

Smith brings vast coaching experience to Hermiston



She replaces former coach Wadekamper

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Dorothy Smith just loves volleyball. It's been a part of her for most of her adult life. She played the sport in college, coached as an adult

Dorothy Smith, recently hired as the next Hermiston High School head volleyball coach, has also coached in Minnesota, California and the Tri-Cities.

and officiated local games for the past few years.

Ever since her college days in the 1990s, Smith has lived and breathed volleyball, coaching when she can and officiating when she can't.

Now, with the retirement of Becky Wadekamper, Smith will take over the Hermiston Bulldog volleyball program.

"I'm excited to be a part of the Hermiston Bulldogs

and excited to see what the future has," Smith said. "I'm not sure about the girls, but I'm excited to see and work with them."

Smith inherits a program that came within one game of winning a Columbia River Conference championship and advanced into the state tournament before it was ousted by second-seeded Bend.

Smith isn't a stranger to Hermiston's home purple gym. She officiated a number of the Bulldogs' volleyball games last fall and

kept the scorebook for girls and boys varsity basketball games.

In fact, her name suddenly popped into Hermiston Athletic Director Blaine Ganvoa's head when he was brainstorming possible candidates to replace Wadekamper.

"I've always known Dorothy (from) the capacity as an official," Ganvoa, who officiates basketball games in his spare time, said last week. "Of late, I came to re-

SEE SMITH/A7

Getting hot when the time is right

The regular season is over. It's now time for the playoffs.

There is a unifying theory across base sports — baseball and softball — about who wins these postseason tournaments. Often, it's not the best teams that are the last ones standing — it's the hottest teams.

Take last fall's World Series, for instance. Nobody thought the Kansas City Royals, who snuck into the playoffs ahead of the Mariners, would play the San Francisco Giants, but those were the teams to catch fire in September and October. Closer to home, Hood River Valley lost their minds last year after finishing third in the Columbia River Conference only to play for the 5A state championship. It's about peaking.

Right now, the Echo softball team is doing just that: peaking.

The Cougars haven't lost in the month of May, posting an 8-0 record and outscoring opponents by an average of 9.5 runs. Since a 10-0 defeat to Weston-McEwen, a game Echo was no-hit, the Cougars have scored 124 runs and allowed just 33. In three games Echo posted run totals of 20, 19 and 16, including Mackenzie Gonzales' perfect game May 9 in Portland.

Cougars head coach Brian Bailey has been pleased with the last couple weeks and knows his squad is in a good place. They've already wrapped up a state playoff spot, and all that's left is to play through the seeding tournament this weekend in Vale. As of Monday, Echo is ranked ninth in 3A, three spots behind the league-champ Vikings.

Echo is getting it done at the plate, which is part of the reason for its May outburst. The Cougars have five girls with more than 75 plate appearances who are hitting over .300: Gonzales (.357), Jaime Christopher (.338), Kenzie Blankenship (.324), Bailey Srofe (.317) and Hannah McCarty (.304). Samantha McQuown has posted a .350 average in 47 plate appearances, and Monique Montoya and Alyssa Ray are right there, too.

Pitching, however, is what has really elevated Echo. Gonzales, a sophomore, has thrown 100 of 150 possible innings for the Cougars, posting a 1.96 ERA and a 10-3 record. She has struck out twice as many batters as she's walked and has allowed just 28 earned runs.

The Cougars are hot right now, and, barring any major injury, it's hard to see them stumbling as they go through the playoffs.

Staying close to I-84, the Stanfield Tigers baseball team is in a similar situation. Though the Tigers haven't won eight straight — they won nine straight, though, earlier this season — they're playing good baseball, too. They've won four in a row and eight of nine to claim their second-straight Eastern Oregon League title and host a playoff game later this week.

With loads of sophomores and one senior, Stanfield has done nothing but improve since the beginning of the season. The Tigers lost their first three games to quality Washington opponents before returning to



SAM BARBEE
FROM THE SIDELINES
Sports reporter

Oregon and promptly rolling through their schedule. With a record of 18-7, 9-1 in league, Stanfield has lost just four times since March 26 after losing three to start the year.

It's been an offensive display all year. Dylan Grogan and Ryan Bailey are both batting .380, and Grogan's on-base plus slugging percentage is a crazy 1.128. Tony Flores isn't far behind at .369. It's not about average, however. Thylor Monkus, though hitting .269, has scored 41 runs and has walked more times — 21 — than he's struck out — 10.

As a team, Stanfield is hitting an amazing .295 and holds a team on-base percentage of .430. That's the best kind of ridiculous. That number means it doesn't matter who it is on the team, they're getting on base four times out of 10. With numbers like that, it's no wonder Stanfield has scored the sixth-most runs in 3A baseball with 195.

Stanfield's pitching has been great, too, with Flores, Bailey and Klay Jensen each posted sub-three ERAs.

This team has something interesting going for it. It might be one of the youngest, yet most-experienced, teams in the state. Almost all of the sophomores on the baseball team played varsity football and varsity basketball and competed in some absolutely huge basketball games. That bodes well for a baseball team that was ousted quickly in last year's state playoffs. This team has the potential, the make up and the numbers to be playing in June. And I think that'll happen.

No pressure, guys. Then, finally, there's Hermiston. Those Bulldogs snuck into the playoffs on a coin toss and will play at St. Helens on Friday. It's been a bit of an up-and-down year for Hermiston, but it has the pitching to keep playing.

Lefty RJ Robles has been just about untouchable lately. When he strikes out nine batters in five innings and it's a down day, you know you have something special. Fellow junior Tyler Sexton has had some quality outings, as well, and relievers Hayden Edmiston, Chase Root and Cole Smith are capable stop-gaps as well.

