

Herald Sports

Follow sports on Twitter
@HHeraldSports

OSAA goes with six-level structure

Committee narrows focus with deadlines approaching

By MATT ENTRUP
Staff Writer

The Oregon School Activities Association announced on Thursday it will go forward as a six-classification entity, based on the show of support for maintaining the status quo from a majority of the state's athletic directors.

The choice between five and six classifications boiled down to which would create the most competitive balance, and since more athletic directors believed it would be the current six-class system, the OSAA let democracy rule.

"After lengthy discussion and review last Monday, the (Classification and Districting Committee) believes the time has come to narrow their approach to one classification system as there is plenty of work still to be done with cutoff points, league alignments and school placements prior to the group finalizing their recommendations to the Executive Board and Delegate Assembly," the OSAA said in its most current update following an April 24 public meeting in Sunriver, the eighth of the

process to determine high school classifications for the 2018-22 block.

During that meeting each classification presented its vote from private meetings held the previous night, and the 6A model won by a total count of 94-88. (Class 1A did not vote on a class model, but instead voted 23-16 in favor of a cutoff of 95 enrollment between 1A and 2A.)

Class 6A athletic directors were "virtually unanimous" in their support of a five tier system, and 5A ADs voted 22-3 in favor of the six class model.

For Hermiston, the argument may be a moot point as the Bulldogs remained steadfast in their desire to join Washington Interscholastic Activities Association for 2018. Attempts to reach Hermiston athletic director Larry Usher for comment were unsuccessful.

Hermiston is still waiting for the green light from the WIAA to make the move, though, and in the OSAA's most current proposal would be a Class 6A team playing in the six-team Inter County Conference with road trips to Gresham and Bend for league games.

Pendleton would go into a five-team Class 5A Intermountain Conference along with teams from central Oregon as well as current league foes The Dalles and Hood River Valley.

The 4A and 2A athletic directors were largely in favor of keeping the current system with tweaks to allow for teams to petition to play down, or to determine which schools should be playing up despite a lower overall enrollment.

Class 3A was a near split, though, with the vote coming out 21-19 in favor of the current structure.

Umatilla Athletic Director Scott Bow said it was mostly private schools and those on the edge of bumping down to 2A who wanted to eliminate a class.

He said the 5-classification model did nothing to alleviate his school's travel issues, and would only put them into a league with even more travel where they'd be the smallest school.

Bow said he did understand the concerns of his fellow ADs, though, and is looking for the OSAA to do even more to balance the playing field by taking more factors than total enrollment into account when placing teams in their classifications.

"From here it's just going to be talking about the per diem, how they're rating the competition in sports," he said. "It's really going to be curious to see where their final numbers do come out, if they do make some major changes."

See OSAA, A10



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Hermiston's Jordan Ramirez and Kaden Caldwell converge on the ball in right field during Friday's game against Hood River Valley at the Armand Larive baseball field.

BULLDOGS GET LATE-SEASON WIN AGAINST HOOD RIVER

Hermiston wins crucial game against league-leading Eagles

By ERIC SINGER
Staff Writer

With a mere three games remaining in the regular season, the Hermiston baseball team gathered for Friday's game needing all the wins it could get as it aims to earn a postseason berth.

However, getting a win on Friday would not be easy as standing in Hermiston's way was the Columbia River Conference leader Hood River Eagles. Though, that did not intimidate the Bulldogs who had beaten the Eagles in the teams last meeting on April 18. And just like the prior meeting, Hermiston was the team that came out on top on Friday as the Bulldogs came back from an two-run deficit in the first inning and held off the Eagles for a 5-4 victory on a blustery day at Armand Larive Middle School.

"We're ecstatic for the W," Hermiston assistant coach John Christy said afterward. "I felt like we played loose and played our game rather than tighten up and let the moment take a hold of us. I feel like we did a good job of just being relaxed and coming back."

