

Hermiston plays host for playoffs

By SEAN HART
Staff Writer

In addition to being home for the Bulldogs, Kennison Field has become a home away from home for Eastern Oregon high school football teams during the state playoffs.

Last year, the 1A, 2A and 3A state championship football games were played on the turf in Hermiston, and all three title games will be played there again this Saturday.

This year's 3A semifinal between Vale and Scio and 1A semifinal between Crane and Adrian were played in Hermiston Nov. 21, and Mike Kay, the operations director for the Hermiston School District, said the games were well attended with three teams from Eastern Oregon.

"It's a great opportunity for us to provide a place for our east-side schools to play so they're not driving to Portland, and more importantly, it's a great boost for our economy here in town," he said.

According to a 2013-14 economic impact study conducted by ECONorthwest, visitors spent an average of \$60.48 per day in the Hermiston area — a total of more than \$4 million — while attending events such as regional and state playoffs.

The Oregon School Activities Association



STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

Vale Vikings football fans cheer their team to a 42-14 victory against the Scio Loggers in a 3A state football championships semifinal game Nov. 21 at Kennison Field in Hermiston. Eastern Oregon players, coaches and fans said they enjoy the facilities and the community.

requires semifinal and final football games to be played on a neutral field, preferably on artificial turf. While many larger schools have turf fields west of the Cascade Mountains, when Kennison Field's turf was completed in 2013, it joined a field in Bend as the only turf fields in Eastern Oregon.

Players, coaches and fans from this side of the state have been enjoying playing on the field and visiting the community. Adrian and Vale won the 1A and 3A state championships at Kennison Field last year, and both teams were happy to be back for semifinal games Nov. 21.

"It's pretty great," Adrian player Mike Griffin said of the facilities. "It's not as shocking as last year when we came, but still it's amazing."

Griffin said he was too young to have had to travel all the way to Portland for a game, but he thinks the shorter drive is beneficial for teams on this side of the state. Adrian head coach Paul Shenk agreed.

"That's the fairest way to do it," he said. "Meet halfway and go. It's good for everybody."

Vale fan Matt Hiatt said he traveled to Hermiston Friday and stayed in a hotel. He said the drive was better than to Portland, and he enjoyed the Hermiston community.



STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

The Adrian football team cheers during the 3A semifinal game between Vale and Scio before their 1A semifinal against Crane Nov. 21 at Kennison Field in Hermiston. Eastern Oregon players, coaches and fans said they enjoy the facilities and the Hermiston community.

"It's a very nice town, friendly people, very accommodating," he said.

Vale athletic director Tom Snook said the team stayed in a hotel Friday as well. He said Kay and Hermiston athletic director Blaine Ganvoa "do such a good job making everybody feel comfortable," and the facilities and location make Kennison Field a great fit.

"This is so much better for our fans," he said. "It's a shorter drive. The facility is really nice. Blaine and Mike go out of their way to make things very accommodating for our kids and our fans, so it's just a great experience for us. We're very lucky that those guys allow us to come here and play."



COURTESY PHOTO BY ERWIN WATSON

Students and instructors from Eastern Oregon Family Taekwondo in Stanfield pose after taking 4th place with 182 points at the 2015 Legacy Cup Taekwondo Tournament at Mt. Hood Community College on Nov. 14. Top row from left to right: Instructor Lorry Watson, Instructor Erwin Watson, Natividad Sanchez, Joseph Phillips, Melissa Shilhonik, Rene Sanchez, Vladimir Caldera, Mario Sanchez. Bottom row from left to right: Aaron Sanchez, Luis Ibarra, Jigjot Singh, Misael Sanchez, Osvaldo Sanchez, Sukprit Kaur, Instructor Tyler Watson, Instructor Bailey Watson.

Local dojo cleans up at Portland regional tourney

By SAM BARBEE
Staff Writer

With just 12 students, the Eastern Oregon Family Taekwondo dojo, based in Stanfield, finished in 4th place with 182 points at the 2015 Legacy Cup Taekwondo Tournament at Mt. Hood Community College Nov. 14.

More than 300 students from 26 schools competed in disciplines such as sparring, traditional forms, creative forms and board breaking. EOFTKD won 15 gold medals, worth eight points a piece, seven silver medals, worth five points and five three-point bronze medals. Students were awarded a point for simply participating.

There were tournaments for weapons and Gi jiu-jitsu, though no Eastern Oregon stu-

dents competed. Owner, operator and lead instructor Erwin Watson said some students have begun practicing with weapons to compete in tournaments next year. Watson also said referees and other instructors were impressed with his students and often asked where they were from. He said it only took reference to Pendleton for them to understand where Stanfield is.

"I'm proud to say how impressed and proud (I am of) each and every one of our students performed this weekend," Watson said. "Not only the students, but a big thank you for all their parents that came to support their kids. Without them none of their success would have not been accomplished."

SPORTS CALENDAR

Wednesday, December 2

BOYS BASKETBALL
Umatilla @ Irrigon, 7:30 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Umatilla @ Irrigon, 6 p.m.

Friday, December 4

BOYS BASKETBALL
Hermiston @ Kamiakin, 7:30 p.m.
Stanfield @ South Wasco Tournament, TBD
Echo vs. Monument/Dayville @ Fossil, TBD

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Hermiston @ Kamiakin, 5:45 p.m.
Stanfield @ South Wasco Tournament, TBD
Echo vs. Monument/Dayville @ Fossil, 3 p.m.

Saturday, December 5

BOYS BASKETBALL
Stanfield @ South Wasco Tournament, TBD
Echo vs. Condon/Wheeler @ Fossil, TBD
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Stanfield @ South Wasco Tournament
Echo vs. Condon/Wheeler @ Fossil, 4 p.m.

WRESTLING

Hermiston @ End of the Oregon Trail Tourney (Oregon City), 9 a.m.
Echo @ Irrigon Tournament, TBD

Tuesday, December 8

BOYS BASKETBALL
Hermiston @ Hanford, 7:30 p.m.
Umatilla @ Weston-McEwen, 7:30 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Hermiston @ Hanford, 5:45 p.m.
Umatilla @ Weston-McEwen, 6 p.m.

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