

500 vs. 500: Wednesday matchup features unique angle

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Two individuals who could stake a claim to the Mount Rushmore of Oregon high school girls basketball coaches — especially at the small-school level — will square off in a unique matchup — one that hasn't happened in close to 20 years.

When Enterprise hosts Crane at noon Wednesday, June 16, it will pit Enterprise coach Mike Crawford and his 505 career wins against

Crane coach Stub Travis and his 504 career wins (win totals as of Monday).

Only eight coaches have ever won 500 games in girls basketball in Oregon history. Crawford was the seventh to reach the feat in February 2020. Travis reached the milestone in May of this year, making him the latest to join the club, according to ORHSsportsrecords.com. (The site does not have a record for Travis' first season in Crane in 1994).

The similarities between the coaches are plenty. In

addition to both being in the 500-win club, both have coached their squads to state championships (Crawford in 1996, Travis in 2004 and 2020). Both have decades under their belt at their respective schools (Travis is in his 26th season, Crawford his 32nd). And both pointed to their players as part of what has allowed them to have a successful career.

"I've had great athletes," Travis said. "That helps, and kind of built a program where we are doing a lot of summer stuff. When

I first started a lot of teams weren't doing summer stuff. It was definitely an advantage. I started probably 18 years ago having a camp at Crane and expanding it each year. I bring in college coaches. Definitely having a lot of great athletes through the years (helps)."

Crawford added the backing of the community — in addition to top-level athletes — is vital.

"In order to survive as long as I have in (this) job, I've had a lot of community support, also, that has helped

the program and supported the program," he said. "I think it's a good thing when you are in a small community. (You) get to know a lot of people, good families, good parents. In my career I've been fortunate that I have had good families (and) kids who want to be a part of the program."

Prior to Wednesday, only two Oregon girls coaches with at least 500 wins had ever met after reaching that milestone — Lake Oswego's Gary Lavender and Oregon City's Brad Smith,

as the two schools are long-time Three Rivers League rivals. Both coaches reached 500 during the 2001-02 season, and faced off on several occasions with 500 Ws until Lavender retired after the 2004 season with 544 wins. Smith, the winningest coach in Oregon history, called it a career two years later with 628.

It's not the first time the Mustangs under Travis — who has an additional 70 wins during three seasons

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Joe Brogdon/Contributed Photo

Joseph alumna and Eastern Oregon University graduate Karianne Zollman recently earned an NAIA all-American in the women's javelin.

Joseph alum closes chapter on EOU throwing career

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

LA GRANDE — Some athletes save their best for last.

But for Eastern Oregon University javelin thrower Karianne Zollman, her best at the 2021 NAIA National Championships came first.

Zollman, a Joseph alumna who over the weekend graduated from EOU, wrapped up her collegiate athletic career by earning all-American in the women's javelin with a personal-best effort at the national meet May 26 of 141 feet, 4 inches. It was a performance that lifted her to sixth in the nation and resulted in her garnering her second all-American in the event.

She didn't linger around till the end, either, to uncork the PR throw, or build up to it. Instead, she did so on her very first attempt of the day.

"I get really amped up for the first throw, and I get really nervous," Zollman said. "I have to be very disciplined. I always have a pep talk with myself. You can't wait until the next throw, you have to do it now."

Her conversation with herself included a reminder that it was going to be her final time on the javelin runway.

"This is your last

opportunity. Let's go out having fun. Let's execute to the best of our ability," she said of her personal pep talk.

Having the big throw early took some of the pressure off as she set out to end her career with a bang.

"I was in the first flight, so I knew I should be able

In fact, she did the same thing in 2019. Then a junior, Zollman launched the javelin 140-feet-2 on her first throw of the day. At the time, it was her personal best. And like at the 2021 nationals, it landed her an all-American nod, as she finished eighth that day.

The strong sendoff came

was really trying to go for a national championship, I had a good base of work I had done in the previous years. Everything prevented the access to gyms and stuff. I couldn't get as much as I wanted, but toward the end I worked my butt off."

Throwing javelin runs in Zollman's blood, as her older sister, Grace, had a successful career and pursued the sport professionally, Karianne said.

"She was able to give me a lot of help," she said. "It was also so cool to watch her throw. I was inspired by her throwing."

