

Winning (and losing) the right way

Back in December, I wrote in the winter sports tab that lots of words could describe the Hermiston wrestling program, but one that head coach Shaun Williams used didn't quite seem correct to me. It was "rebuilding." And — surprising to me — he proved to be right. Hermiston did win the state title, but just. By Hermiston wrestling standards, it was a rebuilding year. The Bulldogs weren't out-of-this-world dominant, which could be classified as a rebuilding year.

And with a slew of returning state placers, the Bulldogs have set themselves up for another retooling year next year, if not rebuilding.

But there's another word that is synonymous with the Hermiston wrestling program, and it's not one that quickly comes to mind. It's not "success," "dominance" or "winning." It's "sportsmanship."

Williams' philosophy is for his team to win with grace and lose with grace. He's taken that philosophy and sewn it throughout his program. It's as much a part of the Bulldogs as winning state titles. But acting with class is the most important thing to him. State titles come with potential and work. Sportsmanship is a base quality to him. You have to have that before you can do anything, in his mind.

"Winning always feels good, I don't care how you look at it," Williams said Friday. "Losing always feels bad. But in either of those scenarios ... When we lose, we shake hands, we smile and we go. ... When we win, same thing because somebody had to lose. When we go to the state tournament and our kids get beat, we don't throw our headgear. We don't cuss up a storm. We don't kick chairs. We shake hands, and we walk off the mat and we get ready for the next match."

When you watch Hermiston wrestlers after bouts, they are very understated. Absent are fist-pumps, double arm-raises or any other shows of emotion. If they win, they smile, as Williams said, but you'd hope



SAM BARBEE
FROM THE SIDELINES
Sports reporter

the guys are happy and excited to win. When Sam Colbray took the 195-pound title match and clinched the state title in the process, he executed the best form of sportsmanship: He acted like he's been there before. He didn't hold up three fingers to announce his third state title. He didn't jump around and make Alberto Meza from Central feel any worse than he already did. He simply shook his opponent's hand, had his arm raised by the referee, shook the opposing coaches' hands and then went to celebrate with him teammates. Williams mentioned Hillsboro, who beat Hermiston in the championship dual at the Oregon Wrestling Classic and came 6.5 points short of capturing a state title. He said those wrestlers worked as hard as any he's seen, so it would hurt Hermiston to "rub it in their faces and dismiss them."

He didn't want to humiliate Hillsboro for a couple reasons: first, he didn't want to give Hillsboro more motivation than they already had, but he also wanted his team's accomplishment to have a feeling of accuracy attached. He said if the Bulldogs had dismissed Hillsboro, then they wouldn't have appreciated what the Spartans did. A narrow second-place finish is nothing to scoff at, especially when it comes down to the final match.

It's important to Williams for his wrestlers to respect and understand what other teams do because he hopes to have that same understanding and respect reciprocated.

It's an interesting approach and the opposite of a famous public relations move from ancient Rome, of all places. During the Punic Wars, which pitted Rome against Carthage, the Carthaginians had this general named Hannibal, who hated Rome with all his being. When the time was right, he marched

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CORRECTION

In Wednesday's issue, a Hermiston wrestler in image number seven of the wrestling photo page was incorrectly identified. Hermiston senior Mitch-

ell Lincoln is on the right. As well, Mitchell lost to Dallas' Brennan Yates by a 2-1 decision, not by fall. The Hermiston Herald regrets the errors.

GO SEE IT

Saturday, March 7

Girls Basketball
Hermiston vs. Crescent Valley, 3 p.m.

Sunday, March 8

No events scheduled

Monday, March 9

No events scheduled

Tuesday, March 10

No events scheduled

Wednesday, March 11

Girls Basketball
*Hermiston vs. TBD @ Gil Coliseum, Corvallis, 1:30 p.m.
*IF HERMISTON WINS TODAY

Hermiston girls hoops wants another shot at La Salle

Bulldogs must defeat Crescent Valley today

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston girls basketball team feels disrespected. Head coach Steve Hoffert said the Bulldogs think La Salle Prep, who the Bulldogs beat in January, are getting the attention from the state that they deserve. He likened it to the Hermiston football team's apparent beef with Silverton, who was tabbed as the favorite and consistently voted at the top of the 5A rankings by coaches and media.

