

OLD OREGON LEAGUE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Cove boys win thriller over Pine Eagle

BY DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

The Cove boys basketball team came just possessions away from seeing its season end.

Clutch baskets from Wyatt Burgess and Patrick Frisch proved otherwise as the Leopards held on to defeat Pine Eagle 64-59 at Baker High School on Thursday, Feb. 17. The victory kept Cove's playoff hopes alive, moving the team into a semifinal matchup against Nixyaawii on Friday afternoon, Feb. 18.

"The mentality was that we're in a dog fight and have to keep punching," Cove head coach Doug Wiggins said.

The matchup was neck-and-neck from start to finish, as the crowd was on the edge of its seat for nearly the entirety of the playoff showdown.

Pine Eagle jumped out to a 6-0 advantage, but Cove would go on to lead for the remainder of the game until late in the fourth quarter. The Leopards settled in and built up an 11-6 run as three-pointers from Wyatt Burgess, Terrell Davis and Patrick Frisch sparked an 11-0 run. Frisch and Burgess were consistent scorers for Cove, finishing with 19 and 21 points on the night.

The second quarter was more of the same, as Pine Eagle stayed within striking distance and battled to trail 30-25 at halftime.

Both teams gave every ounce of energy in the second half, fighting to keep their seasons alive. The Spartans quickly tied the game at 34-34 midway through the quarter as both teams went back and forth.

Senior Caleb Brown pushed the tempo for Pine Eagle, scoring eight points in the third quarter. Brown scored 21 points on the night and helped the Spartans make a late push toward a victory. Any time it looked as if Pine Eagle would tip the momentum, Cove's Wyatt Burgess converted a basket on the following possession — the sopho-



Davis Carbaugh/The (La Grande) Observer

Pine Eagle's Cole Morgan drives toward the basket during a quarterfinal matchup against Cove at Baker High School on Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022. The Leopards defeated the Spartans 64-59 to advance to the semifinals. Morgan scored a game-high 24 points.

more scored six points in the third quarter and controlled the tempo for the Leopards throughout the victory.

"Wyatt Burgess stepped up big for us, and there at the end Pat (Frisch) really got back into the game," Doug Wiggins said. "Caleb Wiggins got hot from the outside, which really helped us open the middle for Pat."

After Cove went into the fourth quarter leading 46-45, both teams ignited offensively in the final frame. A loss for either team would end the season.

Pine Eagle junior Cole Morgan led the charge for the Spartans, scoring 15 points in the second half — Morgan led all scorers with 24 points.

With just over three minutes remaining in regulation, Morgan converted a three-pointer to give Pine Eagle its first lead since the first quarter — the Spartans led 57-56. Frisch bounced back with two

consecutive buckets to put the Leopards back out front 60-57 with 2:15 left in the fourth — the junior scored 10 points in the fourth quarter.

"That's what our two captains and leaders are there to do, help settle the team down and bring it in," Wiggins said of Frisch and Burgess. "When things started to get out of control, they were there composing themselves to make the play they needed."

Brown scored with 2:05 remaining to cut Cove's lead to 60-59. The Spartans won back possession with just over a minute remaining, but Burgess came up with a huge steal and fast break basket to give Cove a 62-59 lead.

After a big stop on defense by Cove, junior Terrell Davis converted two free-throws to put the Leopards up 54-59 with 20 seconds remaining in the game. Brown saw a good look at a three-pointer for Pine Eagle, but the Spartans

were unable to make any late comeback.

The loss ended Pine Eagle's season at 8-13 overall.

For Cove, the win ensured a spot in the district tournament semifinals against Nixyaawii on Friday, Feb. 18. The Leopards previously defeated Nixyaawii 49-46 on Jan. 14.

"Last time we saw Nixy it was a fight," Doug Wiggins said. "We're really looking forward to it and want to come out and prove what we're doing."

In the other boys quarterfinal on Thursday, Feb. 17, at Baker High School, Joseph beat Imbler, 60-34, to advance to a semifinal game against Powder Valley on Friday, Feb. 18.

On the girls side of the bracket, Joseph beat Imbler, 40-28, and Wallowa topped Elgin, 28-18.

Joseph played Nixyaawii on Friday, Feb. 18, and Wallowa played Powder Valley.

Baker vs. La Grande hoops: Round 3

The rematches are set.

Baker's boys and girls basketball teams will renew their rivalry with the La Grande Tigers Saturday evening, Feb. 19, in the Baker gym.

The girls game is set for 5 p.m., and the boys for about 6:30 p.m.

This is the third meeting between the teams in the past three weeks.

At stake is the Greater Oregon League's top seed in the Class 4A playoffs, and a home game in the first round. Boys first-round games are set for March 4, and girls for March 5.

Both Baker teams could potentially have a home game in the first round even if they lose to La Grande, depending on their ranking.

The Baker girls were the GOL regular season champions with a 6-0 league record. La Grande was second at 4-2. The Tigers earned the rematch with Baker by beating Mac-Hi 47-34 in a league playoff game on Thursday, Feb. 17.

Baker won both regular season games, beating La Grande 51-43 on Jan. 28, at La Grande, and 43-25 on Feb. 8, at Baker.

The Baker and La Grande boys split their regular season meetings and finished tied at 5-1 in league play. Baker is hosting Saturday's game due to its higher RPI ranking. La Grande beat Mac-Hi 69-39 on Thursday, Feb. 17, to advance to Saturday's league championship game.

Neither of the regular season games was close.

Baker dominated at La Grande on Jan. 28, winning 67-41.

The Tigers returned the favor on Feb. 8 at Baker, routing the Bulldogs, 76-44.

OREGON MEN'S BASKETBALL

Arizona State rolls over Oregon, 81-57

TEMPE, Ariz. — Jalen Graham, DJ Horne and Kimani Lawrence combined for 38 second-half points when Arizona State raced away from Oregon for an 81-57 win Thursday night, Feb. 17.

Graham finished with 18 points and Horne, Lawrence and Marreon Jackson had 16 each for the Sun Devils (9-15, 5-9 Pac-12), who shot 57%, made 9 of 20 3-attempts and outrebounded the Ducks 40-29.

Arizona State posted its first regular-season sweep of Oregon since the 2010-2011 season. Jay Heath's 3-pointer with 11 seconds left in overtime gave the Sun Devils a 69-67 win in Eugene on Dec. 5. But Thursday night's game was nothing like that one with ASU building a double-digit lead three minutes

into the second half that it would maintain and expand.

Will Richardson scored 12 points and Eric Williams Jr. 11 for Oregon (17-9, 10-5), which came into the game tied for second with USC after having won 11 of its last 13 games, including five of the past six. The Ducks shot just 35%, making only 5 of 26 from the arc.

After falling behind by 19, four straight turnovers helped Oregon go on an 8-0 run and get back within 11 with 11:18 remaining. ASU responded by outscoring the Ducks 21-6 over seven minutes for a 26-point bulge.

Jackson made 4 of 5 from the arc and scored all 16 his points in the first half to lead Arizona State to a 36-30 lead.

Oregon is at No. 3 Arizona on Saturday, Feb. 19. Arizona State is host to Oregon State that day.

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