The Bulldogs (10-13, 4-6 CRC) rode a fantastic pitching performance by junior Lukas Tolan, who lasted six innings and struck out four while allowing nine hits and just three runs. He allowed two runs in the first inning helped by a defensive error, and gave up one unearned run in the



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Hermiston pitcher Lukas Tolan winds up during Friday's game against Hood River Valley at the Armand Larive baseball field.

sixth, which bookended four innings of mastery. Tolan allowed five hits in those innings, but stranded six runners to keep his team in the game.

"I just knew I had to trust my defense and it would all work out," Tolan said. "I knew I had to hang in there and they would make some plays for me."

"Lukas really pitched his butt off today," Christy said of his pitcher. "The second inning on, he really focused on working down and letting his ball move and he settled right in there."

Though it was very early, perhaps the biggest moment of the game for Hermiston came in the bottom of the first inning. Having surrendered the 2-0 lead in the top of the frame, the Bulldogs managed to get a run back thanks to an RBI single

up the middle by Wyatt Noland which helped the Bulldogs re-gain some momentum.

"When I think about that first inning, giving up two but getting one back was huge for us," Christy said.

The Bulldogs then tied the game in the second inning on an RBI groundout by Jordan Ramirez which scored Daniel Gossler from third base.

As the game moved along, the high winds that rolled through the area continued to get stronger, with gusts of 20-25 miles-per-hour blowing straight out toward centerfield. Those winds made it tough on both defenses, especially for fly balls and in the fourth inning it played into Hermiston's favor.

See BASEBALL, A10

Bulldogs duo caps undefeated run

Hermiston boys fall in league match to Hood River

Hermiston Herald

Thomas McCullough and Patrick Wicks finished off an undefeated Columbia River Conference season on Thursday when Hermiston boys tennis went to Hood River to take on the Eagles.

Despite the strong lead from their No. 1 doubles team, the Bulldogs were unable to get the win and were trailing in the final two matches that were called early due to lightning.

Hood River took the 4-2 victory, and Hermiston's only other win was by Koby Grigg and Jason Morris at No. 2 doubles.

"It's been a tough season, losing the top half of our lineup (to graduation) and having kids step in to replace them that haven't had a lot of court time," said Hermiston coach Shann West. "We've got guys that are fighting, and sometimes they fight too much and it bites them in the rear."

That wasn't the case for Wicks and McCullough, which represent the Bulldogs' best chance at a state berth this season and beat twins Adam and Luke Harter, 6-1, 6-1.

"These guys headed into districts have a shot, and hopefully we can get them prepared this week," West said.

Grigg and Morris beat Charlie Bickford and Soren Rajani 6-2, 7-5.

UP NEXT

The Bulldogs won't have another match until the district championships on May 12-13 in Sunriver.

Singles	Sawyer Bogard (HR) def. Kaleb Jorgensen 6-2, 6-0
	Simon Harsani (HR) def. Jose Mendoza 7-5, 6-0
Doubles	Patrick Wicks/Thomas McCullough (HM) Adam Harter/Luke Harter 6-1, 6-1
	Koby Grigg/Jason Morris (HM) def. Charlie Bickford/Soren Rajani 6-2, 7-5
	Arnoldo Perez/Reese Carroll (HR) def. Matt Eckhardt/Austin Garcia 6-2, 6-2
	Jay Fielder/Ben Fick (HR) def. Alan Zepe-da/Eli Muniz 6-4, 6-3

Hermiston softball upsets Eagles

Jones' home run proves to be enough for Bulldogs

Hermiston Herald

The Hermiston softball team earned itself a huge victory on Friday afternoon, outlasting the Hood River Eagles, 1-0, at Rocky Heights Elementary.

The only run of the game came in the second inning, when Hermiston (8-15, 2-8 CRC) senior Ellery Jones blasted a solo home run to

lead off the inning. After Jones' hit, it was a pitching duel between Hermiston's Julissa Almaguer and Hood River's (13-9, 7-2) Hannah McNerney, with Almaguer coming out on top. The junior lefty allowed just six hits and one walk in seven innings to go with two strikeouts.

