

SPORTS

# Echo girls slide by Nixyaawii in nail-biter

At Mission, the Echo girls basketball team slipped past the Nixyaawii Golden Eagles 58-54 despite three Cougars fouling out.

Fouls plagued both teams, which accumulated 51 total on the night. Nixyaawii's leading scorer Charlotte Barkley scored 22 points and hit four 3s, although she got into foul trouble. Cougar leading scorer Elizabeth McCarty, who finished with 16 points, also spent some time on the bench. Half of McCarty's came from the free-throw line.

"It was definitely one of those games where the depth of our bench is what allowed us to carry it," Echo head coach JD Brazil said.

Echo was down by as many as 15 points in the second quarter but went into halftime down just two.

Kelsey Ranger hit two 3-pointers late to help "ice things," before she fouled out, Brazil said. Ranger finished with 15 points.

Beth Millbroot and Hattie Reese had significant and productive minutes with McCarty and her sister, Hannah, on the bench in foul trouble.

The win put Echo in sole possession of first place in the Old Oregon League with an overall record of

12-2 and a league record of 3-0. Nixyaawii is 9-4 and 2-1.

The Cougars will next play Powder Valley at 6 p.m. Friday at home.

## BOYS BASKETBALL

### NIXYAAWII 62, ECHO 33

The Echo boys basketball team wasn't able to continue its brief two-game winning streak, dropping a league affair to Nixyaawii 62-33 Saturday in Mission.

The 33 points were the fewest Echo has scored all season and came on the heels of the Cougars' 83-point outburst a day earlier against Joseph.

After a 1-4 start, the Cougars have won five of eight and are 6-7 (2-2 Old Oregon League) on the year. The Cougars are tied with Powder Valley, who they have beaten, and Wallowa for second place. Nixyaawii (8-6, 3-0) is tied with Pine Eagle atop the OOL with identical records.

The Cougars next play Powder Valley Friday at home. Tip-off is set for 7:30 p.m.

### UMATILLA 74, NYSSA 65

The Umatilla boys basketball team started off league play on a high note, downing the Nyssa Bulldogs 74-65 Saturday in Nyssa.

The win pulls the Vikings to 7-8 on the season and 1-0 in Eastern Oregon League play. Umatilla is tied with Vale, who beat Riverside in its league opener, but sits two and a half games ahead in terms of their overall records.

The Umatilla boys and girls host Riverside on Thursday in a pair of EOL matchups. The girls tip off at 5:30 p.m., and the boys square off at 7 p.m.

## WRESTLING

The Echo/Stanfield wrestling program had a second-place finisher at the Riverside Tournament Saturday.

Kyle Ranger, a freshman at 106 pounds, was pinned 46 seconds into the third round of the championship bout. It was the highest placing for an Echo/Stanfield wrestler so far in the young program.

No further details were reported.

## BULLDOGS:

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two offensive rebounds in his first start of the season. Naillon picked off a lazy pass and laid it up at the other end to give Hermiston a lead, and, early on, the Bulldogs were trying to put the Grizzlies away.

The hungry Grizzlies kept coming back, however. Sunnyside's Nico Valle scored with 32 seconds left in the first quarter to give his team a 12-10 edge in a quarter that saw a combined shooting effort of 11 of 29 and no 3-pointers or free throws made.

Early into the second, Sunnyside built a five-point lead, but a Keegan Crafton 3 and a Chase Knutz floater tied it at 15 with just more than six minutes to play.

Sunnyside again built a four-point lead, but a Knutz 3 and a Zimmerly basket sandwiched around a Hermiston timeout gave the Bulldogs a 21-20 lead with just less than two minutes left.

Sunnyside made its next two shots — its final two shots of the half — while Hermiston languished from the field making just one of its next four. Sunnyside was up 24-23 at the half. "Going into halftime, they got that one-point lead, and they're gonna see that light



Hermiston's Cole Smith (32) looks for a teammate to pass to as Sunnyside's Angel Galarza (center) and Miguel Prieto (32) defend during the second half of Sunnyside's 47-45 win Tuesday night in Hermiston.



Hermiston's Cole Smith (32) lays one up as Sunnyside's Arturo Pala (3) looks on during the first half of Sunnyside's 47-45 win Tuesday night in Hermiston.

at the end of the tunnel getting bigger, and they're gonna play harder," McElligott said. "That's what they did."

The two teams traded baskets in the third quarter, and neither team was able to gain control of the game. With Hermiston up 34-32, its biggest lead of the game, Sanchez hit his only 3 of the game to give Sunnyside a 35-34 lead. Anthony Herrera followed with a layup with 1:22 left to put Sunnyside back up three.

Sunnyside never trailed in the fourth, but Hermiston tried to make it interesting.

Up 46-41, Chance Flores and Crafton had baskets to cut the lead down to one in the final minute. Hermiston kept fouling with Sunnyside in the bonus to force free throws, and Sunnyside kept obliging the comeback attempt by missing. The Grizzlies missed four of their five free-throw attempts in that final minute to give Hermiston a shot, but the Bulldogs turned it over twice, letting the win slip through their fingers.

The loss is especially disappointing after a home win over La Grande

last week and a tough nine-point loss to a good Summit team on the road. "We didn't play well enough to win tonight," McElligott said. "They gave us opportunities at the end, missing one-and-ones. ... We had a lot of empty possessions. We didn't play real well defensively. We got killed on 50/50 balls. They were the first ones to the balls, (while) we were left standing around while they were getting loose balls. We fought our way back, but didn't play well enough to win."

## ADJUSTING:

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coaches and officials.

