

## Keeping history alive

If you are ever at Armand Larive Middle School, peek into the side gym and take a look at the big Bulldog in the yellow circle on the wall. It's a great piece of sports art and living history.



SAM BARBEE  
FROM THE SIDELINES  
Sports reporter

Armand Larive piece to me this week, I could see the pride on his face. I felt like he understood the significance of it and what it meant in a historical context. He was the Hermiston High School athletic director when Armand Larive was built in the late 2000s, and he likely had a hand in mounting that piece.

*Things like mid-court logos are important to people. They're important to fans, to players past and present. It's something with which to identify. It's something that screams "your school."*

But it wasn't a simple job to get it into that gym. It's probably about 10 square feet, so it wouldn't fit through the gym doors, which are only about 7 feet high. It had to be cut in half, wheeled in, reattached and mounted on the far wall. You can still see the seam in the center where they split it in two.

This week, I stood and looked at it for a few minutes. I wasn't quite in awe, but I really liked the thought that went into it. I'm a big history guy, and any time history can be preserved and remembered is important to me. I recently wrote how important it is to remember where one comes from, and institutions are no different. That old mid-court logo allows those involved with the school to remember where they came from, to remember where the school came from.

Things like mid-court logos are important to people. They're important to fans, to players past and present. It's something with which to identify. It's something that screams "your school." At R.

A. Long, our floor was redone my sophomore year, and we had these really cool "R.A. Long" scripts on the sidelines facing the scorer's table. As players, we were nervous that those scripts might not make it onto the new floor. Those had been a part of our floor as long as we could remember, and we wanted to keep that history alive. We wanted to keep, for lack of a better word, those ghosts around.

In the end, our worries were unfounded, and the scripts remained. Our hopes of keeping the history alive worked out, and they're still there to this day.

As Hermiston School District Operations Mike Kay explained the

Frankly, he should be proud. I have never seen anything like that before and probably never will again. It's just another indication of how people feel about sports here: They're deeply ingrained and part of the town's culture.

The mid-court logo mounted on the wall is an example of that sentiment. It says, "Look! We love our sports so much that we couldn't bear to get rid of this wonderful, hand-painted piece of wood. So we're going to immortalize it."

How many times have you seen that before? Then again, how many towns have you been to that care as much about its teams as Hermiston does?

The answer to those questions: Not many, I'd bet.

— Sam Barbee is the sports reporter for the *Hermiston Herald*. He can be reached at sbarbee@hermistonherald.com

## Umatilla girls headed to state

Aleesha Watson nets 13 in win over Bulldogs

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

After the Umatilla girls basketball team's 46-35 district win over Nyssa Tuesday night, cheers erupted from the locker room. Head coach Scott Bow was reading off the goals his team had set for itself this season. Win a playoff game. Check. Qualify for state. Check.

Next on Umatilla's list: beat Vale on Friday.

"I'm excited," sophomore Aleesha Watson said of playing Vale. "I'm ready to go. I'm ready to get after it."

For now, though, Umatilla gets to celebrate its qualifying for the state tournament for the first time in two years.

"It feels really good," Watson said following her 13-point performance Tuesday. "We worked really hard. We've been spending all season ... This was our goal, to get to state, and we did it."

Currently, the Lady Vikings are ranked seventh by the Oregon Schools Activities Association, and a win over Vale would certainly boost that ranking. If Umatilla loses, however, the Vikings will have a tough game in the play-in round of the state tournament.

Umatilla used a late 8-0 run capped by a put-back from Iri Campos to seal the win Tuesday. Nyssa closed its 13-point halftime deficit to just five points early in the fourth quarter when Umatilla went on its game-sealing run.

Despite the close margin, Watson said the Lady Vikings didn't doubt they could pull off the victory.

"As long as we played our game, we were pretty confident we could make it," she said. Umatilla started strong, allowing just a single point in the first quarter and netting 12. Bow said the Vikings weren't focused on the shut-out, just executing their defensive scheme, which led to the strong performance. The Bulldogs got their first field goal on their first possession of the second quarter, but



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Nyssa's Mikki Jenson (20) rips away a rebound from Umatilla's Cassandra Galbraith during the first quarter of Umatilla's 46-35 state-qualifying win over the Bulldogs Tuesday in Umatilla.

Umatilla scored on its first three possessions to build a 17-3 lead two minutes into the period.

The Lady Vikings carried a 13-point lead into the third quarter, when someone put a lid on Umatilla's basket and nothing fell. Umatilla made just one field goal in the third quarter, and Nyssa made two of its three three-pointers, but the Bulldogs only scored eight points that frame.

"We had great looks," Bow said. "I told the kids, 'This is one of those hard parts. You gotta fight through that defensively. This is where you win games, on the defensive side.' You could see a little fear in their eyes when they're only hitting one field goal or missing layup after layup, short jumper (after) short jumper, rimming in and out. A little bit of fear set in. It showed on the defensive end. They were playing scared instead of aggressive."

In the fourth quarter, however, the Vikings' fear disappeared and was replaced by determination: to qualify for



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Umatilla's Sidney Webb (right) passes in the lane as Nyssa's Beatriz Ramirez (14) and Cassidy Hashagen defend during the first half of Umatilla's 46-35 state-qualifying win over the Bulldogs Tuesday in Umatilla.

state, to get another shot at Vale.

That newfound determination didn't kick in until after Nyssa's Sloane Jespersion converted an and-one to cut Umatilla's lead to just 31-26.

Bow then called timeout, and Cassandra Galbraith got a layup and was fouled to push the lead to seven at

33-26. Galbraith got another bucket, on a nice drive-and-dish from Sidney Webb, and her free throws with 4:54 left pushed the lead further to 37-28. Campos' put-back with 4:04 capped the run and pushed Nyssa into desperation mode, but the Bulldogs couldn't rally.