The same is happening with Hermiston and La Salle in girls basketball. Hermiston is the top-ranked team in the state according to Oregon School Activities Association heading into its play-in round matchup today against Crescent Valley, but La Salle was ranked first by coaches and media. Hoffert said that will stick in the back of his players' minds until they get another shot at the Falcons, prefera-



SAM BARBEE PHOTO
Hermiston's Jansen Edmiston (20) drives around The Dalles' Kailin Hoylman during the first half of Hermiston's 51-36 win over the Riverhawks Jan. 23 in Hermiston.

bly at the state tournament in Corvallis next week.

"We want La Salle," Hoffert said Thursday. "The girls want it for the same reason. We felt we beat

'em without Kynzee Padilla, and we feel we can still beat 'em again with Kynzee Padilla. We want everyone around to know it's like the Hermiston-Silverton foot-

ball matchup. Nobody gave Hermiston a shot at beating Silverton because of who Silverton was — regardless

SEE BULLDOGS/A8



SAM BARBEE PHOTO
Hermiston School District Superintendent Dr. Fred Maiocco holds up the 2014-15 state championship trophy earned by the Hermiston wrestling team with head coach Shaun Williams and a Hermiston student by his side.

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

After the Hermiston wrestling team won its team eighth title in nine years, Hermiston High School honored its state participants with an assembly Thursday afternoon.

The Dawghouse was full of students and community

members and had one side of the gym entirely filled. After each coach and wrestler was introduced to rousing applause, coach Shaun Williams took the microphone and addressed the crowd, thanking the student body and the community for their support.

"I don't have too much to say, other than thanks

for all your support — the community, the school district, the students," he said to the crowd. "Thanks for everything you have done — your support throughout the season. Without you guys, I don't think we could have done it, and I'm happy to bring back another state title."

Since Williams has been

in Hermiston, he knows no differently. He's won three state championships in his three years in Hermiston after being hand-picked for the position by Hermiston coaching legend Curt Berger. During those three years, Hermiston has placed 26 wrestlers and

SEE CHAMPIONS/A8

Mixed martial arts coming to town

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Sports teams often try to be creative when fundraising in order to drum up the most funds for a team.

The creativity of the Hermiston wrestling team will be on full display as it hosts a night of mixed martial arts action beginning at 7 p.m. March 21 at the Hermiston High School Gym.

Dubbed "Knucklehead 11: Hermiston Cage Fights," the bouts are sanctioned by the Oregon State Ath-

letic Commission, and the 14-fight card features martial artists from all over the country who registered through the OSAC.

"I didn't choose it. They sought me out," promoter Billy Bobb said of bringing the event to Hermiston. "(Wrestling coach Shaun Williams) contacted me. I've not previously thought about doing a show in Hermiston until the high school contacted me."

The idea came from

SEE MARTIAL ARTS/A8

Bulldog boys, coach overcome learning curve this season

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

When Jake McElligott took the Hermiston boys basketball coaching job last summer, he knew he would have to make adjustments.

He said he knew he would have more responsibilities off the basketball court, and he knew the competition would improve as he moved from 2A Irrigon to 5A Hermis-

ton. The first difference that really hit McElligott was the competition.

"Game to game, you really have to prepare well," McElligott said Wednesday. "Every team can beat you on any given night. I talked to Bob Townsend from The Dalles about this. You may have two or three games in a week at the 2A level. You know one or

SEE LEARNING/A8

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Hunter's education classes available

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is hosting a series of hunter's education classes throughout March, and students can become cer-

tified by the beginning of turkey season starting April 15. There are still six class sessions remaining in Hermiston: Tuesday, Thursday, March 14, March 19 and March 24. They will take place at the Veterans of Foreign Wars

Hall and another location. Classes are also available Tuesday, Thursday, March 14, March 17 and March 19 at AC Houghton Elementary School in Irrigon. There are also opportunities for independent students who have already

completed their workbook or online course. All classes and field days are listed on ODFW's website license sales page, or find more information on how to register at <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/education/hunter/>.