

SPORTS

Emerald Valley gives Bulldog boys fits at state golf tournament

Hermiston drops to sixth in second round

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston boys golf team completed its

second round Tuesday at the 5A Boys Golf Championships at Emerald Valley in Creswell, Oregon, and it wasn't its best day.

Hermiston carded a 331 today, dropping them from fifth to sixth with seven other teams still on the course as of approximately 6 p.m.

Senior Paden La Cour-

siere is the lowest-scoring Bulldog, currently sitting in a tie for 23rd with an 82 Tuesday and 81 Monday for a week's score of 163.

Zac Adams isn't far behind his teammate, turning in an 81 Tuesday to tie with teammate Keegan Crafton, who shot 85, and three others for 26th at 165.

Anders Lind is fourth

for Hermiston with a 168, tied for 34th overall. Jared Thacker sits in a tie for 43th at 177.

Summit currently leads the tournament and is still on the course. The Storm (32-over) lead Bend (37-over) comfortably during the final round. Hermiston leads Pendleton by 15 strokes.

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42-1 and was second in both hurdles.

Also earning state berths in second were McCabe in long jump, Earl in the 800 and Niederwerfer in the 1,500.

LEMUS-CISNEROS DOMINATES DISTRICTS

Andrea Lemus-Cisneros and Fabian Cardenas each won two events to lead Umatilla's list of state qualifiers. Lemus-Cisneros edged teammate Zitterkob to

take the girls 100-meter title, and then held her off again at the tape for the 200 crown.

They then ran the opening and closing legs in the 4x100 relay to lead another Viking win and did the same for the second-place 4x400 relay team.

Moreno-Mendez also won the javelin for Umatilla, and Chavez was second in the 1,500.

Smith placed third in the 200 but got to the top of the podium in her next event, the 400. She added a win in the long jump and second place in the high jump as well.

Cardenas got his wins for the Umatilla boys in the 1,500 and 3,000

meters. The junior long distance specialist won the 1,500 over teammate Mendoza by 22 seconds, and beat 3,000 runner-up Jonathan Holcomb of Nyssa by more than a minute.

Mendoza also qualified for state for Umatilla in the 300 hurdles, where he was second.

Madrigal also will represent the Vikings at state after placing second in the 100 and 200.

STANFIELD GIRLS MAKE HISTORY

Months after playing in their first basketball playoff game, the Stanfield Tigers girls track and field team again made

history by winning their first girls district title in several decades, nearly doubling up the competition despite not owning a single individual champion at the Columbia Basin District meet.

The Tiger long relay team provided the lone Stanfield win.

Stanfield's Braithwaite was another regular podium participant. The Tiger senior took titles in the 400 meters and the high hurdles.

Umatilla and Stanfield will compete Thursday and Friday, Echo is active Friday and Hermiston will be on the track Friday and Saturday. Start times have not yet been disclosed.

TRACK:

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to qualify for the last meet of the high school season this year. Her marks improved with each meet. Her first long jump attempt of the season was 14-06, and her distances consistently went up until she hit 16-07 at the district meet last week. She experienced the same in javelin. She scratched at the first meet of the year, the Buck Track Classic in Pendleton in March, but steadily rose from there. She started under 100 at 98-02, broke 100 for the first time at the Condon/Wheeler Invite in April, and uncorked her 116 toss at the district meet. Her triple jump mark of the year went up nearly six feet from the Buck Track Classic to districts, as well.

"Kelsey, she's really an all-around athlete," Echo coach Ryan Ross said. "She has the potential to do great things next year, which I'm excited for. Just her technique, it's so far along."

Ranger and McCarty said the experience they gained in their successful basketball season has made them confident entering the state track meet. The Cougars' basketball season included sharing a league title, winning a district title and hosting a home playoff



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Echo's Kelsey Ranger is ranked third in the state in javelin and first in the long jump. She will compete in those events, as well as the triple jump, this weekend in Eugene.

game for the first time in three decades. Ranger and McCarty are not resting their happiness on success or failure at state. They hope to do the best they can.

For the most part, preparing for the state meet is no different than their practices any other week. For Ranger and McCarty, it's just another week, with another meet, and another chance to compete.

"We're not trying to make it a big thing," Ranger said.

"Yeah, keep it normal," McCarty added. "You practice the same way you perform."

SMITH:

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alize she had much greater volleyball background than I was aware of. Once that information was set forth, we had conversations with her, confirmed her interest in the position, and she's definitely, as a valued member of our community, doing everything she can to promote Hermiston as a true ambassador."

Her volleyball experience is extensive.

Smith played four years of volleyball at Fresno Pacific University in Fresno, California. At the time, the NCAA Division II school was a small, Christian NAIA school that held open try-outs to fill the roster each year. Smith made the squad as a 5-foot-6 outside hitter in the days when size at the net wasn't as important in the game.

"I was tall then," Smith said. "Now they're just gi-

ants, of course."

Like Wadkamper, the game of volleyball was different when Smith played in college. Scoring was slower, and there was no libero. Smith played her four years, while meeting her future husband, who's from this area, and went right into coaching. She started in California, where she coached club ball and was an assistant in the high school ranks before taking a head coaching gig in Minnesota.

There, she found herself stuck between a rock and a hard place. Minnesota has just three high school volleyball classifications — 1A, 2A and 3A — and Smith's school was one of the smaller 3A schools in the state. It created a challenge for her team to stay competitive against bigger schools with larger talent pools and often better teams as a result.

"We did quite well, considering it was a smaller 3A school," Smith said.

From Minnesota, she moved to Oregon in 2003, and she coached club ball in the Tri-Cities. Five years ago, Hermiston had an opening for its head volleyball coach, and Smith applied but was not selected. She then joined the Blue Mountain Volleyball Officials Association out of Pendleton and began officiating games in the area.

In December, the news of Wadkamper's retirement spread throughout the community, and Smith caught wind of it. She again applied for the position and caught Ganvoa's attention.

Smith provides a broad experience base for the Bulldogs. She's coached a good deal of high-level club volleyball, an environment full of energy and intensity and competitiveness. Smith plans to bring those qualities to the purple gym in the hopes of taking Hermiston past round one of the state playoffs for the

first time since 2011.

Her first order of business will be finding replacements for stalwarts Noa Ena and Brea Kestler, who are graduating.

Ena, an athletic and powerful outside hitter, and Kestler, a confident and precise setter, who have both committed to play college volleyball, leave Smith with big holes to fill. In addition, Hermiston's chief defensive specialist, Briana Wolfe, is also graduating, leaving Hermiston without three key starters.

None of this concerns Smith, who, despite not knowing anything about the rest of her roster, is confident she can evaluate the talent, put players in the best spot possible and hopefully win some games.

She said, however, that developing trust is going

to be important early on as she and the players get acclimated. "They have to

trust whoever's in charge," Smith said. "That's the big one."

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