

Herald Sports



Hermiston wins in final strokes

Hermiston Herald

The four swimmers on Hermiston's 400-yard freestyle relay "B-team" came through big in what was likely their final event of the season. Their fifth-place finish delivered a team title for the Bulldogs boys at the Columbia River Conference district meet in Hood River.

Caleb Jorgensen, Jose Roman, Lane Stevenson and Alexis Perez weren't one of four Bulldogs to earn a spot at the state finals, but their combined

time of 4 minutes, 22.31 seconds was enough to finish ahead of Pendleton's second relay unit, and the four points they earned toward the team tally put the Bulldogs over the top.

Hermiston edged Pendleton 93-91 in team points.

The Bulldogs arrived at their championship point total despite winning just one event thanks to 24 top-six finishes. Pendleton's boys, meanwhile, won six gold medals but had just 17 total placers.

The Buckaroos earned

14 points by winning the 400 freestyle relay, but trailed Hermiston by six coming into the last event.

Hermiston's district champion was Ryan Barnard, who easily held off Pendleton's Avery Madril to win the 200 individual medley in a time of 2:11.84.

Barnard also placed second in the 100 freestyle (52.44) and swam for the Bulldogs' state-bound 200 freestyle relay team that placed second (1:37.97) along with Carson Wrath-

all, Seth Buck and Ean Buck.

Wrathall also qualified for state by placing second in the 200 freestyle (1:55.69). None of the Bulldogs' other second-place finishes were quick enough to meet the qualifying times for state, although the season may not be over yet for Roman and Perez, who are listed as alternates for the 200 freestyle relay.

The state finals begin at 9 a.m. on Friday at Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham.



PHOTO BY MIKE WEBER

The Hermiston High Bulldogs boys swimming team won the Columbia River Conference District Championship Saturday at the Hood River Aquatic Center in Hood River. Bulldogs swimmers include Ryan Barnard, Ean Buck, Seth Buck, Ivan Cardenas, Caleb Jorgensen, Ryan Middleton, Keaton Mikami, Alexis Perez, Jose Roman, Carson Wrathall, assistant coach Kerri Hodges and head coach Kevin Hamblin. Hermiston team members not pictured include Lane Stevenson, Preston Strong and Ryan Wiley.

DAWGS ATTEND TO TASK AT HAND

After winning district titles, top wrestlers look to state meet

By ERIC SINGER
Staff Writer

HERMISTON — The Hermiston Bulldogs wrapped up four individual district championships on Saturday evening, but none of the four champions seemed too ecstatic about the feats.

"It's just another day," said junior Joey Gutierrez, who won the 182-pound bracket, "The bigger picture is state, but it's a good feeling for now. Monday it's time to get back to work."

"I've experienced this two times before," senior C.J. Hendon, who took the 138-pound title, "so it's nice I guess, something that I've earned."

But for a program that heads to Portland in two weeks with a goal of earning its 11th state championship, winning a district title is just another accolade. Hermiston head coach Kyle Larson said that mindset from his team is pleasing to see.

"I like that their heads are on straight," he said. "I'm glad (state) is already in their minds ... we expect a lot out of these guys, we've won 10 state titles and we absolutely expect to win our 11th."

As a team, Hermiston finished in a tie with Redmond for the district championship with 333 points.

The Bulldogs had two chances to seal the solo victory as both Kenny Bevan (220) and Beau Blake (285) wrestled in the championship matches, however both Dawgs lost by fall to keep Redmond in it. The Bulldogs will be sending 14 wrestlers to the state tournament and had



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston's A.J. Tuia attempts to pin Pendleton's Mycheal Pointer in the 145 pound weight class Friday at the district tournament in Hermiston. Tuia went on to win the district title on Saturday after he defeated teammate Wade Kirkpatrick by a 7-2 decision.

15 wrestlers place in the district tournament.

Hermiston's first victory of the day came with Hendon at 138 pounds, who took down Pendleton's Jeff Kovach by fall at the 3:23 mark to earn his third district title of his career. Hendon said that going against a Pendleton opponent mixed with the tight race his team was in with Redmond got him pretty fired up for the match.

"Since times have changed the rivalry with Pendleton isn't as strong but to me it's still there," Hendon said. "And plus it was more than just a rivalry with that match, we needed the pins we need the bonus points."

