

Herald Sports



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Hermiston youth girls teams make history with three state championships



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS ELLIOTT

Hermiston's fifth grade AAU, the Sparks, team poses after winning the championship in Central Oregon. Pictured are: (front row, left to right): Madeline Jared, Camryn Hagel, Addison Garberg, Shayla Stewart and Karsyn Botefuhr; (back row) head coach MaryJane Heideman, Ellie Heideman, Piper Roberts, Amy Armstrong, Avonlea Edwards, Madison Wicks and assistant coach Josh Hagel.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS ELLIOTT

Hermiston's eighth grade AAU team, the Storm, poses after winning the championship for the second consecutive year in Central Oregon. Pictured are: (front row, left to right) Sydney Seavert, Adrianna Coleman, Faith McCarty, Katelyn Heideman and assistant coach Heidi De La Cruz; (back row) head coach Aaron Heideman, Morgan Brown, Taylor Durfey, Caitlin Anderholm, Alexis Kessell, Heavenly Coleman and assistant coach McKenzie Byrd.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYJANE HEIDEMAN

Hermiston's sixth grade AAU team, the Hoopdaws, poses after winning the championship in Central Oregon. Pictured are: (front row, left to right): Kaylee Elliott, Izzy Simmons, Sydney Stocker, Brooklynn Warburton and Nevaeh Thew; (back row) coach Alissa Simmons, Ainsley Philippi, Haylee Mercer, Rian Woodard, Alexis Ackerman and coach Kay Edwards.

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ
STAFF WRITER

city since the start of the AAU tournament in 2013 to win multiple championships in the gold bracket.

After the Hermiston Storm defeated West Linn 33-29 in the 2017 Girls Oregon Middle School State Championship for AAU, they were poised to bring home some more hardware the following season. This past weekend in Central Oregon, the Storm — along with the fifth grade Hermiston Sparks and sixth grade Hoopdaws — did just that.

With the three victories, Hermiston became the first

The championship tournament began Friday and wrapped up play Sunday in Bend and Redmond.

Three teams made up of Hermiston-area students qualified to attend the tournament through top finishes in various tournaments throughout the regular season.

The fifth grade Hermiston Sparks and eighth grade Storm earned bids in early

November after finishing in the top two at a tournament in Spokane. For the sixth grade Hoopdaws, they punched their ticket in January.

In the gold bracket, which included middle schools that feed into a Class 6A/5A high school program, Hermiston had to outlast a total of 55 other teams to make it to the championship game.

The three teams went a combined 14-0 throughout the tournament, holding off their opponents in some tough matchups — the Sparks advanced to the title game by defeating the Churchill Iron Maidens by one point — and some blowouts — the Storm defeated their first opponent 64-20 to open the weekend.

In the title games, the Storm came back for the win

after starting the first half behind with a 28-23 victory over McMinnville.

"I'm proud of the girls playing hard," head coach MaryJane Heideman said, "and coming away with these tough wins."

The Hoopdaws were off to a rocky start in their championship game. They

started down 9-1 in the first five minutes of the play, and couldn't buy a basket.

However, after halftime, Hermiston found its rhythm and eventually defeated Sherwood 42-37.

The Storm was the final team to compete, and pulled away late to seal a 44-39 win over Sheldon.

Hermiston boys, girls seasons end with tough matchups

HERMISTON HERALD

CENTRAL POINT — After a long trip southwest, the Hermiston boys basketball team had their work cut out for them against No. 2 seeded Crater.

The Comets held nearly a 10-point lead heading into halftime. After the break, steady defense from the Bulldogs allowed time for their offense to find shots, and Hermiston was able to pull within three points with three minutes of play left.

But during their following three possessions, the Bulldogs turned the ball over and Crater was able to pull away with a 51-43 victory.

"I thought the effort was there," head coach Casey Arstein said. "We had our chances ... we just couldn't hit a shot."

After the first quarter, Hermiston found itself in a 19-9 hole but then clawed its way out with 19 points in the second.

The Bulldogs (12-12) needed shots along the perimeter, which had never been a problem until Friday night. Reliable long-distance shooter Cesar Ortiz knocked down just three 3-pointers, two of which were in the high-scoring second quarter.

Ryne Andreason, who has also been known for knocking down threes, didn't hit a single shot from outside but still led the team with 10 points.

For the Comets, Mason Vranes led with 19 points.

Girls basketball

SILVERTON 40, HERMISTON 24 — Hermiston girls were ousted from the state tournament after a Round 1 loss to Silverton on the road. The 40-24 defeat ended the Bulldogs' season.

Hermiston managed to stay within reach of the Foxes (20-5), and trailed just 15-14 after the first half. But shooting was sparse in the third and fourth quarters, as the Bulldogs (12-14) were held to only 10 points while Silverton knocked down 25.