It's going to come down to hitting and consistency for the Bulldogs. They've shown the ability to score runs. They just haven't done it on a regular basis. In some ways, they remind me of the Mariners: They have a quality roster, but, for whatever reason, they just can't put it all together on any given day.

But hope is not lost. Remember that Hood River team from last year? They were 10-16 when they snuck into the playoffs and then promptly won four straight games and played for a state title. Anything is possible if a team gets hot.

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Ranger, McCarty staying focused on state

Pair representing Echo at track tourney

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Two girls practiced their javelin throws at Echo High School Monday afternoon. Their work was quick, as they were alone. One would take a turn, receive coaching and then watch as the other took her turn.

Senior Elizabeth McCarty and junior Kelsey Ranger are the lone Cougars to qualify for this week's state championship track meet Thursday through Saturday in Eugene, and they enter as favorites in the respective specialties.

McCarty, a thrower, has posted the best 1A girls javelin toss this spring, checking in at 132 feet, 10 inches. That is more than three feet better than second-ranked Whitney Lindsey of Camas Valley. Ranger is third in javelin at 116 feet, but that's not her best event.

Ranger, who also played basketball with McCarty on a district-championship team, is tops in the state in the long jump. Her 16-07 effort bests Ione's Jessie Flynn by an inch.

McCarty also qualified in the discus, where she is ranked ninth. In addition to javelin and the long jump, Ranger also qualified for the triple jump, in which she's posted the fourth-best distance.

Those rankings don't hold a lot of water with the pair.

"Anyone can throw a good throw any day," McCarty said. "So it can change."

Although some might say there is pressure for them to perform, to bring home a trophy, the pair isn't



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Echo's Kelsey Ranger (left) and Elizabeth McCarty practice their javelin throws Monday afternoon in Echo before they head to Eugene for the Oregon state track and field championships on Friday.

overly nervous — just humble. "Winning would be cool," McCarty said simply.

In last season's state meet, McCarty posted a 118-10 toss, her best of the season and the fourth best at the meet. She didn't top that throw until the 1A district meet this year, when she posted the top mark in the state.

Ranger, meanwhile, is making her first trip to state as a competitor.

Last year, she shadowed McCarty at Heyward Field, acclimating herself to the environment and scene.

"I think that's what drove me to really actually take it really seriously this year," Ranger said. "I got to see what she got to go through and how she had so much fun. I just wanted to do that."

Ranger demonstrated her desire

SEE TRACK/A7

Dawgs, local schools send athletes to state

EO MEDIA GROUP

Nine Hermiston athletes and two relay teams will represent the Bulldogs at the Oregon State Track and Field Championships this weekend at Heyward Field in Eugene, as well as ten Umatilla athletes, also with and two relay teams, seven Stanfield athletes and two Echo athletes.

Stanfield's girls won the 2A Columbia Basin Conference meet for the first time in decades.

Audrey Lincoln, Chris Behrendt, Trey Neal, Sheridan Zumwalt, Tyler McCabe, Nathan Hunsaker, Jazzmin Gutierrez, Hayden Earl and Josiah Niederwerfer all qualified for the final meet of the year, along with the boys 4x100-meter team of Behrendt, McCabe, Zumwalt and Ethan Snow and 4x400-meter relay team of Behrendt, McCabe, Zumwalt and Alexis Mercado, following the district competition.

They will be joined by a host

of other area athletes, including seven from Umatilla and Stanfield and two from Echo.

Umatilla sends Amie Zitterkob, Fabian Cardenas, Andrea Lemus-Cisneros, Nancy Ortiz, Miguel Madrigal, Genesis Lugo, Armondo Mendoza, Maria Moreno-Mendez and Berenice Chavez. The girls 4x100 team of Zitterkob, Sonia Lemus-Cisneros, Kassandra Galbraith and Andrea Lemus-Cisneros and the girls 4x400 team of Zitterkob, Araceli Sanguino, Aleesha Watson and Andrea Lemus-Cisneros will also compete.

Stanfield sends Bailey Watson, Hunter Braithwaite, Uber Hernandez, Carlos Flores, Trevor Shockman, Anna Lemmon and Elvis Lockwood and the 4x400 girls relay team of Shayanne Connell, Jenny Garcia, Lemmon and Watson.

Echo sends a pair in Elizabeth McCarty and Kelsey Ranger.

Hermiston's boys placed sec-

ond at the district competition Friday in The Dalles, while the girls placed fourth.

Lincoln earned three of their berths and placed second in the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes. Joining her at state will be shot put champion Gutierrez and discus runner-up Valerie Beas.

Sprinter Behrendt could be entered in up to four events after he ran for both of Hermiston's champion relay teams, then won the 400 and placed second in the 200.

The Bulldogs' throwers and jumpers also fared well, and Neal made the state field thrice by winning in javelin with a distance of 155 feet, 2 inches and placing second shot put and discus. Hunsaker also made state and placed second in javelin.

Zumwalt also will compete in three events. He earned gold in triple jump with a distance of

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Wednesday, May 20

No events scheduled

Thursday, May 21

Tennis
Umatilla @ State @ Oregon State University, 8 a.m.
Track and Field
Hermiston @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Umatilla @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Stanfield @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Echo @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.

Friday, May 22

Track and Field

Hermiston @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Umatilla @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Stanfield @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Echo @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Softball
Echo vs. TBD @ Vale, TBD
Baseball
Stanfield vs. TBD, 3 p.m.

Saturday, May 23

Track and Field
Hermiston @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Umatilla @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Stanfield @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.
Echo @ State @ University of Oregon, 8 a.m.