

SWEEP from page B1

Siuslaw seemed to get stronger and gain momentum. At the same time it seemed, though they had a boisterous home crowd cheering them on, the home team lost momentum as the night progressed, as indicated by the increasing difference in set scores.

"It was a fast-paced, clean game with a tremendous team effort," said Blake.

An example of that teamwork was the play of sophomore Cate Waggoner, who, for the second time this season, was called in for emergency duty after classmate Brynlee Manues went down with an ankle injury. Waggoner played flawlessly.

"Waggoner did a great job of coming in as the 2nd setter with a solid performance," said Blake. "Cate served error free for 11 serves."

Waggoner will be relied on even more as Manues, as the result of the injury, is out for the remainder of the season.

Tupua shone again and led the team with her aggressive play at the net. Her stat line was impressive: 18 kills, 9 blocks, 12 digs and 12 perfect passes.

"Desiree pounded the ball at North Marion from all angles, many of them hitting straight to the floor. She really came alive last night, and she was rattling the NM defense," said Blake.

One of the most important aspects of a volleyball game is how a team receives their opponent's serves. Siuslaw was nearly flawless in that facet of the match.

Sophomore Meika Shappell had 16 perfect passes out of serves receive, senior Hayden Muller had 18 digs, taking some hard hits off the North Marion attack.

The remaining stats indicate a team effort by the Viks. Freshman Mylee Blake had 20 attacks on the outside for 6 kills, while junior Hailiee Outlaw attacked 19 times from the outside for 6 kills. Tupua had 26 attacks in total, 19 of them ending in points for Siuslaw. Freshman Rhiana Lane added 7 blocks on the night.

The quick-tempo game provided an added bonus. The girls on the volleyball team were excited to be able to quickly dispatch North Marion, board the bus and make it to Junction City to witness the greatest comeback in Siuslaw football history.

"The girls were so excited to run to Junction City to catch most of the second half of the football game," said Blake. "We were listening to it on the bus on the way down and it sounded like our guys were in a tough spot. Once we got there, the football team came alive for one of the best comebacks ever. I'd like to think that our volleyball team was their good luck charms for the night."

Along with the volleyball team's win and the SHS football team's dramatic comeback victory in Junction City later in the evening, the SHS cross country team had an extremely successful showing at the Sky-Em League district meet at Lane Com-

munity College the previous day.

"What a week to be a Viking!! The Siuslaw Volleyball team was ecstatic to add another win in the fall sports collective this week," Blake added.

With the win, the Viking volleyballers will face the number one team in the 4A division on Tuesday when they travel to Sisters. The Outlaws, champions of the Oregon West Conference, are 20-3 on the season and will provide a stiff test for the Vikings. Sisters and Siuslaw met for two sets on Sep. 18 at a tournament hosted by the Outlaws. The Vikings struggled and were swept, 13-25, 17-25.

After that loss, now a month and a half ago, Blake blamed her team's mental approach.

"We know Sisters always has a great team and I think the girls let that psych them out a bit," Blake commented at the time.

This match against Sisters should be different from the last. After going through the gauntlet of the Sky-Em League season, which saw the conference send five of its six teams to state playoffs, it'd be surprising if there was any team that was still able to "psych out" Siuslaw.

The match against Sisters, on Nov. 2, was after press deadlines. If the Vikings win, they will advance to the semifinals of the OSAA 4A State Playoffs which are held at Corvallis High on Nov. 5. The winner of the Siuslaw-Sisters match will face the winner of a match between Philomath and Baker, with the exact time of the match to be announced.

RACE from page B1

but I'm happy with how I raced, going under 17 minutes there was no easy feat. I could've run a little smarter but overall, no regrets."

Hughes finished the race in second place with a time of 16:42.10. Teammate junior Sam Ulrich was right behind him in third with a time of 17:14.8. Junior Kyle Hughes finished sixth in 17:25.1.

Their teammates also had a great showing, though improvement will be needed from the team, as a whole, to compete for state title next weekend, as the competition will be even stiffer.

"I'm super happy for sophomores Brayden Linton (8th, 17:58.8) and Talan Ross (11th, 18:12.1) and junior Jacob Blankenship (10th, 18:05.6)," said Chad. "They pulled through and ran close to what they normally do when the rest of us were a little bit slower than normal. We've been confident this whole year about being a top-ranked team in the state and I think it went to our heads this week. The outcome was what we wanted but the race was just a little sloppy and scrappy. District is normally a weird race, being so small but so important, so wild things happen all the time and nerves get to people. Just glad we won and can move on to hopefully do the same at state."

Dylan Jensen also ran a great race and finished 18th with a time of 18:55.6.

Siuslaw won the team competition with 29 points, followed by Cottage Grove with 51, then Marist with 71, Marshfield with 77 and Junction City with 151.

Chad and his teammates know that they will have to run a good race to reach their goals, but he believes that goal is reachable.

