

HOLCOMB LEADING PENDLETON RESURGENCE

By **SAM BARBEE**
Staff Writer

Morgan Holcomb could feel the pressure. A great deal, in fact.

The junior 145-pounder from Pendleton failed to place at last year's state tournament despite being the second-seeded wrestler at his weight. Entering this year's tourney, he was worried it would happen again.

"All I was worried about was placing because that didn't happen last year and I was seeded second," he said. "I'm glad I placed. Hopefully I can do better next year, you know, hopefully make it into the finals."

Fortunately for him, it did not. After losing by fall to Crater's Logan Meek, a match Holcomb was winning until a mistake gave Meek the leverage he needed to pin Holcomb, the junior rallied with two pins — the first in 14 seconds and the second in the third round — to finish as the third-best wrestler at 145 pounds in the 5A division.

"It's a lot of joy for placing third, because you're third out of the state, you know?" he said. "It takes off a whole bunch of pressure. After my loss in the semis, I was angry. I was mad at myself ... There was a lot of stress on that loss. Then my fellas said, 'You know what? Use that anger and get to third.' And I did."

"I'm disappointed Morgan ended up third and we're not wrestling (in the finals)," Pendleton coach Fred Phillips said. "But a lot of times for a good kid like that who had some goals set on the state championship, it's hard to come back and win matches after you've lost and you're dream's been crushed."

As a whole, Pendleton's youth suggested there is reason for excitement not far on the horizon for the Bucks. Though Buckaroos wrestlers only won one match outside of Holcomb — a first-round consolation bout by freshman 126-pounder Alex Rendon — Pendleton coach Fred Phillips was happy with the way his young guys handled themselves.

"The kids who were here competed hard," Phillips said. "They've seen it now. We get 'em all back. They're ready to get back at it."

In the 3A bracket, Riverside Pirates coach Richard Rockwell said his team "overperformed," but that's not a bad thing. He said the Pirates started the season with 22 kids, but was down to nine by districts. From there, eight qualified for state, and five of those placed at the state tournament, led by high finisher Aristotle Rockwell at 126



Pendleton's Morgan Holcomb (in green) wrestles to third place in the 145-pound weight class Saturday at the state wrestling championships at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

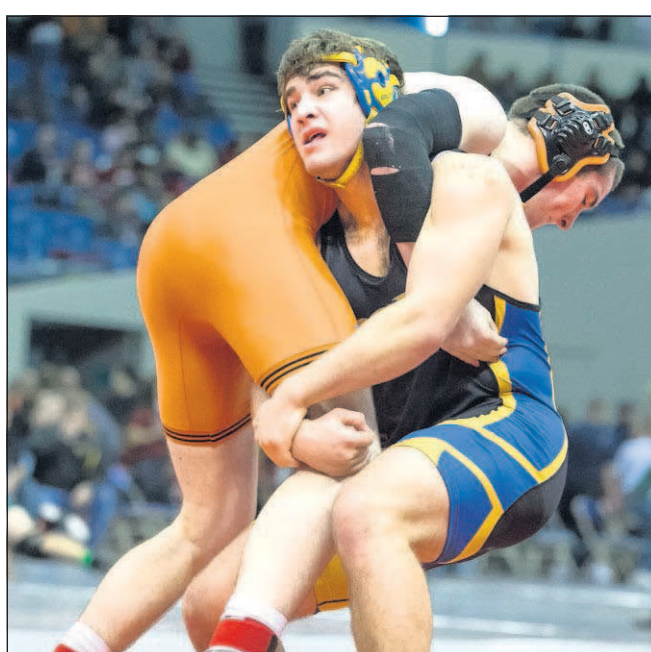
PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 2
BOYS BASKETBALL
Hermiston vs. La Salle Prep, 6 p.m.

Thursday, March 3
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Umatilla @ Dayton @ North Bend HS, 1:30 p.m.

Friday, March 4
GIRLS BASKETBALL
Hermiston vs. TBD, TBD
IF UMATILLA WINS: vs. Portland Christian or Coquille @ Marshfield HS, noon
IF UMATILLA LOSES: vs. Portland Christian or Coquille @ Marshfield HS, 8 a.m.

Saturday, March 5
GIRLS BASKETBALL
IF UMATILLA WINS FRIDAY: vs. TBD @ Marshfield HS, 6:30 p.m.
IF UMATILLA LOSES FRIDAY: vs. TBD @ Marshfield HS, 9 a.m.



