

Sports

POWDER VALLEY GIRLS BASKETBALL

Powder holds off Nixyaawii rally

By Ronald Bond
The (La Grande) Observer

NORTH POWDER — The Powder Valley girls basketball team found a rhythm offensively after a low-scoring first half Tuesday and held off a late rally by Nixyaawii to earn an important Old Oregon League home win.

Belle Blair scored all 17 of her points in the second half and had six points during a key game-closing 10-3 run as the Badgers got by the Golden Eagles, 45-36.

“We just really got through our minds that we weren’t going to lose that game,” Blair said. “That’s what really pulled us through.”

Blair, who had eight points in the fourth, had a layup 39 seconds into the period for a 31-21 lead, but the Golden Eagles caught fire from 3-point range, getting as close as 35-33 with 2:47 to play after Trista Melton hit her second trey of the quarter.

Blair followed with a pair of key baskets in the next



Ronald Bond / The (La Grande) Observer

Powder Valley junior Belle Blair, right, scored all 17 of her points in the second half to help the Badgers to a 45-36 win over Nixyaawii on Tuesday night.

two minutes to put the game away.

Blair did a little bit of everything to help Powder Valley, adding eight rebounds, four steals, two assists and a block.

“She played really well, but I hate to single out anybody in the game. That was a fun defensive game,” head coach Allen Bingham said.

“Our man defense was really tough. I don’t think (the Golden Eagles) were used to that. Made them earn it.”

Offensively, Blair helped spark the Badgers in the third quarter after a first half that saw the teams combine for 20 points. The junior banked in a 3-pointer six seconds into the third to give Powder Valley a 15-8 lead,

then had a steal and a layup for a 22-12 edge with 4:30 to play in the third. A second banked-in 3-pointer — this one from Dalle Jo Bingham — gave the Badgers their largest lead at 25-14 just over a minute later.

“I just think we loosened up and shot the ball a little bit, and we scored in transition a few times and kind of got things going,” Allen Bingham said.

Both teams struggled to get a flow on offense in a first half that saw the teams shoot a combined 7-for-41 and commit 24 turnovers. Powder Valley, which never trailed, led by as much as four points in the opening half, including at 12-8 going into the break when Keanna Bingham scored following a steal with 1:55 to play in the half.

Krieger and Keanna Bingham both added nine points for Powder Valley.

The Badgers (11-8 overall, 7-2 OOL) hosts La Grande Saturday.

POWDER VALLEY BOYS BASKETBALL

Badgers come up short in shootout

By Ronald Bond
The (La Grande) Observer

NORTH POWDER — Fans got their money’s worth during Tuesday’s Old Oregon League showdown between two teams that were not only undefeated in league play, but happened to be the top two scoring teams in 1A boys basketball.

Nixyaawii’s dynamic guards, though, powered the defending champion Golden Eagles past the high-flying Badgers.

Tyasin Burns poured in 38 points, Mick Schimmel added 24, and the defending state champions used a key second half run to distance themselves on the way to an 83-72 win in North Powder.

“I know they’re a good team, and they’ve always been a good team,” Powder Valley head coach Kyle Dixon said. “They came out and had a good game against us. I don’t think we responded well.”

The contest seesawed back and forth most of the first half, with Nixyaawii often pulling ahead by eight or nine points before Powder Valley blitzed its way back into the game.

Even early in the third, when the Golden Eagles opened up what was at the time their largest lead at 50-38 on Burns’ 3-point play, the Badgers responded. Roper Bingham’s 3-point play, a 3-pointer by Cole Martin and two technical foul free throws by Martin after one of three technicals called during the contest pulled Powder Valley within 50-46 with 4:15 to play in the third.

But an 18-2 run that bled into the fourth quarter — one that saw Burns score the first nine points of the fourth quarter — extended the Nixyaawii lead to 68-48, and the Badgers got no closer than 11 points the rest of the way.

“I thought we turned the ball over a little too much, missed some easy layups,” Dixon said.

The Badgers (16-5 overall, 8-1 OOL) host La Grande Saturday.

OREGON WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

Ducks hand UConn historic loss on Huskies’ home court

By Doug Feinberg
AP Basketball Writer

STORRS, Conn. — Coach Kelly Graves and Oregon made history, handing UConn one of its worst home losses under Geno Auriemma.

Ruthy Hebard had 22 points and 12 rebounds as No. 3 Oregon rolled past the fourth-ranked Huskies 74-56 on Monday night, UConn’s first loss on campus in seven years.

UConn had never had a defeat

this bad while playing in Gampel Pavilion, which opened in 1990.

“It means a lot. This is hallowed ground, so to speak,” Graves said of the win. “They’ve been so good for so long. It means a great deal. ... It’s icing on the cake — a pretty sweet cake. Who doesn’t look up to Geno? He’s an icon and great coach.”

It was UConn’s worst home loss on any court since Dec. 5, 2005, when North Carolina beat the Huskies

by 23 points in Hartford, their other home.

UConn’s previous worst margin of defeat at Gampel was 17 points against Iowa in 1990 and against Syracuse in 1992. The Huskies were beaten by 25 points in 1980 by St. John’s when the team played at The Field House.

“They came in here and did something that very few people have been able to do,” Auriemma said. “In

that first quarter it was evident that physically we couldn’t match up with them tonight, plain and simple.”

Sabrina Ionescu added 10 points, nine rebounds and nine assists for the Ducks (20-2), falling short of increasing her NCAA-record 23 triple-doubles.

“To walk into this arena, we were all star-struck looking at the walls and banners,” Ionescu said. “It’s where we’re trying to get our pro-

gram and model after them. Huge for us to do what we did, but still a lot of room for improvement.”

The Ducks built a big lead early in the much-anticipated matchup before a sellout crowd. UConn hadn’t lost on campus since falling to Notre Dame on Jan. 5, 2013. The Huskies were beaten by No. 2 Baylor by 16 points in Hartford last month, ending the team’s 98-game home winning streak.



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