

SPORTS

Outlaws claim cross-country crown

Wallowa Valley girls take second

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

LEBANON — It may not have been “official” in the eyes of the Oregon School Activities Association. But regardless of the label, the Wallowa Valley Outlaws boys cross-country team proved again it is best in state.

Buoyed by three top-five finishes and by having its top five runners inside the top 20, Wallowa Valley breezed to the de facto Class 3A state championship — as it was expected to on paper — Saturday, April 10, at Cheadle Lake Park in Lebanon.

“It was just a great team effort by the kids,” head coach Dan Moody said. “They pushed themselves. They were going hard. They don’t take anything for granted. It’s great. Sometimes kids do that. They don’t. They went after it.”

The Outlaws scored 34 points as a team to easily outpace second-place La Pine, which scored 68 points. Third-place Westside Christian closely followed with 74 points.

“We knew that probably La Pine was probably our main competition,” Moody said. “We’ve got the target on our backs.”

In a year that has been anything but ordinary, the Outlaws’ win felt like a piece of normalcy — even if the team stood on the podium holding a “Spring XC” championship trophy while donning masks.

The OSAA did not sanction a statewide event in the culminating week of Season 2, but instead East Linn Christian hosted a state-style event in Lebanon that brought in



The Wallowa Valley boys cross-country team poses with the state title trophy after winning the 3A state meet Saturday, April 10, 2021, in Lebanon.

Tom Nordtvedt/Contributed Photo

many of the top-ranked teams.

“The meet was exceptional,” Moody said. “I can’t talk enough about how this meet went off and (East Linn Christian head coach) Kellen Peters — this was his baby. It was above and beyond what the OSAA even thought about doing. He did an exceptional meet. My goodness.”

Wallowa Valley, which returned the core of its state title-winning team from 2019, was nothing short of dominant. Henry Coughlan led the pack for the Outlaws by taking second in a time of 16:01.15. Shortly after him in third was Zac Knapp in 16:18.81 and Bayden Menton placed fifth in 16:59.01.

It was a similar look to 2019, when Coughlan won the state title, Knapp took third and Menton came in fourth.

Even Ian Goodrich, who was the fourth Outlaw across



Wallowa Valley runner Kyla Hook, right, placed 15th to lead the girls cross-country team to a second-place finish at the 3A/2A/1A state meet Saturday, April 10, 2021, in Lebanon.

Tom Nordtvedt/Contributed Photo

the finish line, was right in line with his placing last year. Goodrich came in 16th in 2019, and Saturday took 15th in 17:55.90.

Brenden Moore rounded out the top five for the Outlaws in 18th in 18:15.51.

The two others across the line for Wallowa Valley

were Weston Wolfe in 23rd (18:32.39) and Roan Flynn in 70th (21:15.99).

Moody was pleased by the effort the athletes put in, noting timewise, they are well ahead of where they typically would be at this point of a traditional season.

“I couldn’t be more proud

of it, what they accomplished in a short amount of time,” he said. “We’re midseason, and they are running end-of-the-season times. That is something for the kids.”

Girls take second place

Up until a couple of weeks ago, the Wallowa Valley girls cross-country team didn’t have enough athletes to field a full team.

Once they did, they put together the second-best team in the state.

Wallowa Valley scored 81 points in the de facto 3A/2A/1A state championship Saturday, April 10, at Cheadle Lake Park in Lebanon to place second, and in the process flipped the script from the district meet earlier this month by edging Heppner. The Mustangs, who on April 2 topped Wallowa Valley on the way to the district title, scored 83 points Satur-

day to place third. Bandon ran away with the state crown by scoring 46 points.

“Two weeks ago, we didn’t even have a team. And now, they ended up second in state,” Moody said. “When Maddie (Nordtvedt) came on the team, they ended up second in district and pretty close to Heppner.”

Moody said both he and assistant coach Jenny Reinheardt believed Wallowa Valley could catch Heppner for second with a few individual improvements — and that was exactly what happened.

Kyla Hook led the way for the Outlaws on Saturday by placing 15th in a time of 21:20.24. Freshman Iona McDonald was 22nd in 21:56.16.

“The Heideman girl (Hailey) from Heppner, that was the first time Kyla beat her, and beat her pretty decisively,” Moody said. “Iona was also ahead of her.”

The key, though, may have been the athlete who joined the team late to give Wallowa Valley a full complement of five runners. Nordtvedt — who started Season 2 on the volleyball court before a late change back to cross-country — placed 34th in a time of 22:41.88.

“It was so great for the kids to (go from) no team to get to where they are at. Thank volleyball for letting Maddie on, and Maddie toughing it out,” Moody said.

The Outlaws rounded out their scoring with Michalia Caine in 59th in 23:46.69 and Lottie McDonald in 60th in 23:47.56.

“This meet was for the kids. It was all for the kids. That was what was so special about it,” Moody said. “I can’t say enough about how it worked out.”