"Next week my expectations are to repeat our state title," said Chad. "Our team is really good and has been all season, so we are coming into next week with the number one hypothetical rank. I think that we've earned that ranking and just need to execute good individual races to close the season with that first-place trophy. Individually, I would love to win. District definitely wasn't my best race, but I feel like I have a solid shot at winning state. I just need to catch Garcia-Silver. Last year I got eighth, so I want to do better than that, hopefully first or second."

Siuslaw girls and boys cross country teams will return to Lane Community College in Eugene on Saturday Nov. 6 for the 4A State Championships. The girls race is at 11:45 a.m. and the boys at 12:20 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at osaa.hometownticketing.com/embed/all?sports=Cross+Country.

UNDEFEATED from page B2

With 7:03 to go, Erickson scored again from five yards out. Lacouture ran in the 2-point conversion and — just like that — Siuslaw was one touchdown away from tying this game that seemed all but out of reach just a few minutes ago. It was 40-34.

The Vikings have managed to perfect the art of the onside kick and it paid off, big time, on Friday night. Usually, praise for a successful onside is directed at the kicker, and Lacouture does deserve credit for his well-placed kicks, but on this team, every player on the field has an important job. All 11 players know they are an integral part of the attempt to recover the kick and all know what their specific role is.

"Just like each person has their own job on offense, the same is true for the kickoff team when we onside kick," said Sissel. "We have hitters and getters. The hitters' job is to hit the other team and try to make sure the other team doesn't get the ball and to allow the getters to have time to get the ball."

For the second time in this game, the strategy worked. The Viks recovered the onside kick.

Soon after the recovery, Erickson hit Thornton for his third touchdown of the game. Just like that, the game was tied at 40.

This led to the Vikings getting flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct while celebrating the touchdown, which was assessed on the extra point.

Coach Sam Johnson called on Lacouture for the long kick attempt. He connected from over 30 yards out, to give SHS the lead 41-40.

The Tigers received the kick, and their offense was driving. JC looked like they were on their way to a score to take the lead.

However, Viks linebacker Sissel had different plans for the Tigers offense. He sensed a pass coming and proceeded accordingly.

"When Junction City snapped the ball, I knew it was a pass right away," he said. "I saw the halfback go into the flat so I kind of made my way over there. Then I noticed the quarterback's eyes were fixed on this one spot, so I went and

stood there. When I caught the ball, I was just thinking, 'Don't fumble.' I thought of trying to score, but realized that it would be smarter and better for the team to just go down when someone came to try and tackle me. After the play, I just felt relieved that as a team and as a brotherhood, against all odds we won the game."

Lacouture gave Sissel credit for making a huge impact in the comeback victory.

"Ian was the guy who won this game," said Lacouture. "He had a crucial hit to get us the ball on an onside kick, he had countless tackles and the game-sealing interception with 1:38 left to play."

The interception sealed the win for Siuslaw. While Sissel and his teammates felt relief, for Coach Johnson the feeling was more disbelief.

"Did that really happen?" he asked after the final buzzer sounded.

Though many of the 27 points needed for the team's comeback were the result of shrewd coaching during the last quarter, Johnson gave all the credit to his players.

"They are winners, that's for sure," the coach said. "You want to talk about a group of young men who bet on themselves and love each other more than anything? These guys trust each other through thick and thin."

According to Don Hunt, Siuslaw football historian, the 26-point turnaround marked the largest comeback in the program's history. This bested the 21-point comeback the 1989 Vikings staged after being down by that amount to Pleasant Hill at the half. SHS came back to win that game 28-21.

This was the final game of an unblemished regular season for the Vikings and the fifth undefeated regular season in program history, after 1989, 2006, 2010 and 2011.

Siuslaw will face Blanchet Catholic, of Salem, on Friday. The Cavaliers finished the regular season 3-5, in fourth place in the Special District 1 East Division. Blanchet beat Clatskanie 40-20 on Friday night. They qualified as an at-large team by finishing within the top 16 of the OSAA computer rankings but are the lowest ranked

team still alive in postseason play.

The Viking players won't let Blanchet's low ranking fool them into expecting an easy game, but they know the key to victory is to play as a team like they have all season.

"I expect that it will be a battle," said Sissel. "The playoffs contain the best football teams in the state. That being said, there is no one better than us when we play together. Coach Johnson always says that it isn't about who we're playing. It's about playing our brand of football together as a brotherhood. If we do that, I believe that we will win it all."

Blanchet Catholic plays the Vikings at Siuslaw in the OSAA 3A Playoffs - Round 1 on Nov. 5 at 7 p.m. Tickets are only available online at osaa.hometownticketing.com/embed/event/237?es=0prnuvpcjoa9gvf-g74aft9tjbu and cannot be purchased in person at Hans Petersen Field.

On Nov. 12, the winner of this game will face the winner of the game between Junction City and Cascade Christian.

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