"That last run we had there with Sidney activating it with her attack to the hoop, that just started it right there," Bow said. "It gave us our cushion back."

Umatilla gets its final shot at Vale this season for the district title Friday in Vale. The game time is yet to be determined.

### UMATILLA 46, NYSSA 35

NHS 1 11 8 15 35  
UHS 12 13 5 17 46  
Nyssa — J. Martinez 10, S. Hartley 0, M. Mitchell 0, B. Arredondo 0, R. Hartley 7, B. Ramirez 6, S. Jespersion 5, C. Lancaster 4, A. Hernandez 0, K. Hernandez 5, K. Hashagen 0  
Umatilla — B. Chavez 0, M. Paz 2, K. Barajas 0, I. Campos 7, B. Campos 0, S. Webb 10, K. Galbraith 10, C. Dohman 4, A. Watson 13  
3-point field goals — Nyssa 3, Umatilla 2. Free throws — Nyssa 8-10, Umatilla 18-26. Fouls — Nyssa 19, Umatilla 13. Fouled out — I. Campos (UHS).

## Umatilla boys defeat Vale for state play-in slot

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

The Umatilla boys basketball team joined the girls when it qualified for a state berth after a 62-35 walloping over the Vale Vikings Tuesday night in Umatilla.

Juan Coria had a season-high 13 points, and Tristen Sanguino added 11 in the win. Dany Ayala had just seven points,

but the senior point guard made five rebounds, four assists and two steals.

The home Vikings allowed just seven first-half points on the way to a 33-7 lead at the break. Coria hit three three-pointers in that first half, and Sanguino, Aaron Simmons and Kaden Webb each hit 3s, too. The boys outplayed the girls when they allowed one field goal in each of the first two quar-

ters and just three in the fourth quarter. Umatilla held Tyson Mesa, Vale's leading scorer, to just two points and no free-throw attempts.

Umatilla was red hot from outside, hitting 11 of 22 3-point attempts. The home Vikings shot 46 percent overall from the floor.

Umatilla heads to Nyssa for a 7:30 p.m. matchup Friday to decide the district championship.

### UMATILLA 62, VALE 35

VHS 3 4 18 10 35  
UHS 15 18 16 13 62  
Vale — Z. Jacobs 2, D. Hiatt 12, J. Schoorl 0, A. Weber 9, M. Ramirez 0, M. Skarjanec 1, C. Schluge 0, C. Towers 0, J. Noethe 4, T. Mesa 2, L. Noethe 3, B. Mattos 2  
Umatilla — D. Ayala 7, E. Garica 8, G. Armenta 3, J. Coria 13, K. Webb 6, D. Garcia 0, A. Jamie 9, J. Tejada 0, T. Sanguino 11, A. Simmons 3, E. Morales 2  
3-point field goals — Vale 2, Umatilla 11. Free throws — Vale 9-18, Umatilla 7-16. Technical fouls — L. Noethe (VHS). Fouls — Vale 18, Umatilla 14.

## Bikers from throughout region to compete in Echo Red to Red race

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

In 2008, Echo Bike and Board owner Shayne Myers and his friend Brian Cimmyotti hatched a plan: Use trails developed outside of Echo to host a race and bring people to the area.

Seven years later, the Echo Red to Red race continues to grow.

Myers and Cimmyotti initially just needed a place to train, and, until they contacted Lloyd Piercy 10 years ago about creating a trail system on his land at Sno Valley Winery and Echo West Ranch, they had nowhere to practice in Echo during the lengthy off-season.

The first year of the race seven years ago, the trail

system drew 175 competitors to Echo. That number grew to 548 by 2009. Mind-numbingly low temperatures and freezing rain limited the field to 200 last year, but organizers are expecting anywhere from 500 to 600 at this year's event, Feb 28 and March 1.

"If the weather plays nice with us, we're really expecting at least 500 this

year," organizer Stephanie Myers said. "We always plan for 600. That's always our goal. Realistically, 500 would make me happy."

The race has grown into an important one on the Oregon Mountain Bicycle Racing circuit. A quick Google search "Echo Red to Red" yields YouTube

SEE RACE/A7

### SPORTS IN BRIEF

#### Hermiston Booster Club Steak Feed coming up

The Hermiston Booster Club's 36th annual steak feed is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. March 7 at the Hermiston Con-

ference Center. Tickets cost \$40, and the proceeds benefit Hermiston athletic programs. On average, the steak feeds generate about \$80,000 dollars per night and \$100,000 in a year. Call Joe Thompson at 541-571-4478 for more information.

### GO SEE IT

#### Wednesday, February 18

**Girls Basketball**  
Stanfield @ Districts vs. Culver @ Armand Larive Middle School, 6 p.m.

#### Thursday, February 19

**Boys Basketball**  
Hermiston vs. Hood River, 7 p.m.  
Echo @ Districts vs. TBD @ Baker, TBD

#### Friday, February 20

**Boys Basketball**  
Stanfield @ Districts vs. Heppner @ Pendleton Convention Center, 8:45 p.m.  
Echo @ Districts vs. TBD @ Baker, TBD  
**Girls Basketball**  
Hermiston @ Hood River, 7 p.m.  
Stanfield @ Districts vs. TBD @ Baker, TBD  
**Wrestling**  
Echo @ Districts @ Hermiston, 10 a.m.

#### Saturday, February 21

Stanfield @ Districts vs. TBD @ Pendleton Convention Center, TBD  
Echo @ Districts vs. TBD @ Baker, TBD  
**Boys Basketball**  
Stanfield @ Districts vs. TBD @ Pendleton Convention Center, TBD  
Echo @ Districts vs. TBD @ Baker, TBD