

Playoff possibilities abound entering final week of regular season

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Depending on how the final week of the regular season goes, the Enterprise football team could find itself in anywhere from a tie for first to alone in fifth in the West division of Special District 2.

It means that while Enterprise is in a good position to qualify for the playoffs for the first time since 2017, it's far from a given.

Two games will dictate the Outlaws' fate in district action, one of those games being Enterprise's road trip to face Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat on Friday, Oct. 22.

Enterprise, Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat and Imbler all enter the final week of the season 3-2 in district play. The teams are a half-game behind Ione Arlington (4-2) and a game behind Dufur (4-1). Imbler visits Dufur on Friday, while Ione/Arlington plays a non-

league game against Cove.

The most important game for the Outlaws, obviously, is the one in front of them against Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat. The winner pushes their way into no worse than a tie for second with Ione/Arlington. Both teams would own a tiebreaker given they each have head-to-head wins over the Cardinals, who stayed in the picture with a stunning 46-6 upset of Dufur last week.

But the outcome of the Imbler-Dufur battle carries significant weight. A Dufur win puts the Rangers in first and give them the top seed going into next week's district playoff at Eastern Oregon University. The Enterprise-Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat winner would be second and Ione-Arlington would take third. Those three teams would earn automatic state playoff berths, regardless of the outcome of the district games.

An Imbler win, though, would set insanity into motion,

as four teams — Imbler, Dufur, Ione/Arlington and the Enterprise-Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat winner — would be 4-2 in district and tied for first. Under this scenario, the Enterprise-Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat loser would drop to 3-3, entirely out of the district playoffs and hoping their final ranking could them an at-large bid to state.

The district playoff games at EOU will look a little different than in years past. This fall, six teams from District 2 — the top three from both the East and West divisions — will automatically qualify for the playoffs. There still, though, will be four games — the East side fourth team against the West side fourth team, E3 vs. W3, E2 vs. W2 and E1 vs. W1. The E4 vs. W4 game will be important as the outcome could determine if a team's OSAA ranking is good enough to garner one of four at-large playoff bids.

Wallowa still has an outside

shot to earn a fourth-seed into the district playoff, but would need a win against Elgin to force a three-way tie between the Cougars, Huskies and Cove.

Joseph to play for second seed Thursday

In six-man football, Joseph already has garnered a bid into the eight-team playoff.

The outcome of Thursday's contest at Prairie City/Burnt River will determine if the Eagles are a two-seed, and host in the first round, or are a three-seed and hit the road.

The teams will play in an eight-team bracket — five from the West and three from the East — to determine the six-man football champion. The East side champion — Wheeler County — hosts the fifth seed from the West. The West side champion will host the West fourth seed. The West second seed hosts the East third, and the East second hosts the West third.

Volleyball districts take place this week

In volleyball, Joseph's undefeated Old Oregon League season gives it the top seed in the north, and a berth to the district semifinals Saturday, Oct. 23, in Baker City. The finals and third-place match will be later that day. The top three teams go to the state playoffs.

Wallowa hosted Elgin Tuesday, Oct. 19, in a fourth seed vs. third seed matchup. (This contest was played after the Chieftain went to press). The winner faces the second seed from the South — Imbler — on Oct. 21, with that winner reaching the district semifinals.

At the 2A level, Enterprise needed a win Tuesday against Weston-McEwen (a game that, like Wallowa's, started after the Chieftain went to press) and help in order to gain one of five spots into the Blue Mountain Conference's district tournament. The Outlaws entered Tuesday in sixth place in the BMC.

Classification adjustments likely to have little impact in Wallowa County

By RONALD BOND
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SALEM — The Oregon School Activities Association, as it does every four years, is reviewing its classifications and districts and considering proposed changes to how they will look in the next four-year block beginning in the fall of 2022.

So far, the only impact the current proposals would have on Wallowa County schools is who they play in league.

The latest proposal the OSAA is seeking feedback on is a six-classification draft. Within it, Enterprise would remain in the 2A Blue Mountain Conference, and both Joseph and Wallowa would stay in the 1A Old Oregon League.

The only real change would be league opponents. Under the newest draft, the BMC would be a six-team conference, with the Outlaws being joined by Heppner, Grant Union, Stanfield, Irri-gon and Weston-McEwen.

The OOL would retain all its current schools — Joseph, Wallowa, Griswold, Nixyaawii, Powder Valley, Elgin, Imbler, Pine Eagle and Cove — but would add two schools that would drop from the current BMC, Union and Pilot Rock.

The OSAA has looked at both five- and six-class setups for the next four years, but in its most recent meeting on Oct. 11 narrowed its scope to six classes, which would keep it the same as it currently stands, and has since 2006.

Whether a draft was for five or six classes, it did not have a major impact in Wallowa County.

In the previous four proposals put together by the OSAA, and listed on its website, Enterprise was joined by Grant Union, Weston-McEwen, Heppner and Stanfield, and current school Irri-gon. In all four proposals, Pilot Rock, currently in the BMC, would dropped to the OOL.

Union was in flux depending on the proposal with whether it would remain in 2A or drop to 1A alongside Joseph and Wallowa depending on where the OSAA sets the 1A/2A cutoff.

In fact, the range on OSAA's average daily membership (ADM) — enrollment numbers it uses — varied the size of the new 2A classification to anywhere from 37 to 44 schools, with the latest draft having 38. There currently are 47 schools in 2A.

