

# Love's late field goal lifts Outlaws past Stanfield

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

PENDLETON — For the third time this season, the Enterprise girls basketball team saw a second-half lead against Stanfield evaporate.

This time, though, the Outlaws had a response.

And as a result, they are headed to the state playoffs.

Emily Love scored 11 points and converted the winning layup with nine seconds remaining, and Enterprise — despite scoring just eight points in the second half — outlasted the Tigers, 31-30, on Friday, Feb. 18, in the semifinals of the Blue Mountain Conference tournament at the Pendleton Convention Center.

"We've been in every one of these games," head coach Mike Crawford said. "And we came out on fire. And quite frankly, I told them there's going to be a fire. They're going to come after us...we gotta be in striking range, we gotta be in it close enough. If you stay close enough, you got a chance. And we had a chance and we made it. We attacked the



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

**Enterprise's Emily Love, shown in the Blue Mountain Conference title game Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022 against Union, had the winning layup with nine seconds left in the Outlaws' 31-30 win over Stanfield on Feb. 18.**

basket, made the lay-in from the backside. Emily has been clutch all down the stretch, (and) did it again today."

With 18 seconds remaining and the Tigers holding on to a 30-29 lead, Stanfield's Alexis Shelby missed the front end of a 1-and-1.

The Outlaws corralled the rebound, Maci Marr pushed the ball up-court and found Love open at the basket for the winning hoop.

"Maci found me, she passed it in and I found my shot," Love said. "I just think that God was watching

over us, really."

Stanfield got one final look on an inbounds play from half court, but a difficult 3-pointer by Maggie Sharp fell short.

The Outlaws pulled off the win despite scoring only eight points in the second

half, and just two in the first 13 minutes as a 10-point halftime lead slowly became a 28-25 Stanfield lead, which matched the Tigers' largest lead of the night.

Love ended a five-minute scoring drought with the Outlaws' first points of the fourth, as a layup off a Jada Gray assist trimmed the margin to 28-27 with 2:58 remaining.

Two Zuri Reeser free throws regained a three-point lead with 2:01 to play, but free throws from Gray and Marr cut the margin to one with just over a minute to play.

The Tigers twice missed the front end of a 1-and-1 in the final 30.2 seconds before Love's winner.

The Outlaws opened the contest with the first eight points and had a 10-2 lead just three minutes into the game, and were ahead 14-6 after one.

Stanfield pulled within 14-9 on Reeser's floater, but Enterprise pushed the lead to 10 on a layup by Love. Sharp, who had 11 points and five steals, got two breakaway layups to trim

the lead back to six, but two more layups by Gray, who had a game-high 15 points, put the Outlaws ahead at the half, 19-9.

"I told our girls it's tough to beat a team three times, especially when they're good," Stanfield head coach Daniel Sharp said. "It's a good matchup. They're well coached. You gotta match intensity. I thought Enterprise was way more intense in the first half."

Sharp and Reeser, who led the Tigers with 13 points, pulled Stanfield even as they combined for 10 points in the third quarter. Sharp scored six straight before Reeser hit two shots 90 seconds apart, with her jumper at the 1:01 mark tying the game at 23-23.

The Outlaws struggled mightily on offense in the third, committing seven turnovers and going without a basket until Rilyn Kirkland's jumper just before the buzzer put the Outlaws ahead 25-23.

"All I know is we were one point ahead at the end," Crawford said. "That's good enough for me."



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain

**Joseph's Hayden Hite dribbles to the basket during the semifinals of the Old Oregon League District Tournament Friday, Feb. 18, 2022.**

## Joseph's upset bid falls short

Eagles outplay Badgers, but fall after late free throws, 55-52

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

BAKER CITY — Gritty is the best way to describe the boys semifinal between Joseph and Powder Valley.

The Eagles, playing with a chip on their shoulder as the underdogs against the second-ranked 1A school, made the Badgers work for every point. They responded to every Powder Valley rally, and led most of the night, right up to the final minute.

In the end, though, the Badgers took advantage of Joseph foul trouble, an ample advantage at the free-throw line and got key shots when they needed them in a 55-52 win over Joseph on Friday, Feb. 18.

"My team played with a lot of heart," Joseph head coach Olan Fulfer said. "They have no reason to hang their heads, pout or anything. They battled through a lot of adversity, showed a ton of heart, and that's all we preach is hustle and giving every bit you have. That's what they did. They left it all out there today. Some close shots that we missed, and then a lot of fouls. We put them to the line. That's tough."

Joseph nearly locked up the state berth on Feb. 18 with what would have been one of the biggest upsets of the season.

The Eagles scored the first eight points of the game, led by as much as nine in the opening half, and flustered Powder Valley with a stifling defense, which mixed well with the Badgers struggling to get shots to fall.

Even when the Badgers briefly grabbed the lead — taking its first at 24-23 on a score in the

low post by Reece Dixon, who led Powder Valley with 17 points — Joseph responded. James Burney replied the Dixon field goal with a 3-pointer. In the third, Reece Nelson, who went off in the second half with 15 points for Joseph and finished with a game-high 20 points, had a jumper with 1:12 to play in the third to put the Eagles back in front after Kaden Krieger's 3-point play for Powder Valley.

"Reece comes in in practice...and he dominates," Fulfer said. "He is an incredibly gifted player, and as soon as it clicks for him, it's over. He's an amazing kid. he deserves every bit of the praise for this game."

Even role players off the bench for the Eagles chipped in. Twice, Kane Johnson had putbacks that helped keep Joseph in front. He also hit a runner that gave the Eagles their biggest lead of the fourth, 48-43, with 6:15 remaining.