Heppner's Cord Flynn (in blue) wrestles Nestucca's Chase Cook to a semifinal victory Saturday in the 2A 195-pound weight class during the state wrestling championships at Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

moment," Aristotle said of his father. "I could've shared it with my brother last year, but I messed up. This was definitely for everyone I let down last year.

"All I want to do now is go have some Red Robin."

Ricardo Mendoza, who started the season at 195 pounds, injured his shoulder in the finals at Riverside's first tournament at Mac-Hi, and returned in time to make a final at the Pirates' final tourney in Heppner. Then Rockwell and his staff agreed to bump him up to 220 pounds for districts, based on the field of guys at 195. It paid off, with the junior placing

third.

Overall, the Pirates placed five of its eight participants, which would certainly bode well for the Riverside program.

"All of them come back except for one," he said. "We got some youth and we're building. So, when I'm driving back (to Boardman), I think we're feeling pretty good."

The Mac-Hi Pioneers placed five, led by 285-pound senior Rosendo Moreno. Moreno almost didn't advance to the final, but a late comeback on Ian Johnson of Hidden Valley propelled him.

Moreno was down 5-2



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

An exhausted Rosendo Moreno, of Mac-Hi, receives congratulations from his coaches Saturday after winning his 3A state finals wrestling match in the 295-pound weight class at Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

inside the final minute of the third period. Starting the round on top, he needed to either stick Johnson to win, or get a three-point near fall to force an overtime. He got the three points, then pinned Johnson shortly thereafter with six seconds left. He advanced to the semis after a 6-2 battle with Dylan Porter of Elimra that had to be settled with a tiebreaker. In his final bout, Moreno beat Twister McComas of Banks 3-1. McComas sprained Moreno's ankle at the Pios' first tournament in Estacada in the final, forcing Moreno to miss some time.

"He came back in the biggest match of the year, and beat the kid who gave him his first loss of the year," Mac-Hi coach Chad Kilburg said.

Also placing for Mac-Hi were Riley Chester (5th, 132), Cole Skramstad (5th, 152), Alyxander Shaw (5th, 170) and Spencer Shaw (5th, 220).

In 2A/1A action, the Heppner Mustangs brought two wrestlers and advanced both to their respective finals. Ryan Smith, who was the two-time defending state champ at 113 pounds, lost his first match of the year to Derrick Hargraves, the top-seeded 113-pounder from Riddle. Wrestling in his first state tournament, 195-pounder Cord Flynn had the top seed, but lost Culver's Jaiden Jones by pin.

Flynn was holding his own against the superbly athletic Jones, but a slight mistake and crazy scramble ended his season. He was very emotional afterwards, and Heppner coach Mark Lemmon said he reminded the junior of how much he actually accomplished.

"If I were to say I wasn't disappointed, I'd be lying," he said. "...It's hard tonight, but it's really something to be proud of. Silver's not that bad. Being in the final, being in the spotlight is an accomplishment."

Lemmon had nothing but good things to say about Smith, who improved immensely in his career at Heppner.

"Ryan is a kid to be really proud of" Lemmon said. "He's come a long way. He's matured a lot. He's been a leader on the team. I was concerned with who would be the leader on the team, and he stepped right up."

Echo/Stamfield, in its second year as a program, qualified two for state, but just one — Kyle Ranger — made it to Saturday. Ranger was pinned by Dillion St. Onge in the first round, but coach Monte Toombs was happy with how the weekend went for his Cougars.

Irrigon's Kasey Kroske was one match away from placing, but came up short, being pinned by Neah-Kahn-Nie's Anthony Ramirez. Ramirez went on to finish third.

TEAM FINISHES:

1A/2A:		
7.	Heppner	36.0
27.	Irrigon	4.0
3A:		
7.	Riverside	91.5
25.	Echo/Stamfield	3.0
4A:		
6.	McLoughlin	83.0
24.	Pendleton	21.5

CHAMPIONS:

3A 126 — Aristotle Rockwell (Riverside)
4A 28 — Rosendo Moreno (McLoughlin)

PLACERS:

5A 145 — Morgan Holcomb (Pendleton)	3rd
4A 132 — Riley Chester (Mac-Hi)	5th
4A 152 — Cole Skramstad (Mac-Hi)	5th
4A 170 — Alyxander Shaw (Mac-Hi)	5th
4A 220 — Spencer Shaw (Mac-Hi)	5th
5A 113 — Silvestre Vazquez (Riverside)	5th
3A 132 — Tyler Hancock (Riverside)	4th
3A 220 — Ricardo Mendoza (Riverside)	3rd
3A 220 — Anthony Kernal (Riverside)	6th

Bulldog freshmen basketball teams finish amazing year

Freshman boys go undefeated

By **SAM BARBEE**
Staff Writer

The Hermiston freshman basketball team completed an undefeated season, going 24-0.