"Anything that's being called now, should have been called all along," Simmons said.

She said the goal is for the game in Hermiston, Ashland and Astoria to be called the same way. Therefore, when teams from all over the state, or, more broadly, from across the country, play each other, nobody has a greater advantage than anybody else.

She said, if one team plays in a league or region or state where the hand-check rule is applied forcefully, they have an advantage over teams where close attention isn't given to that rule.

For the officials, she said, it's good practice to know what must be whistled, so when they get to a similar situation, they're not guessing. They know what they are seeing and know what they have to eliminate.

"Hopefully coaches will get tired of the calls and they'll be eliminated, not because officials stop calling it, but because the kids are playing it right."

Teams in the area have made the adjustment without too much trouble. Fouls are down, and game times are neat and tidy again. Teams are no

longer being whistled for 25 or 30 fouls, and it has a lot to do with both coaches and adjustments made by officials.

Hermiston girls basketball coach Steve Hoffert said he did not make any real adjustments to the way he coaches his team. He said his program has always focused on footwork and the age-old adage of "defend with your feet, not with your hands."

Hermiston boys coach Jake McElligott said the hand-check rule is a good idea in theory, but it hasn't been applied evenly throughout the state.

"It seems to be hit or miss where we go," he said. "When we went two tournaments in Portland, they didn't really call (the hand-check) at all. In Summit, they didn't really call it at all. It'll be interesting to see when we go into league. I think it's different with each association, each league. I think they call it a little tighter here than they do on the other side."

Hoffert said he is most concerned that hand-check fouls are being called consistently.

"As long as we know the expectations, I don't have a problem," he said. "It's tough for kids to not know what to expect, and the good kids and good teams adjust. It's part of the game. If you know what to expect, not many adjustments need to be made."



In this photo, Weston-McEwen's Matison Aby's defense is considered legal under the new National Federation of High School Association's hand-check rule because her hands are up and she is using her entire body to shield Stanfield's Cynthia Curiel, not her hands.

## NFHS hand-check rule adopted in Oregon

"The following acts constitute a foul when committed against a ball handler/dribbler:

- a. Placing two hands on the player.
- b. Placing an extended arm bar on the player.
- c. Placing and keeping a hand on the player.
- d. Contacting the player more than once with the same hand or alternating hands.

**Rationale:** Rather than continuing to make hand-checking a point of emphasis year after year, simply add a brand new rule that requires a personal foul be called any time this type of contact occurs on a player holding or dribbling the ball outside of the lane area. The NFHS game needs this type of illegal contact on the perimeter ball handlers and dribblers eliminated."

## DUCKS:

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my internal struggle to support the Ducks, but I've been coming around. I still get to hate them on a given Saturday in the fall, but,

other than that, they are another team in the Pac-12. Indeed, they are a rival, and, indeed, their success hurts, but there's more to life than hating a school and its football team. At a certain level, we are all the same: football fans from an under-appreciated league and region.

We should support each other regardless of our affiliations, except, of course, on those given Saturdays. Then, it's on.

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Each table at Nookies Restaurant and Brewery in Hermiston had Oregon Ducks and Rose Bowl logos on them.

## CHEERING:

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Around Hermiston, the support for the University of Oregon was everywhere Monday. "Go Ducks" or similar phrases were common on business reader boards in town. Hermiston wasn't the only small town in the United States rallying around their college team of choice.

Oregon, Ohio, a town about the size of Hermiston in northwest Ohio, changed its name for a day. Two men, who admitted not to be Ohio State fans but who wanted to create a bit of Ohio pride, successfully petitioned to change the name of the town for a day, and, Monday, the town went by "Buckeyes by the bay, City of Duckhunters."

In the Northwest, Hermiston might have been quiet, but local bars were writhing with energy.

Nookies Restaurant and Brewery in Hermiston was ready for the game. Green and yellow ribbons hung from the basketball hoop over the front door. Each table had flags emblazoned with the University of Oregon's logo and the Rose Bowl logo. Staff wore Oregon gear, and the game was on each and every television in the building. The place was absolutely packed until halftime, when the game appeared to be getting away from the Ducks.

The crowd was comprised mostly Oregon fans, with a few Oregon State fans and a lone Ohio State fan, thrown in. With exception of the Buckeyes fan, most of the spectators' allegiance was to the state of Oregon as a whole. Oregon State fans, even while wear-

ing the orange and black of their school, openly cheered for Oregon. The state of Oregon was represented — not the University of Oregon.

And that, to many people, was what mattered.

"Once the Civil War's over, it's all Oregon," Happy Valley, Oregon resident Lynden Jones said from his table at Nookies. "It's Pac-12 all the way."

Oregon State fan and Corvallis resident Brad Bennett said he was an honorary Duck fan for the night.

"They're not playing each other," he said of OSU and the Ducks. "So, when they don't play, I'm all green and yellow. Not many orange sweatshirts will say that."

Jason Baron, a Vancouver, Washington, resident, said he wasn't even an Oregon fan but was happy to see the Ducks in the championship game.

When it came to the impact that national exposure has on the State of Oregon, many patrons were in agreement: It is a good thing.

Baron said just appearing in the national championship game will help Oregon football's recruiting and give the college more exposure.

"It's pretty huge," Hermiston resident Roger Bounds agreed. "We are in a very small state. It'll be good for the University of Oregon system because it'll attract more and better students. Just the success of the football program has affected enrollment."

Bounds' statement about enrollment increases are accurate. Since the fall of 2008, the fall enrollment at the University of Oregon has increased by more than 3,000 students.

## Super Crossword

### Answers

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