"Julissa threw lights out," Hermiston coach Kate Greenough said after the game.

Bulldogs catcher Bailee Noland had a solid game as well, as she collected two hits with a double and

a stolen base on offense, and also threw out two runners on the basepaths. Amanda Barron and Kalei Smith also collected hits for Hermiston.

The win snaps a three game losing streak for Hermiston and snaps a four-game winning streak for Hood River, who had been tied for first in the CRC with Pendleton.

		R	H	E
HRV	000000	0	—	0 6 0
HHS	010000	X	—	1 5 4
	W — Ju. Almaguer, L — H. McNerney, 2B — B. Noland (HHS), HR — E. Jones (HHS).			

Challenge accepted by runners

Hermiston Herald

More than 150 men, women and children gathered at Butte Park on Saturday morning for the annual Butte Challenge.

Runners and walkers participated in the four different races — a 5K run, 5K walk, 10K run and a shorter Kid's Butte Scoot — though only 114 of them completed their respective races. The 5K run was the most popular of the day, with 61 finishing with an average time of 32:01 to finish the three-mile course.

Angie Treadwell, a

41-year-old from Hermiston, was the overall 5K champion as she crossed the finish line in 20:35. She had a 28-second cushion on the second place finisher Melody Sanchez who finished at 21:03. Jaysen Rodriguez of Hermiston was the men's 5K champion as he finished in 21:30, edging out Joe Hodge (21:31) who took second place.

In the 5K walk, 58 people began the race and 34 finished with Garrett Stone, of Hermiston, leading the pack with a time of 26:31, while Taylor Blackburn was second, Kristy

Blackburn (30:59) third, Nick Jones (31:44) fourth, and Tamara Bock (35:01) was fifth.

And of the 19 finishers of the 10K race, Athena-native Stephanie Hodgson claimed overall victory as the 33-year-old ran the race in 27:23, nearly four minutes ahead of second place finisher Jennifer Jensen (31:11) of Hermiston. Cairo Puzey of Calgary, Alberta, Canada was the men's top finisher at 31:44, while Tommy Rivers Puzey (38:24) was second.

The annual event, which

completed its 18th year this year, is a fund-raising event for the Hermiston cross country program to pay for travel costs and meet fees for the team. As of deadline on Tuesday, This year's event raised about \$3,000.

Full results can be found online by visiting ButteChallenge.ItsYourRace.com.

Butte Challenge Top Finishers

Women	5K Run
1. Angie Treadwell (20:35)	1. Taylor Blackburn (30:57)
2. Melody Sanchez (21:03)	2. Kristy Blackburn (30:59)
3. Alaina Lemmon (23:49)	3. Tamara Bock (35:01)

4. Sandra Aguilar (24:05)	Men
5. Hailey Gardner (25:13)	1. Jaysen Rodriguez (21:30)
	2. Joe Hodge (21:31)
	3. Cody Radant (22:14)
	4. Juan Sanchez (22:45)
	5. Damian Carrillo (22:49)
	5K Walk
	1. Taylor Blackburn (30:57)
	2. Kristy Blackburn (30:59)
	3. Tamara Bock (35:01)
	4. Lynne Uitto (42:06)
	5. Danita Smith (42:38)
	Men
	1. Garrett Stone (26:31)
	2. Nick Jones (31:44)
	3. Wesley Carnahan (42:41)
	4. Brad Knight (43:53)
	5. John Ballard (49:26)
	10K Run
	1. Stephanie Hodgson (27:23)
	2. Jennifer Jensen (31:11)
	3. Katie Puzey Hendrickson (36:16)
	4. Amy Puzey (38:49)
	5. Rosa Holt (44:51)
	Men
	1. Cairo Puzey (31:44)
	2. Tommy Rivers Puzey (38:24)
	3. Cameron Bendixsen (43:48)
	4. Larry Palmer (49:48)
	5. Wyatt Morris (49:53)



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Amy Puzey races to victory in the Butte Challenge women's 10-kilometer run on Saturday morning at Hermiston Butte Park.