

SPORTS

Colbray loses in finals, takes first loss of season

BY WARNER STRAUSBAUGH
EO MEDIA GROUP

During introductions for the finals of the Reser’s Tournament of Champions, Hermiston’s Sam Colbray walked to center stage a confident young man.

The junior 195-pounder moseyed onto the mat. Everyone else sprinted.

“Two-time state champion, six-time All-American, national champion,” the announcer read.

His confidence was almost as intimidating as his undefeated record this year.

Crook County’s Gunnar Robirts paid no mind. The senior for the Cowboys was aggressive early, jumping to a four-point lead.

Saturday’s crowd at Liberty High School was in an uproar at that point, especially those in the Crook County section. The 195-pound final was, by far, the loudest and most excited the crowd had been all weekend.

Colbray’s legendary status in the wrestling world was enough to pique their interest; the chance to see him lose was unheard of.

After the initial four-point deficit, Colbray got sloppy, later admitting he thought he was trailing by more than four.

The end result was a 10-5 win for Robirts, and the first blemish on Colbray’s record and only of his career wrestling in the state of Oregon.

Hermiston head coach Shaun Williams said Crook County studied Colbray’s previous loss in Fargo, N.D., at nationals.

“They basically followed that same strategy,” Williams said.

Colbray said it was a combination of matchup management and sickness that got the best of him.

He has been dealing with a flu-like illness for a week and said his leg was in pain during the match.

“I know that I’m the best out there on the mat when

I’m not sick,” Colbray said. “He’s not going to touch me on a day when I’m not sick.”

His throat, in particular, was bothering him to the point of feeling like he had less oxygen than normal, he said.

Williams did not think the sickness affected the result.

“We can all make up excuses, but, at the end of the day, the other kid was the better kid on the day,” Williams said. “Anytime you step on the mat, you’re ready to go to battle. There are no excuses.”

Colbray tested negative for strep throat during the week but has been on antibiotics and has lost weight.

Even though he lost the match, Colbray did not lose his confidence.

“In the grand scheme of things, this is nothing,” he said. “He’s won a (Tournament of Champions) title. I’ve won two. ... This is his last year. He had some luck, but I’ve been doing it



PHOTO BY WARNER STRAUSBAUGH FOR THE EAST OREGONIAN

Hermiston’s Sam Colbray (in white) tries to free himself from Crook County’s Gunnar Robirts on Saturday in the championship 195-pound championship at the Reser’s Tournament of Champions at Liberty High School. Robirts won 10-5 in an upset.

for the longest, and it’ll pull out in the end.

“I know that if I wrestled him again, if I wrestled him right now, he’s not going to beat me.”

Williams said he hopes Colbray learns from the loss, particularly the manner in which Robirts beat him. Colbray’s weakness-

es were exposed, and Williams said the wrestler has to work smarter, not harder, to move past this defeat.

Both coach and wrestler said that six weeks from now, the state tournament, is what really matters.

The Bulldogs finished eighth in the team standings with 101 points.

Aside from Colbray’s second-place finish, Liam Tarvin (113 pounds) placed fourth, Jesee Rodelo (220) placed fourth and Bob Coleman (170) finished in fifth. Brock McDonough (160) had a run of four-straight wins but fell short of the top five, finishing in sixth.

Landeros’ 27 pushes Knights past Tigers

Braithwaite tallies 15 in the loss

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

In the third quarter of Stanfield’s boys basketball game against Irrigon, the Tigers were making a run at the top-ranked Knights.

Down 28-18, Dylan Grogan hit two consecutive 3-balls to cut Irrigon’s lead down to four. The crowd was excited. Stanfield had the momentum.

Irrigon standout Anthony Landeros, however, scored the game’s next five points on his way to a game-high 27 and sparked a run that would propel the Knights to a 65-55 win Saturday evening in Stanfield.

“When you’re playing the state champs, that’s the time where you gotta find the time where you can overcome that little hiccup, and we did it for the most part, but they hit shots,” Stanfield head coach Daniel Sharp said. “They’re good players. Anthony just came down and hit shot after shot every time we got matched, so it was a good game and good for us to just get it gone and get going now.”

Irrigon head coach Mitch Thompson also complimented the Tigers.

“Hats off to Stanfield,” he said. “They came out and played, man. They rolled their sleeves up and said ‘Let’s go.’”

Hunter Braithwaite scored 15 points for the Tigers, and Dylan Grogan put up 14. Fredy Vera chipped in 15 for the winners.

“I thought that they attacked the key really, really well in the first half,” Sharp said. “We were not able to stop that, and they were just able to get to the rim. The second half we did a better

job (of stopping penetration), but when you do that, they hit 3-pointers. You kind of have to pick your poison.”

