

## Local gyms all have their high points

Recently online, there was a ranking of all the NBA court designs by a reporter who admitted he looks at that stuff too closely. I read every single little blurb and even got to ranking them in my own head.

I'm weird. Uniforms, court designs, gym layouts, etc., are things I love. My dad and I always discuss uniforms when we watch games. The way we see it, if we're looking at them for two hours, we might as well talk about them.

The point being, I want to talk about the four gyms I've visited when covering games. Let me first say that I like them all, and they all have their unique attributes that set them apart from the rest.

Let's start with Hermiston.

It's the biggest and newest of the four and has the biggest floor, too. The college-sized floor acts with the same purpose as the track and turf at Kennison Field. It can accommodate a college game if needed. Naturally, it seats the most people — around 1000 — and is also the most modern in terms of equipment. I never understood why, though, the speaker system is so low. It wreaks havoc in volleyball games and basically renders a full-court shot impossible.

It's a nice place to watch a game, though. It's comfortable, well-lit, easy to get to, there's lots of parking (usually) and lots of entrances and exits. The mid-court logo is good, too. It's big enough to accommodate a weekend series like Bouncin' Cancer as well as community events like the welcoming and acknowledging to the football team's state championship. It's a good facility, which I've come to expect from Hermiston.

Umatilla's gym most closely reminds me of my home gym, the quaint Lumberdome in Longview. The Lumberdome is relatively small, and it was built in the 1930s by one of the New Deal programs during the Great Depression. In the



SAM BARBEE  
FROM THE SIDELINES  
Sports reporter

school library, there is a picture from the '40s with students filling one side, and the place looks exactly the same as it does now. We have two levels, the bottom with pull-out stands and the top with permanent benches, and it has a balcony overlooking one basket. It's a cool little place, and, boy, does it get loud.

Umatilla reminds me of that. It's not perfect, but it's close. The Viking band is up in a balcony reminiscent of the Lumberdome's. The gym itself is built down a hill, so the entrance is high above the court, making for cool sight lines. It's a good place to watch a basketball or volleyball game, and the atmosphere is always fun.

Here's something that's perplexed me, though: The court isn't blue and orange; it's green and orange. My best guess is it started as blue but, over time, the layers put atop the wood blended with the blue paint, turning it green. It just makes me laugh when I see it, and it's one of those things that makes Umatilla's court entirely unique. I love it.

Of all four, I think I might like Stanfield's the best. When I cover games, I sit along the baseline up against a wall where I can see the scoreboard and get good pictures to go with my stories. Stanfield's gym is the only one of the four (for various reasons) that puts the wall 10 feet from the baseline, so I can abide by OSAA rules when sitting down there. It makes my job my life a lot easier, and I don't have to worry about tripping a player or official. Needless to say, that would not be good.

But it's a good environment. I like the banners with awesome art depicting the league teams. I love looking at those. The stands are minimal, but they're always full. I just enjoy being in that gym. I'm

SEE GYM/A10

### GO SEE IT

#### Saturday, January 10

**Wrestling**  
Hermiston @ Gut Check Challenge in Olympia (WA), 9 a.m.

Echo/Stanfield @ Riverside Tournament, 9 a.m.

**Swimming**  
Hermiston @ The Dalles in Hood River, 10 a.m.

**Boys Basketball**  
Hermiston @ Summit, 3:30 p.m.

Umatilla vs. Vale, 6:30 p.m.

Echo @ Nixyaawii, 5:30 p.m.

**Girls Basketball**  
Umatilla @ Vale, 5 p.m.

Echo @ Nixyaawii, 4 p.m.

#### Sunday, January 11

No events scheduled

#### Monday, January 12

No events scheduled

#### Tuesday, January 13

**Girls Basketball**  
Hermiston vs. Sunnyside, 7:30 p.m.

**Boys Basketball**  
Hermiston vs. Sunnyside, 5:45 p.m.

#### Wednesday, January 14

No events scheduled

## Tiger boys trample TigerScots

Stanfield downs  
Weston-McEwen 73-43  
in league opener

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

Since Daniel Sharp has been head basketball coach at Stanfield, his boys have never beaten Weston-McEwen by 30 points. The matchups between the Tigers and TigerScots were always knock-down, drag-out affairs that were settled in the final two minutes.