Cougars, Enterprise football teams end with wins

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — Zeb Hermens saved his best for last, and stepped up in a major way when the Wallowa Cougars needed him to.

The senior, who filled in for an injured Lute Ramsden at quarterback, rushed for 224 yards and four touchdowns and passed for two more scores as the shorthanded Cougars fought off the Elgin Huskies on Friday afternoon, April 9, in their season finale, 58-42.

“Essentially we were playing without three all-state, two-way starters,” head coach Matt Brockamp said. “Elgin has some big, strong, physical kids and they ran the ball well. They ran the ball hard. ... It was neat to see our kids keep playing hard and keep scoring and keep ahead of them.”

The Cougars were without Ramsden and Colby Mandal, both injured in last week’s win over Powder Valley, and lost Zeb Ramsden in the game due to injury.

Hermens engineered the Cougar offense largely with his legs, carrying the ball 27 times to pile up his yardage. He also was 5-for-10 passing for 79 yards and two scores — one to Tristin Bales and one to Ryder Goller. Defensively, he had six solo tackles



Wallowa’s Zeb Hermens shakes Husky tacklers on a touchdown run in the fourth quarter Friday, April 9, 2021. Hermens ran for four touchdowns and 224 yards in the Cougars’ 58-42 win.

Ellen Morris Bishop/For the Wallowa County Chieftain

and assisted on six more.

“To step in the last week with one week of practice and be able to quarterback our offense, which is actually pretty complex for the quarterback in the read keys and the (run-pass option) stuff we do, it’s a lot to take on,” Brockamp said of Hermens. “We tried to simplify things and run the ball, and he did a great job. He’s always had the heart and the ability to do it, he’s just been tiny. He finally

had a growth spurt finally his senior year. ... He played tough, played hard, (and) ran really tough.”

With Hermens leading the way, Wallowa rushed for 405 yards and finished with 484 yards of total offense. Bales had an additional 99 yards rushing and a touchdown and also had 48 yards receiving, and Zeb Ramsden had 52 yards rushing and 20 receiving before leaving with an injury. Defensively, Jesse

Duncan had five tackles and 14 assists, and Ramsden had three tackles and six assists.

Brockamp said the defense had to shuffle players around until Wallowa was able to find a combination to get the stops needed.

“It was musical chairs for a little bit until we got something we felt a little more comfortable with,” Brockamp said. “And we made a couple stops, we forced a couple turnovers, and were able to

keep scoring and stay ahead of them, and make plays on special teams as well.”

With the win, Wallowa wraps up the spring with a record of 4-1.

Enterprise finishes with win over Cove

COVE — Despite the loss of three starters, the Outlaws managed to round out their abbreviated season with a win on their only road contest of the year Friday afternoon, April 9, defeating the Cove Leopards 40-18.

“On offense, we started three freshmen, and on defense, two,” Enterprise head coach Rusty Eschler said. “They stepped up and played well. They were a little nervous at kickoff, but as the game went on, they settled in real well.”

Eschler said the lack of their regular lineup took some getting used to for the remaining Outlaws, who ended up tallying 408 total offensive yards on the night.

“We were missing our quarterback, tight end, outside linebacker and starting guard,” he said. “It took some time, but the team adjusted.”

The Outlaws were previously set to face Union in a rematch, but the Bobcats had to cancel due to a lack of players. They also had a half-game during the season.

“Imbler was gracious

enough to play us two quarters after they played Ione,” Eschler said. “It’s been a tough season. It was a way different year than we’ve ever had before. But the kids got to play 3½ games. That’s better than nothing. You wish you could have all six games, but it is what it is.”

The Outlaws wrapped up the season with a 2-1 overall record in 1A Special District 2 play.

Joseph volleyball ends with losses

NORTH POWDER — The Joseph Eagles wrapped up the spring with a pair of losses in North Powder at the 2A/1A culminating week tournament Friday, April 9, falling to host Powder Valley, 25-7, 25-12, 25-22, and to Weston-McEwen in five sets, 25-14, 15-25, 21-25, 25-17, 16-14.

Stats were not available.

The season ends for Joseph at 7-6 overall.

Wallowa ends with win

WALLOWA — The Wallowa volleyball team outlasted Elgin in five sets in its season finale Friday, April 9.

Stats were not available for the Cougars, who ended with a record of 6-5 overall.

Freelance reporter Brett Kane contributed to this report.

Sponsor List:



Bronze Antler B & B LLC
Community Bank
Dr. Jason Follett, DMD-Wallowa Valley
Heavenly's
Log House RV Park
Minam River Lodge
Minam River Lodge
Mountain Crest Apartments
Ponderosa Motel
Umpqua Bank
Valley Bronze of Oregon
Valley Bronze of Oregon
Viridian Management
Wallowa County Grain Growers
Winding Waters Medical Clinic