Irrigon hit just eight 3-pointers but they all came in big situations. Adrian Romero’s 3 right before the half and Landeros’ right after the half were the two biggest of the night. “They just hit big shots,” Stanfield senior Hunter Braithwaite said.

Despite relatively low foul numbers, the game was very physical, especially in the second half. Three times Landeros went down hard after a drive, and in the fourth quarter he struggled to rise from the court after a brutal collision. When the final buzzer sounded, he fell to the court and was helped back to the bench by Thompson and a teammate.

The Irrigon senior has been dealing with back spasms all year, and they appeared to flair up after the fourth quarter of hard falls.

After a close, but sloppy, first quarter, Irrigon led 13-7. Stanfield turned the ball over six times and Irrigon four, and neither team shot better than 30 percent. Stanfield and Irrigon played evenly for the first four minutes of the second quarter until Vera and Romero had back-to-back buckets to give Irrigon a 10-point lead at 21-11. After a Stanfield free throw, Landeros got a layup to give his team a 23-12 lead, and Romero’s layup got the lead to 25-12 with 2:06 on the clock.

“We had that second quarter where we turned the ball over and dug a little bit of a hole,” Sharp said. “It was a little bit similar to Heppner (last Saturday). We’re down and just come out and play the game. There’s nothing fancy we can do, just match up and grit it out.”

Against Heppner, Stanfield overcame a double-digit halftime deficit with a huge



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Stanfield’s Hunter Braithwaite (21) rises for a tough shot as Irrigon’s Zach Rice (21) tries to take a charge and Adrian Romero (1) and Hayden White look on during the second half of Irrigon’s 65-55 win over the Tigers Saturday in Stanfield.



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Stanfield’s Dylan Grogan (22) tries to block a floater from Irrigon’s Anthony Landeros (11) during the fourth quarter of Irrigon’s 65-55 win over the Tigers Saturday in Stanfield.

third quarter to get past the Mustangs in Stanfield. Unfortunately, the Tigers didn’t have that magic in Saturday’s third period.

After Grogan and Landeros traded their buckets, Ir-

rigon took control and led by 13 heading into the final period. Stanfield trimmed down Irrigon’s lead to 11 at 57-46 midway through the final period, but three consecutive turnovers would doom the Tigers

to fouling down the stretch, and Irrigon made enough free throws to hold off Stanfield.

Braithwaite said the game was a “learning experience” for Stanfield. He pointed out that the Tigers graduated five or six guys from last year’s team, and Sharp said a handful of guys came straight from junior varsity, while Irrigon has almost its entire roster returning from a state-championship run. It was an opportunity for the Tigers to learn what it’s like to play a game in that environment against that type of team, Sharp said.

“We see a little bit where we’re at,” he said. “(Irrigon’s) a great team. There’s some things we could’ve done a little bit better.”

“It’s not the last game of the year,” Braithwaite added.

IRRIGON 65, STANFIELD 55		
IHS	13-15-20-20	65
SHS	7-10-17-20	55
Irrigon — A. Romero 10, X. Rambo 0, A. Landeros 27, F. Vera 15, R. Reynolds 0, A. Rice 0, Z. Rice 6, H. White 5, A. Timpy 5, O. Romero 0.		
Stanfield — L. Moreno 0, R. Bailey 5, J. Carrillo 2, E. Galarza 5, A. Nunez 0, E. Lockwood 4, T. Flores 4, H. Braithwaite 15, D. Grogan 14, T. Monkus 5, A. Montes 0, S. Allan 0, M. Davchevski 1.		
3-point field goals — Irrigon 8, Stanfield 8. Free throws — Irrigon 14-18, Stanfield 7-16.		
Fouls — Irrigon 15, Stanfield 14.		

ECHO 46, HELIX 15

The Echo boys basketball team won its third straight game Saturday when the Cougars topped the Helix Grizzlies 46-15 in Helix.

Michael Thompson and Klay Jenson each had 12 points, and Carlos Chavez pitched in with 11. Jake Sprenger and Grant Christman were Helix’s top scorers with four apiece.

Echo led 24-9 at halftime and finished the game on a 24-6 run over two quarters.

Win the win, Echo improved to 9-7, 5-2 in league.

ECHO 46, HELIX 15		
EHS	17-5-17-7	46
HHS	5-4-4-2	15
Echo — H. Gehrke 0, C. Chavez 11, Z. Gehrke 0, J. Dorn 0, K. Jenson 12, C. Medrano 2, M. Thompson		

STANFIELD 47, IRRIGON 35		
IHS	5-10-11-9	35
SHS	9-11-12-15	47
Irrigon — K. Gilman 0, A. Ayala 0, H. Vera 2, K. McLaughlin 12, J. Burns 16, L. Mills 0, D. Roybal 0, B. Aguilera 4, C. Case 1, T. Davis 0.		
Stanfield — C. Curiel 2, M. Griffin 10, A. O’Neill 6, M. Banderas 3, B. Watson 8, G. Chavez 2, Y. Chavez 7, B. Braithwaite 2, S. Connell 2, C. Hopper 2, N. Esquivel 3.		
3-point field goals — Irrigon 1, Stanfield 4. Free throws — Irrigon 8-24, Stanfield 9-15.		
Fouls — Irrigon 15, Stanfield 18.		