Zollman briefly dabbled in the shot put, hammer throw and weight throw at EOU, but solely focused on the javelin her senior season.

"I did not have that much time, and I knew I could be the most successful in javelin and reach (nationals) in javelin," she said.

Her marks improved each week during the 2021 season, building up to that best — and first — all-American winning throw at nationals.

"Coming back and finishing, before this, it felt like you had to stop in the middle of a book," she said. "The final chapter was not complete. I didn't care how it ended up. I just wanted to put in the work, and however it ended, great."

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— Karianne Zollman, EOU javelin thrower

to get into the finals (with that throw)," she said. "I wanted to get a good average. This was my last time competing. I didn't want it to be a fluke. Most of my throws were 40 meters (131-feet-3), and before that, I was struggling to get above 40 meters."

Her average on five marked throws that day was 133-feet-10, including three throws above the 40-meter mark, all boosted by the initial effort of the day.

It's not the first time her first throw has been her best at nationals, either.

after a pandemic-canceled 2020 that would have been her senior campaign, one in which, coming off an all-American effort as a junior, she hoped to contend for a national title.

COVID-19 not only altered that, but put her in a spot where she was uncertain she would even compete in 2021.

"I wasn't even sure I was going to come back," she said. "I had a few classes, but I didn't have a reason to come back in the fall or winter, so I only showed up in spring term."

"The season before, I



The Observer, File

Jonah Staigle of Joseph competes against Joshley Howell of Siletz Valley in the 2A/1A state wrestling tournament in February 2020. Staigle has been selected to play in the East-West Shrine football game in August.

Staigle selected to play in East-West Shrine Game

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Jonah Staigle was excited when he saw the email telling him he had been selected to take part in the Shriners East-West All-Star Game, which returns in August after a year away due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Oh, man, it's an honor," the Joseph senior said. "(Head coach) Duncan (Christman) talked to me, he put me and Justin (Rogers) both in there."

"I got the email the other day. That was crazy."

Staigle and 43 others received that email, telling them they would be part of the 69th Shriners game, which is a major fundraiser for Shriners Children's Hospital in Portland.

"It's amazing to be able to have the game back," said Zachary Steele, first vice chairman and player personnel manager. "This year would have been our 70th game."

"It's the largest fundraiser in the Northwest for Portland Shriners Hospital. Being able to have a game and get those dollars to help kids walk is amazing."

The pandemic canceled last year's game, but there was hope the game would be able to resume this summer. Steele said the big lift came when state sanctions on full-contact football in Oregon were lifted.

"It's always been the goal since we canceled the game last year," he said.

Steele said the players that get selected among the nominees are those who coaches believe are not only talented, but who are tops in character. The players are nominated and selected by coaches.

"No. 1 we want high-character kids, and No. 2 we want your best athletes," Steele said, noting the game is, after all, an all-star game.

Staigle does know some about the history of the game and the impact it has.

"I've heard a little bit about. I know it's been going on for quite a while. I remember telling my mom, and she freaked out telling me how it was a big deal when she was in high school here," he said. "It definitely is an honor to get picked for it."

Past traditions have been for players to tour the Shriners campus in Wilsonville to meet children who are in the hospital.

That won't be possible this year due to COVID restrictions, but Steele said players still will be able to see how the game — and, more specifically, the funds raised by it — help children and families.

"We still are going to get the kids exposure to what they are playing for," Steele said.

The game traditionally generates about \$25,000 for the hospital, which provides orthopedic, burn, cleft lip and cleft palate care — all for free to families.

"The hospital, No. 1, is at no cost to nobody, ever. We do not bill parents for the cost of care," Steele said.

Staigle said now the hope is he can get on the field, as a lingering injury has limited him in wrestling this summer.

"I guess the first thing I thought of was my injury, hoping it doesn't hold me back," he said. "I was really surprised, definitely. Didn't think I was going to get a spot on the roster."

There are four Union County and one Wallowa County athlete on the alternate list who still could find their way on the field.

"If a kid declines (or) gets injured, we then go to the alternate list," Steele said. "Every year we have five to 10 alternates who get selected to play."

The game is at 7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 7, in Baker City.

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