

# Joseph basketball: Boys, girls are on the highway to state after district success

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Fulfer expressed pride in his team for their performance under pressure:

"To come back from being down seven in the fourth quarter and to battle back like they did shows a lot of heart," Fulfer said. "I'm really proud of those kids."

After Thursday's rough and tumble win over Imbler, the boys played league nemesis Powder Valley on Friday night. Despite the bruising game the night before, the Eagle boys showed what they're made of when firing on all eight cylinders, cruising to a 58-39 in on what was essentially the Badgers' home court. At one point, the Eagles led by 22.

Senior Tyler Homan had his best game of the year, leading the sharpshooting with 18 points, going 6 for 9 from the field, 4 of 4 from the free throw line while committing four thefts. Sophomore Chase Murray, back after a stretch of illness, scored 14 points, going 4 for 4 from beyond the paint. Mason Ferre, Hadley Miller and Kade Kilgore each pushed six points through the ring.

The victory was satisfying for coach Fulfer.

"Powder's a really good team and ranked," he said. "We played our best game of the season at the perfect time to secure ourselves a home playoff game, which is awesome."

The following game saw a real battle with Nixy-waaii with both teams trading three to four point leads before the Eagles stumbled midway in the fourth quarter, finally succumbing, 54-42, playing on their third consecutive night. Coach Fulfer said that the Golden Eagles are the toughest team they've faced all season.

"We played well, playing our game plan, but we stopped getting rebounds,

and they hit a couple of big threes as well," Fulfer said. "Our kids were just gassed (exhausted) after the tough battle with Imbler and with Powder Valley. They played their hearts out the whole weekend."

Ferre and Murray led the offense, each knocking 12 points through the hoop. Hadley Miller nailed six while Homan and Trey Wandschneider knocked in five each.

"Even though we lost against Nixy, there's nothing to be sad about in that game," Fulfer said. "They did everything they could to win, and it didn't fall for them. I'm really proud of them. We're peaking at this point in time, and it's pretty amazing."

Districts allowed the boys to secure second place in the league as well as a state championship opening home game against Dufur on Tuesday, Feb. 19.

As an added bonus for the weekend, both Homan and Mason Ferre received first-team Old Oregon League honors. Chase Murray scored an Honorable Mention nod.

The ladies had an easy go of it in the first game on Friday night, romping all over Cove Leopards, 51-20. The Eagles got on top of things right with energy and focus from the start.

The Eagles press proved very effective and high energy spread through all the players.

"It was a great game for us to open up the district tournament," Coach Lance Homan said. "We were able to play everyone and rest our starters some."

Saturday proved less than savory as the Eagles ran into a brick wall against the Badgers after the first quarter. Unfortunately, foul trouble and Powder's game plan had other ideas, and the Eagles flustered to the ground.

"Powder really came



Joseph Eagles take on Power Valley.

Ellen Morris Bishop

to play and we just didn't have any answers for them," Homan said. "We took more shots and had less turnovers, but we shot 29 percent to their 38 percent."

Homan credited Powder's defense and coach-

ing with holding back the Eagles' wave.

"Now it is on to the next step in the journey," Homan said.

The girls next play at home versus Lone on Wednesday, Feb. 20, in

the first round of the state championships.

On the bright side, the girls placed three players on the first-team Old Oregon League squad. Sabrina Albee made the squad while she also served as the

league's unanimous selection for player of the year. Madelyn Nelson and Emma Hite also received the honor while Haley Miller received second-team honors. Camille Crenshaw received an honorable mention.

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