ECHO 70, HELIX 46

At Helix, the Echo Cougars girls basketball team throttled the Helix Grizzlies 70-46 Saturday.

Elizabeth McCarty had 19 points and nine rebounds in the win. Macey Tullis had 19 in the loss for Helix. Echo forced 17 steals and out-rebounded a tall Helix team 44-28.

ECHO 70, HELIX 46		
EHS	22-17-19-12	70
HHS	6-7-18-15	46
Echo — E. Parks 4, K. Ranger 10, T. Swaggert 11, H. McCarty 13, L. Cox 2, B. Strofe 5, E. McCarty 19, B. Milbrodt 0, H. Reese 6.		
Helix — B. Isles 4, L. Ashby 0, E. Feherenbacker 4, M. Tullis 19, T. Jackson 2, B. Newton 2, M. Mize 8, P. Flehringer 2, K. Mize 2, S. Wilson.		
3-point field goals — Echo 1, Helix 5. Free throws — Echo 11-15, Helix 9-15.		
Fouled out — Mize, Flehringer. Fouls — Echo 19, Helix 18.		

COUGARS:

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of these girls — these seniors and juniors — this is a playoff game, just because we have so much history with Dufur. I don’t think we’ve ever not played them in districts.”

The deciding play came when Dufur’s Hannah Harris took a long pass from the baseline inbounds and laid it up through a Bailey Strofe foul with 8.6 seconds left to extend Dufur’s lead to 50-46. Harris made the free throw, all but wrapping it up the game. Harris would make two more free throws with 1.5 seconds left to eliminate any uncertainty.

“It sucks,” Echo senior forward Elizabeth McCa-

rty, who led her team with 22 points, said. “I think there was a lack of focus. I think some girls were focused and others weren’t.”

Echo’s biggest struggle was the failure to capitalize on the Rangers’ foul trouble. Senior post Taylor Darden missed much of the second quarter after picking up her third foul. At one point in the first half, Dufur had five fouls with three of them charged to Darden, but Echo (14-4, 6-1) couldn’t put away the Rangers.

With Darden on the bench, Echo scored just nine points but held a 27-23 lead. With Darden on the floor in the second half, Echo managed just 19.

Darden was whistled for her fourth foul in the fourth quarter and was forced

to the bench, but Echo couldn’t capitalize then, either.

“That’s a problem,” Brazil said of Echo’s inability to pull away with the opposing team’s lead scorer on the bench. “When we get somebody’s hoss out of the game, we need to be able to go on a little run, and we didn’t do that today.”

Echo never led in the fourth quarter. It’s latest lead was a 33-31 advantage with 3:39 in the third quarter. After that, Dufur (10-6, 6-1) closed on a 22-13 run during the final 11:39, including a 5-0 run in the final 11.5 seconds.

McCarty said her squad has to do a better job of not panicking when its behind.

“We sometimes get too frazzled when we’re down,” she said. “That’s

the hard part. That’s something we have to work on. We’re down by two, and we’re not done. You get down by two — that’s one shot. That’s something that we got to get in each other’s minds.”

A positive in a sea of negatives for Echo Monday night was the continued development of its bench. Devyn Tarvin was not in the lineup because she was sick, giving Taylor Swaggart, Lizzie Cox, Beth Milbrodt and Hattie Reese more minutes to play.

Brazil already goes 10-deep on his bench, and he said he was pleased with how the reserves kept the game close with Darden sitting in foul trouble.

Echo, though, made Dufur work for the win. The Rangers claimed the

first four points of the fourth quarter and led 39-35 and maintained their four-point lead until Hannah McCarty hit a jumper with 4:11 left to cut the lead to two at 40-38. A Dufur free throw and a Darden bucket gave the Rangers a five-point lead at 43-38. Kelsey Ranger hit a layup with 1:41 left to cut the deficit to three at 43-40, but Aimeelyn Miller got a layup to go with a foul and hit the free throw, giving Dufur a 46-40 advantage. Elizabeth McCarty then hit a 3 — her second of the game — then fouled Darden with 42.9 remaining. Darden hit both shots, making it a five-point game at 48-43.

Echo then started to chuck 3-balls, releasing five in 40 seconds, hitting