Senior Valen Wyse was

pleased to have the district tournament at home this year because he liked hearing the loud cheers from the home crowd.

"It's been very comfortable. I like having our fans come out and watch us perform," he said. "It kind of gets the fire going under you so you can go out and give the fans something to cheer about."

Wyse, wrestling at 170 pounds, had a familiar opponent in the championship match as he took on fellow Bulldog Julio Leiva. Wyse ended up winning the championship by pinning Leiva at the 3:53 mark in the second round, and admitted afterward that it's always a little odd to wrestle a teammate in a champi-

onship match.

"It's difficult because the fans are cheering for both of you, so you just have to tune that out and put on a good show," Wyse said. "But it's really encouraging to know you're from one of the toughest programs and that we have two guys in the finals. But now I fully expect to meet up with Julio in the finals at state again too because he's a contender, a great competitor and a great training partner."

Hermiston also had another pair in the finals at 145 pounds, as Adrian Tuia met up with Wade Kirkpatrick with the title on the line. Kirkpatrick controlled the match through the first round, but as soon as the second round start-

Hermiston State Qualifiers

- 106 - Ruben Madrigal (3rd)
- 113 - Gage Shipley (4th)
- 126 - Jesus Rodriguez (4th)
- 132 - Oscar Lopez (2nd)
- 138 - CJ Hendon (1st)
- 145 - Adrian Tuia (1st)
- 145 - Wade Kirkpatrick (2nd)
- 170 - Valen Wyse (1st)
- 170 - Julio Leiva (2nd)
- 182 - Joey Gutierrez (1st)
- 195 - Sean Stewart (4th)
- 220 - Kenny Bevan (2nd)
- 220 - Corey Mason (3rd)
- 285 - Beau Blake (2nd)

ed, Tuia took over and earned a 7-1 decision victory.

Larson said overall, he was mostly happy with the way his Bulldogs wrestled over the two-day tournament. And as for his star of the tournament, he singled out not one of his champions, but the runner-up at 132 pounds Oscar Lopez. Lopez started the tournament as a No. 6 seed, and upset the No. 3 seed and No. 2 seed in the bracket to advance to the title, where he eventually lost to Pendleton's Alex Rendon.

"Oscar, that's my guy coming in as a six seed ... that's absolutely wrestling above his potential and that's what we like to see," Larson said. "At the beginning of the year Oscar started at 152 pounds and now he's finally at a weight where he feels comfortable and can compete."

Now Hermiston will return to mats for a grueling week of practice to prepare for the state tournament, and it feels confident in its abilities to add another banner to the walls in the Dawg House.

"I think we're sending the right number of people to state as we expected to," Wyse said. "We're going to have to come in and wrestle tough for sure, but we're just preparing and getting ready to put on a show at the state tournament."

Hoops recap: Hermiston can't cool Pendleton's hot hand

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Pendleton senior guard Caden Smith hit three straight three pointers and sank Pendleton's first 11 points of the fourth quarter Thursday, and his teammates hit their free throws in the final minutes for a 47-39 win over Hermiston.

Until his three-pointer with 25 seconds to play in the third, Smith was just 2 of 11 from the field with four points guarded by Hermiston sophomore Jordan Ramirez.

"Jordan's 5-foot-10 and 100-whatever pounds, he doesn't weigh much, but the kid works his butt off," said Hermiston coach Casey Arstein. "He's probably the best defender in the conference when it comes to guarding the best player."

Hermiston came out driving to the rim almost at will in the first quarter to take a 13-6 lead, but found the points much tougher to come by the rest of the game. Hermiston's Xavier Rambo scored eight of his 11 points in the first, and Chance Flores had five of his 11 in the frame, but Hermiston was forced outside when the Bucks shifted to a zone defense and went

5-of-22 from behind the arc.

Hermiston will celebrate senior night at its next home game on Friday, Feb. 17, when they take on Hood River at 7 p.m. They played The Dalles Tuesday but the score was not available by press time.

STANFIELD 63, PILOT ROCK 59 — The Stanfield Tigers held off a late charge by the Pilot Rock Rockets to hang on for a victory to end the regular season for both teams on Saturday night.

The victory was the 17th consecutive win for the Tigers, who now head into the district tournament as the No. 1 overall seed as well as holding the No. 1 OSAA ranking in Class 2A.

