received one bye at 195 pounds, won a technical fall over Joseph's Warnock in semifinal action, then pinned Elgin wrestler Levi Carper midway in the second round to claim his title.

Wallowa's second wrestler, 120-pound competitor Luis Mendez, won two matches, lost two matches, and claimed a fifth place in the tournament for 10 team points.

## OUTLAWS: EHS girls lose

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After being outscored by Imbler 9-2 in the first period, the Outlaws totaled seven points to the Panthers' six in the second frame.

Enterprise coach Mike Crawford said, "This is a young team and the first time a lot of these kids have played in this environment. They came out and played a little tight and it showed."

However, EHS fought back hard, pulling to within a point after at the third quarter's end. And then it was basket for basket in the fourth, with Enterprise outscoring Imbler by one, 11-10, and putting the game into the four-minute overtime.

The game remained intense into the final seconds.

Crawford recalled his team going to the free throw line with the game tied, but the

Outlaws weren't able to capitalize.

The tables turned and Imbler went to the line. The Panthers couldn't sink their free throws either, but with only seconds remaining, a second missed free throw bounced off the rim and right into the hands of Imbler's post player, who put in the winning field goal to break the hearts of Enterprise's fans, players and coaches.

"It was a heart-breaker," Crawford confirmed. "Our goal of making it to district was made. We set another goal to move on. When we got there, it didn't happen. The girls did everything they were supposed to do except we didn't make our free throws. We know how important that is."

Sophomore Darby Gasset played phenomenally and was awarded player of the game.

Gasset scored 14, going four-for-five from three-point range. Senior leader Carsen Sajonia scored six including a three. She also had three rebounds, two assists and three steals. Emma Hall didn't score any points but did have four rebounds, three assists and a steal. Center Tiffanie George scored three with four rebounds and an assist. Sarah Aschenbrenner scored six points with three rebounds and a block. Freshman Reece Christman put up one three-point shot and made it. She also had three rebounds and an assist. Riley Gray, another freshman, scored and had two rebounds and two assists. Crawford will be losing three seniors from this year's team, but some of his team will be returning for two more years and other players for three. He thinks EHS will become the team to beat.

## MATS: Young wrestlers vie for state

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Those who place high at Boardman will move on to the State Junior High School Wrestling Tournament scheduled for March 14 in Woodburn.

Competing in pod competition Friday, Feb. 6, on mats inside the Pine Eagle High School gymnasium, several local wrestlers competed well.

In fact, the team from Enterprise won 13 of 15 matches it competed in and had three of its five wrestlers go undefeated.

Winning three matches each for Enterprise were seventh grader Kennison Knifong and eighth graders Shane Lund and Evan Johnson. Knifong and Lund wrestled at 95 pounds and Johnson at 110 pounds. Winning two of three matches for the same Enterprise team were sixth grader Trace Evans, at 90 pounds, and eighth grader Clint Norton, at 200-plus pounds.

In that same tournament, Joseph junior high school coach Ryan Seal said his four wrestlers compiled an accumulative record of 8-4. Going undefeated for Joseph with 3-0 marks were 80-pound eighth grade wrestler Steven Beckman and eighth grade 160-pound wrestler Callum Wilcox. Another eighth grader, Trey Wandschneider, won two of three matches at 135 pounds and Seal's fourth wrestler, seventh grader Austin Sykora, wrestled at 120 pounds and was winless in three matches.

Wallowa coach Mel Byers said each of the four wrestlers he entered in the Halfway event won one of three matches.

Eighth graders who wrestled for Byers were Austin Beaucamp at 115 pounds, Joe Robb at 160 pounds, and Zane Hermens at 195 pounds. Also competing on the team was 80-pounder Zeb Hermens, a sixth grader.



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And then for the Eagles it was on to at least one state play-in match.

Joseph beat the Echo Cougars 52-50 on Friday, Feb. 20, in district action in the Baker City gym, and then lost to powerhouse Nixyaawii, 37-56 on Saturday, leaving Joseph as tourney runner-up.

Joseph coach Olan Fulfer summed up the reasons for his team's success in the

Echo game. "We came out and played our game. The boys were confident. We hit some big threes and poured it on from the inside too."

Echo was up 10-9 after one quarter, but the Eagles then bested the Cougars 10-6 in the second for a 19-16 halftime lead. A high-scoring third was highest for Echo, 18-14, putting the Cougars up by a point before Joseph's offense prevailed 19-16 in the final stanza to give the Eagles the win.

"Cayden (DeLury) hit a big three-pointer near the end and Sam (Beckman) hit four clutch free throws (in a row) to help us win the game," Fulfer noted.

Stats weren't available from Saturday's game against Nixyaawii. Fulfer

said the Eagles came out and played "like they had nothing to lose." Going into the half the Joseph Eagles were up by one over their formidable foe. In the second half, however, Nixyaawii came out fast and strong and poured it on, Fulfer acknowledges.

One of the highlights of last week's tournament came when Joseph was forming its spirit line before the Nixyaawii game. The Wallowa boys' and girls' teams and Wallowa fans all joined in the line. "We really appreciated it," Fulfer said.

Joseph's first state play-in game was scheduled Tuesday at home against the Dufer Rangers. A Joseph win would place the Eagles to a second play-in for a spot among the elite eight in the state tourney.



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