Not Friday.

Stanfield used a huge fourth quarter to down the TigerScots 73-43 in their Columbia Basin Conference opener Friday night in Stanfield.

"It feels great," Stanfield senior Hunter Braithwaite said after the game. "To start off league like that ... We expect to carry it the rest of the way through."



Stanfield (9-2, 1-0) started in its trademark press, and Weston-McEwen (5-7, 0-1) had a hard time handling it. The TigerScots committed 10 first-quarter turnovers and 13 total in the first half.

TigerScots head coach Brian Pickard said if his team wants to win games, it has to take care of the ball. "You're not gonna be in any kind of game if you're turning the ball over 35-plus times," he said. "I'm

sure we had that plus. The kids played hard. We've been struggling from the field with our shooting, and (tonight) we got some good open looks that didn't fall. We're just struggling right now."

Behind those 10 turnovers in the first quarter, Stanfield jumped to a quick 10-0 lead, but Weston chipped it down to as few as six in the first quarter.

In the second, back-to-back baskets — a 3-pointer from Cedric Hall and a layup by Lane Rosencrans — got Weston within four, but it would be the TigerScots would get to Stanfield.

The Tigers pulled away and led by 12 at the break, by 19 after three quarters, and they blew it wide open in the fourth.

"We stuck with things," Sharp said. "I looked up at the board with about a minute and a half left in the third quarter, and we basically played even. Then it just popped, and it popped quick. I think that was a big part of it."



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Stanfield's Natalia Esquivel (54) and Weston-McEwen's Chelsea Quaepts (32) fight for a loose ball during the first half of the Tigers' and TigerScots' Columbia Basin Conference opener Friday night in Stanfield. Esquivel never plays a game without a braid in her hair.

## Superstitions, traditions a big part of team preparation

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

The jersey stripes have to be just right. Hair has to be braided. Gotta take a shower before games. The logo on socks have to be just right. Perhaps one puts their socks on the right foot before the left foot. Maybe they eat the same food, listen to the same song, take the same route to school or the game.

These are a few superstitions common among athletes, and local teams have developed their own, as well.

The Stanfield girls basketball team, in particular, has a range of superstitions that include most of those above. Sophomore forward Natalia Esquivel said she has to have a braid in her hair — anywhere is fine — or she doesn't feel right. The sock logo has to be centered, Ashlee O'Neill said, and Yazzmin Chavez has to take a shower before each and every game. All said the jersey stripes have to line up just right, and they use a mirror to make it so.

Superstitions are a part of sports. They manifest themselves in many ways

*"I'd probably say, as far as superstitions, we do the exact same thing every game. No matter what — where we are or what we're doing. We're in the locker room at a set time. They're sitting at a set time. I walk in, and it's quiet. Everything is the exact same, no matter where we go."*

— Scott Bow

Echo girls head coach

from free-throw routines to pregame activities.

When he was only coaching the Stanfield boys team, Daniel Sharp, who just became the girls coach this season, said, in the past, he would "go hide" in his office during the second half of the girls games before his boys played.

"I didn't want anyone to talk to me," he said.

This season, before girls games, Sharp said he is compelled to check all the girls' numbers and

make sure they're wearing the right jerseys.

He can't help it, he said.

Setting routines — having one's mind in the same place before important moments — are also important for teams.

Before games, the Stanfield girls gather after player introductions and yell a certain phrase before tip-off: "All out, all game, all season."

It does two things: It creates some uniformity with each game, but it

also helps to motivate.

"I'm a stickler for that kind of stuff," Sharp said.

In contrast, the Umatilla girls team doesn't have any quirky habits or superstitions, at least ones the players admit to having.

For them, the superstition is more togetherness.

"When we're on a trip, we all seem to be in the same room," Umatilla junior guard Sidney Webb said.

They do, though, have one pregame ritual.

Senior forward Iri Campos dances before games, usually to OT Genesis' "CoCo" and, according to Webb, is "dripping" with sweat by the time they take the court.

Once there, they have a signature handshake they do after player introductions. With their arms crossed in an "X," they jump and touch forearms.

"We only started doing it because we thought it was cool," Webb joked.

For the Lady Viks, the togetherness is motivation. Before Campos does her dance routine before games, they talk about what they need to do during the

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