Ryan Bailey led Stanfield (18-1, 8-0 CBC) with 14 points and Thyler Monkus had 12. Brody Woods and Tony Flores each scored 11 points apiece. Tracker Denny led all scorers with 22 points for Pilot Rock (11-9, 4-4).

Stanfield has a bye in the district tournament, and will play for the title on Saturday at 3 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center.

On Friday Jose Garcia poured in a game-high 24

points and Dylan Grogan added 20 as the Tigers pulled away early on senior night to beat Weston-McEwen 99-70.

UMATILLA 57, RIVERSIDE 41 — At Umatilla, the Vikings clinched the Eastern Oregon League championship and an automatic berth to the state postseason with a win over rival Riverside on Friday night.

Three Vikings reached double figures in the game, led by Kaden Webb with 13 and followed by Sebastian Garcia and Justin Maret with 12 points apiece. Eon Castillo led Riverside with 13 points, the lone Pirate to reach double figures.

The team followed the performance Saturday with a 68-52 win over Vale in Umatilla to close out the regular season.

Tyrone Morris started his first game of the season for Umatilla and led all scorers with 21 points, while Kaden Webb put up 18 points.

"The boys are on a mission now," Umatilla coach Derek Lete said. "They knew wins and momentum were huge going into districts and they played well tonight."

Umatilla now will await the winner of Burns and Ir-

rigan in the district semifinal game on Tuesday night, and will play for the district title on Friday night.

ECHO 52, WALLOWA 29 — At Echo, the Cougars took down Wallowa on Friday to close out their home slate for the 2016-17 season.

Devan Craig and Klay Jensen each scored 12 points apiece for Echo, and Morgan Marcum and Ty Mulder each scored 11 points.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

HERMISTON 62, PENDLETON 31 — In their previous meeting, Pendleton had erased a 16-point fourth quarter deficit for a stunning victory. Hermiston was having none of that on Thursday.

Hermiston freshman Jazlyn Romero came up big for her team in the fourth quarter and the Bulldogs continued to extend their lead until the buzzer finally sounded on a 62-31 rout.

"We knew that we had to keep going, pushing, we couldn't let up," said Romero, who scored eight of her team-high 21 points in the fourth quarter. "I've just got to thank my teammates for getting me the shots open and passing me the ball, it was a

great team win."

Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez said it was supposed to go down back on Jan. 31 in Pendleton when the Bucks came back from 16 down to win 62-31 and snap a 26-game unbeaten streak in the rivalry for the Dawgs.

Maddy Juul added 12 points and six rebounds, and Kynzee Padilla chipped in 11 points, seven rebounds and four steals.

Hermiston (10-9, 4-1 CRC) created havoc for Pendleton's offense with its half-court defense, and the Buckaroos finished the game with 24 turnovers. Ten of those were in the first quarter as the Bulldogs raced out to a 19-10 lead.

PILOT ROCK 58, STANFIELD 26 — At Pilot Rock, the Rockets finished out their regular season schedule with a big 58-26 win over Stanfield, while celebrating senior night on Saturday.

Kendra Hart and Natalia Esquivel each scored eight points apiece to lead Stanfield (4-16, 1-7).

On Friday the Tigers kept a better handle on Weston-McEwen guard Chelsea Quempt's this

time around, but the junior TigerScot still managed a game-high 20 points to lead her team to a Columbia Basin Conference win 46-31 on Friday night.

Brittin Braithwaite carried Stanfield with 10 points and 13 rebounds, and Shyanne Connell added nine rebounds to go with five points.

VALE 40, UMATILLA 22 — At Umatilla, the Vikings finished off the season with a 40-22 loss to Vale on Saturday night.

Aleesha Watson finished off her career with a game-high 14 points for Umatilla (6-17, 1-9 EOL) and Lauryn Journot had six points. Vale was ahead 19-9 at halftime and Umatilla was held below 30 points for the third straight game.

On Friday the Riverside Pirates ended their 2016-17 season by sweeping the season series over rival Umatilla with a 44-23 win.

Lacey Mashos led Riverside (9-10, 3-7 EOL) with 13 points while Alondra Caldera added eight and Skylar Wightman seven. Aleesha Watson carried Umatilla with 16 points.