

GIRLS TAKE STATE TITLE



Maria Weer/Contributed Photo

The Wallowa Valley middle school cross-country team recently won the state middle school title on Sunday, Oct. 31, 2021, in Monmouth.

Wallowa Valley girls team wins all seven races

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The next generation of stand-out cross-country runners in Wallowa County are already making a name for themselves.

The Wallowa Valley girls cross-country team won the middle school state championship Sunday, Oct. 31, at Western Oregon University in Monmouth.

The Outlaws edged past Philomath for the team title, finishing with 49 points. Philomath came in with 67 points, and

third-place Linus Pauling Middle School, based in Corvallis, had 92 points.

The team peaked at state, with runners not only beating personal records, but shattering them.

“All 11 girls that ran at the state meet, we had an average of 41-second PRs,” head coach Dan Moody said. “That’s pretty exceptional. It’s the right timing, and also down at sea level.”

Wallowa Valley’s top three runners finished the 3,000-meter course in less than 12 minutes, and two of them came in in just over 11 minutes. The team leader was Abigail Hurley, who placed ninth overall with a time of 11:15.30, and right on her

heels was Piper Harvey, who took 11th at 11:18.50.

Lilly Weer just missed the top 20, but placed 21st overall, clocking in at 11:31.50. In 41st was Mary Hellinger in 12:03.10, and Owyhee Harguess was 45th in 12:11.50 to round out the team’s top five.

“I had 19 girls, and they were all really good runners,” head coach Dan Moody said. “Every one of them pushed each other. Just an exceptional bunch of young ladies.”

The victory marked the conclusion of an undefeated season for Wallowa Valley, which won all seven races it competed in

this fall. The Outlaws opened the season by placing five runners in the top 15, and nine in the top 25, to win the seventh and eighth grade race at the Catherine Creek Scamper outside of Union on Sept. 10. A week later, Wallowa Valley edged La Grande to win the Wallowa County Invite with half of the top 16 runners in the field. Wins at Stanfield, Baker and Heppner followed, with the race in Stanfield one that really showed the team’s depth.

“We had five of our top 10 or 11 girls (who) were gone at the Stanfield meet, and they still won it,” Moody said. “The

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Knapp’s season puts him in rare air in the program

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Zac Knapp is only the third runner from Enterprise — and only the fourth in the boys program — to win an individual boys state championship.

And head coach Dan Moody thinks the season he just completed — winning every race on the way to the 3A state title — bests any put forward in program history, including by a runner who now has Olympic trial experience under his belt.

“I’ve never had an undefeated kid — ever,” Moody said, answering in the affirmative when asked if

Knapp’s season was the best in the program. “For boys, he’s only my fourth state champion.”

Knapp joined Shawn Johnson in 1998 and David Ribich in 2013 as the only runners from Enterprise to win an individual boys title when he completed the course at Lane Community College in 15:52.3 on Nov. 6. Henry Coughlan, a former Joseph runner who ran in the Wallowa Valley co-op for three years before transferring to Crescent Valley, won in 2019.

“I finally broke the curse — the curse was a third-place finish from freshman

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Zac Knapp, of Wallowa Valley, leads the pack at the first mile mark of the OSAA Class 3A boys cross-country championship Saturday Nov. 6, 2021, at Lane Community College in Eugene. Knapp won the event with a time of 15:52.3 on the 5,000-meter course.

Duncan named SD2-West defensive player of the year

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The Enterprise football team’s defense improved as the season went along as the Outlaws won five games and returned to the state playoffs.

Chase Duncan played an important role in the process, and recently led eight Outlaws in being named not only a first-team linebacker, but in being named the 1A Special District 2 West defen-

sive player of the year.

“I was definitely surprised. Last year I wasn’t even starting defense,” Duncan said. “This year, I just stepped up a bit, I guess. And we had a bunch of freshmen come up, and it made our defense way better. Having an amazing defense, it was super easy for our team to make tackles and all that.”

He was one of seven athletes to earn first-team all-league honors for

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