Mustangs ousted by Prospectors, 46-39

By ERIC SINGER
STAFF WRITER

PENDLETON — Heppner seniors Kacie Gray, Morgan Correa and Sophie Grant sat side by side at the end of the Mustangs bench as the final seconds of their prep basketball careers ticked away on Friday morning.

The Mustangs lost to Grant Union 62-46 in the consolation round of the Class 2A state tournament at the Pendleton Convention Center, ending their season. However, the seniors' faces didn't show signs of sadness or disappointment. Instead, they were upbeat, soaking in the last moments of the kind of season they could have only dreamed about for the first three years wearing the blue and gold.

"This season was crazy and we loved every minute of it," Grant said afterward. "We were really a family and each and every one of us love each other and it was a great experience to have."

"We came here as the underdog and we really surprised people, so it was an awesome experience."

Even with the loss, the three seniors went out on a high note. They combined for 16 points, nine rebounds and three assists and all played solid defense against a talented Prospectors squad. Head coach Robert Wilson was proud of the growth the seniors showed in their career and the leadership they showed this season.

"When I took over three years ago," Wilson said, "we were really young and this group embraced the situation they've had to deal with and have been leaders with the younger kids, keeping them engaged with a great team vibe."

Grant and Correa were in the starting lineup on Friday when the Mustangs (16-8) got off to a



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Heppner's Jacee Currin flicks a pass to a teammate out of reach of Kaylee Wright (23), of Grant Union during Thursday's OSAA 2A girls consolation state tournament game in Pendleton.

slow start in trying to meet Grant Union's fast tempo. Grant Union (22-4) scored the first nine points of the game and later opened up a 29-10 lead with 3:52 left in the second quarter.

Except Heppner wasn't ready to go away. The Mustangs ended the half on a 9-0 run, capped by a jumper from Gray, to head to the break trailing by 10 points at 29-19.

"We never gave up," Grant said. "We knew we could play with each and every team here, and we knew if we kept trying

and played our game we could be with every team."

That fight from the Mustangs continued throughout the second half. After Grant Union got the lead back to 17 points early in the third quarter, the Mustangs chipped away and back-to-back 3-pointers from Sydney Wilson and Gray made it a 43-33 game at the end of the third.

In the fourth, the Mustangs got the deficit to single digits on several occasions, coming as close as seven points after Jacee Currin

nailed a short jumper with 6:28 to make it a 46-39 game.

But that was as close as Heppner could get. Each time the Mustangs would get the lead under double digits, Grant Union's pressure defense would force a few turnovers that lead to easy baskets and get the lead above 10.

"We knew Grant Union was going to pressure us the whole game," Wilson said. "And we did really well at times, but when a team does that the whole time, there's moments whether it's fatigue or something that leads to little runs. But for the most part we did a good job of handling it."

Sydney Wilson, Heppner's standout freshman, led the team with 17 points on 6-of-9 shooting with seven rebounds and two assists. Junior Jacee Currin added 11 points with three boards, two assists, and two steals. Both are part of nine contributors set to return for the Mustangs next season.

"For us, our expectation is to be back here," Robert Wilson said. "We talked about soaking this up and enjoying it ... we need to understand the level of competition it takes to play here at this level because it's a different type of game than preseason and regular season."

And even though the seniors will be moving on, they are excited to see what the future holds for the team and will likely be keeping close tabs next season.

"I see great things," Grant said. "These young girls are awesome and we have so much coming up from the youth, it'll be great and I'm so excited for them."

HHS 7 12 14 13 — 46
GU 16 13 14 19 — 62
HEPPNER — S. Wilson 17, J. Currin 11, S. Grant 8, K. Gray 6, M. Correa 2, M. Combe, M. Nichols, J. McCullough, J. Mahoney, M. Ashbeck, M. Mitchell.
GRANT UNION — K. Wright 30, H. Wright 8, H. McCullough 8, T. Hutchison 5, M. Moulton 4, K. Wells 4, M. Culley 3.
3-pointers — HHS 4, GU 3. Free throws — HHS 16-23, GU 15-22. Fouls — HHS 15, GU 14.

Irrigon finishes sixth at 3A state championships

HERMISTON HERALD

COOS BAY — In the consolation finals at the Class 3A state tournament, the No. 8 Irrigon Knights had to face No. 6 Cascade Christian.

At first, Irrigon had the advantage, going up 11-7 after the open-

ing quarter. But the Challengers put together back-to-back quarters where they held the Knights to only 20 points while scoring 34 of their own.

In the second quarter, Cascade Christian chipped away at its deficit to enter the half just one point behind Irrigon.

Then, in the third quarter the Challengers exploded and their efforts led to a 55-45 victory to claim fourth place.

Cascade Christian was led by Joel McLemore, who finished with a game-high 24 points.

The Challengers (20-10) shot 40 percent from the field and

banked more than half of their free throw attempts.

For the Knights (22-6), Eric Carillo finished with 13 points and Johnny Phillips followed with 12.

Irrigon finished 43 percent from the field and only hit 3-of-13 3-pointers.