The Bulldogs averaged 75 points per game as a team and allowed just 50.

Freshman girls complete stellar season

By **SAM BARBEE**
Staff Writer

The Hermiston freshman girls basketball team wrapped up a 19-win season last week with a win over the Pendleton Buckaroos.

The Bulldogs, coached by Ron Sivey, went 19-2, and won the fi-

nal two games of its series with the Bucks, avenging a 35-28 loss in January.

"This group of girls came into the season with a lot to learn and I think they have done a great job!" Sivey wrote. "It was truly a team effort. Every game where were different leaders on the floor. They are a very athletic group and when the focus and

work ethic are there, they are a very tough team."

Sophia Streeter led the Bulldogs in points per game (6.95 min. 10 games played) and rebounding (114), had 28 steals, 17 assists and 16 blocks. Megan Wampler averaged more than nine points per game, but played in just nine games.

Taylor Greene led the team in field goal and free throw percentage at 43 and 56 percent, respectively, and also led the team in blocks with 34. Joanna Rosales led the team in steals with 48, and Sharidan Deike had the most assists with 20.

As a team, the Bulldogs averaged 38.8 ppg and shot 31 percent from the floor.

CHAMPS:

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ings. By the end of Friday's action, the Bulldogs had a 40-point lead and was in the driver's seat to bring home yet another banner. Shortly through the semifinals — through which Hermiston went perfect — the Bulldogs essentially wrapped it up. Hermiston had six wrestlers in the final rounds. Crater, the second-place team, had just three.

Valen Wyse, who earned his first state title at 152 pounds with a well-wrestled match against Tanner Earhart of Dallas, said there's a legacy set forth by the teams of his coach, Kyle Larson, and, in a sense, it's his team's responsibility to continue it.

That continued success of Hermiston's wrestlers isn't an accident and it isn't assumed. Though Hermiston has been confident in its abilities all season, it proved to be justified. The Bulldogs scored more than 200 points on the weekend, and beat Crater by nearly 70 in team points.

For Wagner, it's as sweet as the first one.

"No matter how many times you win, it always feels good, because if you don't put in the time, the effort, the sacrifice, the blood sweat and tears, you're not gonna be on top," he said. "And so, it just feels that much better to know all your work paid off."

As an individual, this is his first one. The senior 126-pounder cruised through his state tournament, pinning

his first three opponents until Brawley Lamer of Crescent Valley provided the only real challenge, which Wagner won anyway 2-0. Smiling and not really knowing what to say, Wagner was understandably elated.

"It's just so overwhelming, so exciting," he said. "It feels good to be on top, to know you're on top, and everyone else to know you're on top."

Wyse said last week he wanted to "bully" people and "make it entertaining." He certainly did that, pinning his first three opponents and never wrestled more than half a match. He faced Earhart at the Reser's Tournament of Champions in January, and knew the Dallas coaches would have a specific game-plan. They did — single leg

take downs and movement — but Wyse stood firm, even while trailing.

"It was very physical and just a matter of who was going to break first," he said. "I knew that after the first takedown. I wasn't going to break first"

But despite however much success the Bulldogs have, the past never falls too far behind. Many Bulldogs talked about the legacy left by alumni, including Larson. A word kept popping up, too: responsibility.

"The state tournament and being competitive at Hermiston is holding the standard up," Coleman said. "They set a culture and not letting that culture die is our duty."

TEAM SCORES:

5A:		
1.	Hermiston	226.5
2.	Churchill	137.0
3.	Crater	132.0
4.	Dallas	120.0
5.	Lebanon	114.0
CHAMPIONS:		
126	Andy Wagner 1x	
152	Valen Wyse 1x	

180	Bob Coleman 1x
195	Sam Colbray 4x

PLACERS:

132	CJ Hendon 3rd
113	Liam Tarvin 2nd
170	Brock McDonough
2nd	
195	John-Henry Line
2nd	

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