

Irrigon sweeps doubleheader

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STAFF WRITER

The Irrigon basketball teams stuck to their winning ways at their home tournament Friday and Saturday. The girls handed Pilot Rock its first loss at the invite, while the boys ran away with a 81-71 win after Pilot Rock was unable to execute an upset.

After the girls bested the Rockets 47-41, the boys took the court at Irrigon Elementary, a change of venue because of a leak in the high school gym roof.

The packed house witnessed quite possibly the Knight's most electrifying game of the season, as they outlasted the Rockets to remain perfect on the season.

"It's an emotional game," head coach Davie Salas said. "I'm sure Pilot Rock always wants to beat the Irrigon kids and vice versa."

The opening quarter was a good indication of how close the game would be, as the teams ended the first eight minutes with the score knotted at 17 points apiece.

"When you take a team lightly, and that's what happened, you get a scare like that," Salas added.

In the second quarter, the lead changed four times before Pilot Rock went on a 7-1 run to have the upper hand at 28-22 with just over five minutes until halftime.

Although the game remained close throughout the next two quarters, Irrigon was slowly gaining the upper hand.

Thanks to a 3-pointer at the buzzer from Eric Carrillo — who finished with eight points — and another three from Lino Covarrubia to open the fourth, the Knights went on a 4-2 run to put the pressure back on the Rockets.

Emotions were running high as the two teams battled it out. Two technicals were given, one to each team. Keith Fleming received one in the first quarter after exchanging words with a Rocket, and Pilot Rock's Levi Thieme was tagged with one in the fourth for the same offense.

It was only after the technical that a win looked more and more probable for Irrigon.

Carrillo sunk three of the four free throws he was awarded because of the foul and the technical and from there the Knights sailed to its 11th straight win.

"You need these games," Salas said. "It lets you know you're not invincible. It lets you know you've got a lot of work to do."



Irrigon's Natalie Romero shoots the ball trailed by Pilot Rock's Sara Weinke in the Knights' 47-41 win against the Rockets on Friday in Irrigon.

STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS



Irrigon's Johnny Phillips shoots the ball guarded by Pilot Rock's Levi Thieme in the Knights' 81-71 win against the Rockets on Friday in Irrigon.

STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

The Knights were led by Fleming, who knocked down 26 points — 15 of which came in the second half. Johnny Phillips also played a key role in the victory, contributing 16 points of his own to Irrigon's total.

GIRLS: A day off surprisingly hurt the Knights more than it helped them. Despite showing fatigue against the Rockets, who looked fresh after defeating Mac-Hi 56-34 on Thursday, Irrigon was able to hold on and outlast Pilot Rock to claim its fourth consecutive win.

Irrigon had a steady lead after the first two quarters.

The Knights outscored the Rockets 16-4 in the first and entered halftime up 24-17. But even with the upperhand entering the final two quarters, Irrigon's sluggish second quarter and rocky third gave Pilot Rock a chance to strike back.

"I thought we started the game (well), the first quarter was good for us," head coach Mike Royer said. "We shot the ball pretty well and we passed it well and I think defensively we played with energy (but) we got tired and you could tell — we

had trouble buying a basket in the third quarter. Nothing seemed to drop. We had opportunities to pull away a little bit but we never could."

A late effort from Brianna Rice off the bench in the fourth quarter gave Irrigon some momentum as it was able to hold off Pilot Rock's final push.

Rice scored all eight of her points in the fourth quarter, including a pair of threes.

However, it was Jada Burns who again led the Knights with 10 points. Three players chipped in eight points, Ana Zacarias, Kylie Wyant and Rice.

PREP ROUNDUP

Umatilla boys make it to championship round of SAC Tournament

Heppner drops doubleheader, Echo girls find success at Bouncin' Cancer Tournament

HERMISTON HERALD

Umatilla Vikings

Both Umatilla basketball teams set out to the SAC Holiday Tournament at Salem Academy Christian High School over the weekend.

The boys entered the tournament on a three-game winning streak and kept things going with a big win on Thursday. The Vikings blew out the Monroe Dragons 71-34 and then claimed a spot in the championship game after defeating the host Salam Academy 59-54.

Umatilla was led by Trent Durfey, who scored 15 points and grabbed 11 rebounds. Three other players scored double figures for the game.

Behind Durfey, Sebastian Garcia had 14 points, Kaden Webb had 10 points and seven assists and Seth Cranston had 10 points and five rebounds.

On Saturday, in the championship game against Portland Adventist Academy, the Vikings came up just short and fell 61-51 to end the weekend 2-1.

Umatilla now sits at 11-2 on the season and will have a three-game homestand to bring in the new year. The Vikings first hosted Kennewick (WA) on Tuesday — results for this game were not available at press time — and will welcome Stanfield on Thursday and Irrigon on Jan. 12.

The girls didn't have nearly as good of a weekend as their counterparts.

The Vikings dropped all three games at the SAC Holiday Tournament.

After a 40-28 loss on Day 1 to Western Menonite, Umatilla scored less than 30 points for the fourth consecutive game

as it fell 48-26 to Portland Christian.

On the final day of play, the Vikings dropped their 10th game of the season to East Linn Christian Academy. The 43-35 loss moved Umatilla to 3-10 on the season.

The Vikings will return home to face Stanfield at 6 p.m. Thursday.

Echo Cougars

The Echo Cougars joined a handful of other schools at the Bouncin' Cancer Tournament in Helix on Thursday and Friday.