The OSAA has also changed how it calculates its ADM. Rather than using students in grades 9-12, it is now factoring its enrollment data based on grades 9-11, doing so to adjust for students who graduate early.

But the ADM isn't a high school's overall population. It weighs in several factors, perhaps the most significant reducing the ADM by 25% of how many students it has who take free and reduced lunch.

Football:

Continued from Page A9

Rutherford added 96 yards rushing.

Joseph, despite the loss, did qualify for the eight-team six-man playoffs after Prairie City/Burnt River's 44-22 win over Echo on Friday night.

Joseph (4-2 overall) visits Prairie City/Burnt River on Oct. 21, with the winner earning the second seed from the East and the losing team taking third.

Cougars fall to Badgers

Powder Valley surged out to a 42-8 halftime lead Friday, Oct. 15, at Wallowa, on the way to a 62-24 victory over the Cougars.

Wallowa (1-4 overall) hosts Elgin Oct. 22 in its regular-season finale, needing a victory to maintain a hope of a district playoff berth.

Enterprise wins via forfeit

The Enterprise foot-



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ball team didn't even need to take the field to gain a third straight win.

The Outlaws defeated Sherman/Condon after the Huskies forfeited the

game due to a lack of players.

The victory gives Enterprise its longest winning streak since also winning three games in a row

in 2018. Coincidentally, that streak started with a win by forfeit against Sherman.

Enterprise (4-3 overall) visits Lyle/Wishram/

Klickitat on Friday, Oct. 22, to wrap up the regular season. If they win, the Outlaws clinch a first playoff berth, which would be their first since 2017.

Enterprise:

Continued from Page A9

helped Enterprise trim the margin back to six, but Stanfield pushed the lead back to 11 and went on to lead by as much as 13 points en route to the win.

The team traded leads four times early in the final set. An ace by Reeser put the Tigers ahead 10-9. Stanfield pushed the lead to four on several occasions, and seemed ready to put the match away when Mazie Reeser's kill made the lead 23-17.

Enterprise mounted one final rally, though, to try and stay in the match. A kill by Liz Rowley and two by Gray helped trim the deficit to 23-21, and after the Tigers pushed the game to match point, Gray, Madison Wigen and Rowley all had kills to tie the set at 24-24.

Two errors by Enterprise, though, on the next two points gave the set and the match to Stanfield.



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Enterprise's Liz Rowley, left, drops to a knee to return a ball while Jada Gray looks on Friday, Oct. 15, 2021.

Gray had eight kills and three blocks for the Outlaws, while Rowley had five kills. Coggins added two aces.

The Outlaws followed up Friday with a split of action on Saturday, losing to Grant Union at home in straight sets, 25-16, 25-17, 25-12, and defeating Pilot

Rock 25-12, 25-11, 15-25, 25-9.

Gray had four kills in the loss to Grant Union, while Rosie Movich-Fields had six aces.

In the win over the Rockets, Wigen had seven kills, Gray had eight digs and Rilyn Kirkland had six aces.



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Enterprise's Madison Wigen tips the ball over the net during a match with Stanfield Friday, Oct. 15, 2021. The Outlaws fell to Stanfield in straight sets.

"We struggled a bit this weekend to find our equilibrium with a new lineup, minus an injured Maci Marr," head coach Lisa Farwell said. "Our team worked hard, but we had a difficult schedule with Stanfield and GU both. With just one league game left, we're in

a do-or-die situation trying to get into the district tournament. We'll need to get a win on Tuesday, and a few other things to go our way, or our season will be over."

Enterprise (10-10 overall, 3-8 BMC) finished up the regular season Tuesday against Weston-McEwen.

Joseph:

Continued from Page A9

Saturday. Joseph's first opponent won't be known until Thursday night.

Wallowa ends skid

After falling to Powder Valley at home on Friday, Oct. 15, Wallowa ended a month-long rough stretch with two home wins on

Saturday, Oct. 16, defeating Nixyaawii in five

sets, 25-17, 25-19, 19-25, 26-28, 15-11, and later topping Griswold in four sets, 22-25, 25-17, 25-23, 25-23.

The victories brought an end to a 12-game losing streak and placed the Cou-

gars in a tie for second in the Old Oregon League-North. Wallowa's last win was a victory over Wallowa on Sept. 11.

The Friday loss to Powder Valley was by a score of 25-23, 25-14, 25-14.

Knapp:

Continued from Page A9

he likely would not have the same passion for running.

The Outlaws won the team title at four of their first five races, and fellow senior Bayden Menton has been following Knapp closely to the line

with a trio of runner-up showings.

Moody leans on his two seniors to help guide a team looking to win its third-straight state title.

"It is a team effort every time we go to a meet, so they work together and help each other out," he said. "Zac will take groups with him and he pushes them. Between him and Bayden

they are our true leaders on the team."

Menton has always been a team player often leading the team to the line in middle school. Knapp and Henry Coughlan — a state champion two years ago who transferred to Crescent Valley — may have surpassed him in the standings in high school, but his impact is no less. Men-

ton, who runs with Knapp on the weekends, never cared where he finished, it is always about the team and it made him work harder, Moody said.

"Bayden is a fantastic leader, he is always supportive and I think I learn a lot of my leadership skills from him," Knapp said. "During my races — and I don't mean this in a bad way — I am like,

"I can't let Bayden catch me." That is definitely one of my motivators."

Knapp has set an impressive pace so far this season, and even when he is pulling away on the course he is driven by one thought.

"I can't let anyone beat me," he said.

He has shown what he can do when he is focused on something.