The Badgers chipped away, mainly at the free-throw line — where they were 28-for-44 — but it was a 3-pointer by Case Olson that tied the game at 52-52 with less than two minutes remaining that proved to be a key basket.

Krieger's two free throws with 42.1 to go gave the Badgers at the time their biggest lead. Joseph's reply, a 3-point attempt by Burney, just missed. Powder Valley added a free throw with two seconds to go for the final margin.

The odd game saw the teams combine for 52 fouls, 66 free-throw attempts, three technical fouls and one ejected fan, to name a few. Joseph had three players foul out. The Badgers won despite shooting just 22%. Some other 22s in the game — Joseph shot 22 free throws, making 13, and Cole Martin for Powder Valley grabbed 22 rebounds.

## Nixy girls topple Joseph in OOL semifinal

Golden Eagles pull away after tight first quarter

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

BAKER CITY — Nixyaawii reached the Old Oregon League tournament title game after another dominant victory.

Sophie Bronson scored a game-high 23 points and had four steals, Sistine Moses added 22 points, and the Golden Eagles took command with a 16-0 run and used a dominant second half for a 66-25 win over Joseph on Friday, Feb. 18, in Baker City.

"They're good," Joseph head coach Lance Homan said. "They get out and run quickly, they rebound well, they shoot well. It's a tough matchup for us. We tried."

The Golden Eagles took the lead for good, 16-13, on a Moses 3-pointer in the closing seconds of the opening quarter, one of four she hit on the night.

It started the snowball effect that put Nixyaawii well ahead.

Mersayuss Hart, Kyella Picard and Bronson all scored during the first 4:05 of the second, with Hart's steal and layup capping the big run and putting



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain

**Joseph's Cooper Nave dribbles to the basket during the semifinals of the Old Oregon League District Tournament Friday, Feb. 18, 2022.**

Nixyaawii up 29-13.

"We like to push the tempo, we're uptempo we like to move the ball. The girls like to run. We get a lot of things off our defense. We're more of a defensive running team, if that makes sense," Nixyaawii head coach Michael BadWarrior said. "Once we get going running, we get a lot of stops, get a lot of fast breaks, all that sort of stuff."

Two layups by Joseph's Aimee Meyers, who led the Eagles with eight points, briefly stemmed the tide, but the Golden Eagles reas-

serted themselves with the final seven points, going into the half up 36-17 on a Bronson jumper.

The Eagles made one more brief run to start the third, with Cooper Nave, Meyers and Sarah Orr all scoring in the first 1:20 to make it 36-23. But that was as close as Joseph got. Bronson's 3-point play and layup pushed the lead back to 18, and she closed the quarter scoring with a 3-pointer for a 48-25 lead.

The Nixyaawii bench finished the win, with 18 fourth-quarter points to

cap what ended up being a game-ending 30-2 run.

Joseph did what it needed to stay in the game early, slowing the pace and hitting its shots. Maggie Miller twice gave the Eagles an early lead of 6-4 and 8-6 with field goals, and the teams were tied at 13-13 after a Meyers layup and a trio of Miller free throws.

But Nixyaawii had too much firepower, as the Golden Eagles shot 49% for the game and connected on six 3-pointers. Joseph struggled from the floor, shooting just 20%.

## Badger girls outlast Wallowa in OOL semifinals

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

BAKER CITY — Basketball is a game of runs, which was proven in Powder Valley's victory over Wallowa.

The Badgers capitalized off a huge fourth-quarter swing to top Wallowa 38-26 in the semifinals of the Old Oregon League district tournament at Baker High School on Friday, Feb. 18. The victory secured Powder Valley's spot in the state championship and Old Oregon League title game.

"Our defense made the difference for four full quarters," Powder Valley head coach Allen Bingham said. "I thought as a team we did really well."

The game was neck-and-neck early on, as the Badgers built up an 11-8 lead at the end of the first quarter. Powder's defense was stifling from start to finish, as Wallowa struggled shooting during the matchup. The Badgers held the Cougars to under 10 points in each quarter.

The second quarter was a spark to Powder's eventual victory, as junior Dal-



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

**Wallowa's Libby Fisher brings the ball up court during a semifinal matchup against Powder Valley in the semifinal round of the Old Oregon League Tournament at Baker High School on Friday, Feb. 18. The Badgers defeated the Cougars 38-26.**

lee Jo Bingham scored eight points. The Badgers outscored the Cougars 10-7 to take a 21-15 lead heading into halftime. Powder Valley's defense continued to prove advantageous, forcing Wallowa to turn the ball over 16 times in the first half.

"In the first half, we had way too many self-inflicted wounds," Wallowa head coach Greg Oveson said.

A balanced effort by Wallowa gave the Cougars a slight 6-4 advantage in the third frame, heading into the fourth quarter trailing 25-21.

Sophomore Sophie Moeller scored two points for Wallowa in the third quarter en route to a team-high seven points.

In the fourth quarter, the game looked as if it would go down to the wire. The Cougars climbed back to trail 26-24 with just over four and a half minutes left in the fourth quarter. The Badgers responded with a huge 10-0 run to jump out to a 36-24 lead late in the game — Powder Valley held Wallowa scoreless for nearly four consecutive minutes.

Dallee Jo Bingham was efficient in the fourth quarter for Powder Valley, scoring seven more points. The forward finished with a game-high 17 points.

"We thought if we executed the offense that we would get isolation looks," Allen Bingham said. "She just got better and better and better."

The loss put Wallowa in a difficult spot, needing a win in Saturday's third-place game in order to make it to the state tournament.

"We're a lot farther ahead than I thought we'd be at the beginning of the season," Oveson remarked.