The girls basketball team ended the week unscathed after earning a 59-36 win over Ione and a 54-37 victory against Trout Lake (WA).

The boys, on the other hand, were 1-1 after facing the same competitors. The Cougars picked up a nearly 20-point win to open play Thursday.

The 70-54 win over Ione was their first victory in three games. But Echo would split the tournament after falling 51-48 to Trout Lake (WA) on Friday.

Both teams then returned home to welcome South Wasco Country on Saturday.

The girls moved to 5-7 on the season after a 57-46 loss to the Redsides. The boys, however, matched the girls season record, 5-7, after another big victory. This time around Echo defeated South Wasco Country 57-36.

Next on the schedule, the teams will host Nixyaawii Friday for a doubleheader. The girls will begin play with a 6 p.m. tipoff against the undefeated Eagles and the boys will follow with a matchup against the 9-2 Nixyaawii boys basketball team.

SCHEDULE

Local slate

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL
Wednesday
Hermiston at AC Davis (WA), 7 p.m.
Thursday
Nixyaawii at Echo, 7 p.m.
Stanfield at Umatilla, 7:30 p.m.
Friday
Riverside at Nyssa, 6:30 p.m.
Silverton at Hermiston, 7 p.m.
Joseph at Echo, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday
Irrigon at Vale, 4:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Thursday
Stanfield at Umatilla, 6 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Echo, 6 p.m.
Friday
Riverside at Nyssa, 5 p.m.
Joseph at Echo, 6 p.m.
Saturday
Irrigon at Vale, 3 p.m.

PREP WRESTLING

Friday
Echo, Heppner at JO-HI
Riverside, Irrigon, Heppner duals
Saturday
Riverside, Irrigon, Heppner at Riverside Rumble

Tournaments get the best of Bulldogs

HERMISTON HERALD

Over the weekend, the Hermiston boys basketball lost a pair of games at the Crescent Valley Invitational.

The Bulldogs entered the matchup against the host school, Crescent Valley, with newfound momentum after picking up their first win in three games a week prior — a 72-52 victory over Dallas — but all was lost Friday night as Hermiston suffered a 55-45 defeat at the hands of the Raiders.

"(It was) a pretty sloppy game," Hermiston head coach Casey Arstein said. "We never got into a good rhythm offensively, a little of that was defensively not getting out and forcing any kind of turnovers or getting transition baskets."

Ryne Andreason had a game-high 16 points for the Bulldogs and both Jordan Ramirez and Cesar Ortiz added eight points. AJ

Sandvig led Crescent Valley with 13 points.

The two-day tournament gave the Bulldogs a chance to redeem themselves Saturday after the 10-point loss. But again, they struggled on defense and allowed Central to get away with a 54-48 win.

The Panthers outscored the Bulldogs 12-7 in the first quarter, and used their size advantage in the paint to extend the lead at halftime to 27-23 despite Hermiston's best efforts.

The Bulldogs were able to make some offensive adjustments and try for a comeback after scoring 25 of their 48 points in the second half, but their efforts were squandered by poor free throw shooting that could have changed the outcome in Hermiston's favor.

Hermiston was 3-for-12 from the charity stripe, while Central was 22-for-43. The nine missed points were what the Bulldogs

needed and then some to make the trip back into town a bit more bearable.

After the game, head coach Arstein noted that the defense — as well as playing cohesively and consistently — was going to be a priority going forward.

"We didn't do the best job of getting them out of the paint," he said.

Size has always been a disadvantage for Hermiston so along with working on pushing teams to the outside, Arstein wants the team to get better at working together.

Hermiston will have only a few days to work out its kinks before the Bulldogs (4-6) head to AC Davis (WA) on Wednesday.

GIRLS: The Hermiston Bulldogs returned to the court over Christmas break and won one of four games at the Nike Interstate Shootout in Lake Oswego.

The four-day tournament is comprised of 24 teams, including

Hermiston. Among the mix are the top schools from OSAA's Class 6A, Southridge and McNary, and from Class 5A, Marist Catholic and La Salle Prep.

In the opener, the Bulldogs weren't able to last the full 32 minutes and fell 42-30 to Oregon City.

Hermiston went toe-to-toe with No. 2 seeded Oregon City and entered the break with a narrow 25-22 lead.

But a sluggish third quarter for the Bulldogs and a breakout third for the Lakers gave Oregon City a late lead that it would hold until the final buzzer.

For Hermiston, junior Jordan Thomas finished with a team-high 12 points.

On Day 2, the Bulldogs faced the host school after falling into the consolation bracket with that opening loss.

Hermiston was up 34-32 late in the game, but the Lakers cashed in

with three points of their own to claim the lead as the clock wound down, but the Bulldogs dished out a 3-pointer of their own from senior Hannah Thompson to seal the deal and a 37-35 win.

For the second day in a row, junior Thomas led Hermiston with a game-high 19 points.

On Friday, Hermiston scored a season-low 26 points as they lost to Sherwood at the Lake Oswego Nike Shootout.

On the final day in Lake Oswego, the Bulldogs left the Nike Interstate Shootout 1-3 after falling to Skyview (WA) 38-28.

The 10-point loss was Hermiston's 10th of the season and the Bulldogs (2-10) will have one more road trip before returning to the Dawg House.

Hermiston will have over a week to prepare for its next matchup at Post Falls (ID). The Bulldogs will make the trip on Jan. 10.