FROM A1

The greatest Knight

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ STAFF WRITER

During Irrigon girls basketball head coach Mike Royer's extensive career, he has coached only a handful of players who reached the 1,000-point milestone — all of whom, until Saturday, Dec. 16 where from his years at Hermiston.

There's a certain kind of player how can accomplish this feat, Royer explained.

"It takes just consistency and you don't see that very often," he said.

It also takes years on the court at the varsity level to aid in the process. All of which are components of Irrigon senior Jada Burns' game.

The three-sport star athlete recently became the first Knight in the girls basketball program to notch 1,000 career points, and for Burns it was just like any other game.

"I was just wanting to win and it happened," Burns said of Saturday's game against La Grande, where her 10-point performance helped eclipse a career milestone that she had been working towards the past three years.

Burns' freshman year in 2014-15 was her first as the starting point guard for the Knights and it was also Royer's first year at the helm of the program. That year, Irrigon finished 7-13 overall and Burns earned first team all-Columbia Basin Conference honors after she scored 258 points, an average of 12.9 per game.

The following year, again with Burns leading the team on the court and Royer calling plays from the sideline, the team added two wins to its total, ending 11-13 overall. This was Irrigon's final year competing in Class 2A and Burns' output drastically increased and turned in 360 points as a sophomore, or 15 per game, once again earning herself first team all-Columbia Basin Conference honors and third team all-state honors.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Jada Burns concentrates before launching a free throw during Saturday's non-conference game against La Grande in Hermiston.

And last season in Irrigon's first go in Class 3A, Burns met the tougher competition head on and kept producing night in and night out. She scored 345 points, an average of 15.7 per game, and led the Knights to a winning record (12-10) and was the only junior to earn first team all-Eastern Oregon League honors.

Burns has opened this season with 115 points so far, and is one pace to add at least 150 more to her total by season's end.

Her early success has been a catalyst for the team, which started the year undefeated before heading into Saturday's matchup. But a 44-39 loss to the Tigers stained the Knights' record.

Burns' accomplishment wasn't overshadowed by the loss, but it was a hard pill to swallow. The defeat could have turned out to be another tally in the win column, but with Burns suffering from an illness this past week she was not at her best.

"I honestly think if Jada would have been healthy Saturday we might have had a shot at beating them because honestly, she shouldn't have even played," Royer said.

But playing through pain just comes with the territory.

"You just have to say it's for the team and fight through it," Burns said. "I mean, it was hard to go out there and feel like you couldn't move and couldn't breathe but I did what was best for the team."

As an all-league shortstop in softball, the junior varsity quarterback and varsity backup as a senior, and an all-league volleyball player, Burns has spent many years on the court, on the field and in the dirt.

Each experience building on one another, giving Burns confidence and increasing her athletic ability and smarts.

"It just took a lot of confidence," Burns said on the milestone. reaching

"You start at the beginning and you have to work your way up and you just realize you want to win and you'll do anything to win and if it wasn't for my teammates I definitely would never have gotten where I've gotten. We build as a team."

Burns' success has elevated the level of play across the Knights' 11-player roster. Now, in her senior year instead of racking up the buckets she's looking more to dish out assists to her teammates than she has in the past, and still more often than not is leading the team in points after its all said and done.

"This year (Jada) has been a leader for us in assists and just getting us set up and handling pressure," Royer said. "We always look to Jada and as a coach, it's been really nice having someone like her as a point guard the past four years.

"I mean, she knows how to score," he added. "She's a good scoring threat, and she just knows basketball. She's a smart basketball player, and is going to have a good senior year too."

BY THE WAY

BTW Continued from Page A1

ger,' such as seeing an old friend or family member you used to get high with," he said.

If you or someone you know needs help, call Lines for Life at 800-923-4357 or text RecoveryNow to 839863.

The Stanfield Public Library expressed appreciation to all the Santa's elves who volunteered their time during Santa's Workshop. The event included cookie decorating, writing a letter to Santa, an ornament craft and photos with Santa.

Library director Cecili Longhorn said a number of people were a great help,

including Sebastian Sanchez, Elizabeth Cervantes, Adam Lemmon, Jennifer Brown, Debbie Baros, Anna Lemmon, Kathy Wall, Jennifer Baros, Nikki McCann, Kitty Lamb, Samantha Vermillion, Aleta and Bruce Lemmon, Melissa Peterson and Frosty.

"You are all a treasure to Stanfield and we are lucky to have you in our community," Longhorn said.

Don't forget tickets are still on sale for the sixth season of Dancing with the Hermiston Stars. The Jan. 13 event features Cam-Josh Burns, Erik Juarez, Triwho will hit the dance floor

with professionals from the Utah Ballroom Dance

In addition to competing for the coveted mirror ball trophy, dancers are raising money to support Desert Arts Council's mission to promote the arts by offering activities and bringing visual and performing arts events to the area.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. They are available at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, Hermiston Parks & Recreation, by calling 541-667-5018 or www.desertartscouncil.com, where people can also "buy" votes for their favorite "star."

SECO Pallets, LLC. lit up the holiday season in Boardman with the Wel-

come Santa Drive.

Hitching up a custom-made sleigh — made, of course, with pallets the Boardman business organized a lighted parade. Ending at the SAGE Center, Santa Claus posed for photos and handed out gifts. Frankie Lezama said the third annual event has grown each year.

The SECO Pallets family expressed special thanks to others who helped make the event possible, including the **Morrow Country Sheriff's** Office, Boardman Police Department, Boardman **Rural Fire Protection** District, DJ Kora, C&D Drive In, Columbia River Dairy, the Leffler family, SAGE Center, Boardman Kiwanis Club and Santa Claus, aka Dan Huxoll.

FACTORY Continued from Page A1

2019, supporting growth in North America and overseas exports to Asia.

"It's really to keep up with demand," Stoolman said.

Mark Morgan, Hermiston assistant city manager, said the project is the largest ever investment in the Greater Hermiston Enterprise Zone, both in terms of capital investment and annual payroll.

We're very happy that Lamb Weston is choosing to make this investment in the Hermiston area," Morgan said. "This is an advanced operation, so these are not vour run-of-the-mill processing jobs. We anticipate these full time jobs to pay an average of at least \$18

per hour, plus benefits."

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown also approved an award from the state's Strategic Reserve Fund to move the project forward, which she said is part of her focus to boost the economy statewide.

"In addition to supporting our rural economies and booming agriculture industry, this investment provides critical workforce training opportunities in well-paying jobs in Eastern Oregon," Brown said.

Nathan Buehler, spokesman for Business Oregon, said the state is indeed finalizing the contract on a half-million dollar loan to Lamb Weston. That loan will include requirements for job creation, workforce training and building a wastewater system at the site.

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