

# New course hosts first professional tournament

## Disc golf tourney draws a crowd of competitors

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY JADE MCDOWELL  
STAFF WRITER

The grass was a little taller than most competitors were used to at the first Professional Disc Golf Association tournament at Hermiston Desert Disc Golf.

The course — which started with nine holes last year and recently acquired a back nine — presented a unique high-desert terrain for 69 amateur and professional-level golfers at the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation Open, sponsored by Dynamic Discs and hosted by the Umatilla Disc Golf Club.

“We had 72 spots, so 69 is a pretty good turnout, especially for being the first one we’re having,” organizer Ginger Wilkinson said.

At 7,492 feet, the new course is one of the biggest in the region.

“It’s long,” said Chris Muller, who came down from Richland to compete. “It’s a big boy course.”

Muller, who was preparing to putt into one of the metal baskets that make up the “holes” on the course, said the trick to a good putt was to get a lot of spin on the disc and to have a “good pre-putting routine.”

While casual users of the course might just play with a single disc, the PDGA-ranked players each came prepared with a backpack full of discs in various weights to be used as everything from a distance driver to a putter, factoring in wind and other variables. Alex McDannold said he has been playing in tournaments since 1999, but the sport has really taken off in recent years.

“When I first started with a club I was the 77th member, and now you go to a course and there are hundreds of people,” he said.

It was his second time playing the Hermiston Desert Disc Golf course, and he



Jesse Garcia of Walla Walla tees off on his first shot of the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation Open in Hermiston Saturday.



Caleb Joiner of Yakima, Washington, left, putts at the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation Open.

said it was a “cool” course to play on. Much of the course is flat, with holes and tees interspersed with tall grass and sagebrush, but includes

some ridges and trees. Sections of tall grass were mowed down to form the greens and fairways, while organizers marked off out

of bounds sections and bunkers. Wilkinson said one of the fun things about mowing the course (many courses are in parks where all grass

is already mowed) was that organizers could change it a little each year.

Before the first round of the tournament started,

“Come out and play any time ... We want people to learn how to play.”

Matt Richmond,  
tournament organizer

Jesse Garcia of Walla Walla was warming up with a few other players. He pointed to Kevin Mann of Kennewick and said his goal for the day was to beat “that guy right there.”

“We’ve been battling it out the whole year,” he said.

Garcia and Mann were some of the 13 people in the pro division registered to compete in the two-day tournament, while others in the amateur division battled amongst themselves. Most of the players were men, but there were a handful of female and junior-level players registered.

Most of the players from around the region knew each other from past tournaments, and there was plenty of joking around on the course. Wilkinson said the camaraderie of the sport was one of the things she enjoyed most about it.

Organizer Matt Richmond said people don’t have to be a PDGA-ranked player to use the Hermiston course — the more the merrier, and no one should be intimidated.

“Come out and play any time,” he said. “If you see people playing, feel free to come up and ask questions. We’re not a snobby community. We want people to learn how to play.”

Scores and rankings of all registered players can be found online at [www.discgolfscene.com](http://www.discgolfscene.com).

The Hermiston Desert Disc Golf Course is free for anyone to use and can be accessed from the Oxbow Trail across 11th Street from Good Shepherd Medical Center.

## Tigers win 4th straight district title

### Woods dominant on the mound, strikes out 14

By ERIC SINGER  
STAFF WRITER

STANFIELD — With only three returning starters and a host of new faces on the varsity roster this spring, it is likely that not many people expected the Stanfield baseball team to go out and win its fourth consecutive district championship.

Except, that’s exactly what it did.

After winning the Eastern Oregon League’s regular season title with a 13-1 record, the Tigers secured home-field advantage for the district championship game. And on Friday afternoon, Stanfield defeated the Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa squad 8-1 at Madigan Field behind a dominant performance from senior Brody Woods on the mound for the sixth district title in eight years.

“Each one is terrific and it’s great for these kids,” Stanfield coach Brad Rogers said of the win. “Especially with the group we graduated last year, I don’t think anyone but us thought we would be here again, but here we are.”

Woods pitched all seven innings for the Tigers (21-5 overall) and struck out 14 batters while giving up only two hits, two walks and one run to the Eagles (19-6). He had both his fastball and curveball working to near perfection, keeping the Eagles’ hitters off balance for his eighth dou-



Stanfield’s Justin Keeney (8) rounds third base as Joseph’s Rylie Hayward looks on in the Tigers’ 8-1 win against the Eagles on Friday in Stanfield.

ble-digit strikeout game of the season.

“I was just trying to hit my spots and mix pitches up a lot,” Woods said. “A lot of their guys were sitting fastball, so I’d start them off-speed first pitch and stuff ... my (curveball) was working really good today and it had a lot of bite. I was surprised it was working that good, so I tried to stick with that a lot.”

Woods got help from his Tiger teammates in the third inning as the bottom third of the lineup gave the team a spark.

Makiah Blankenship singled to right, Michael Connell blooped a single to right, and Hunter McCanch put down a perfect bunt single down the third base line to load the bases with no

outs. That brought Adrian Renner to the plate, and Renner jumped on a first-pitch fastball and lined it up the middle to score two runs.

“It’s good to see our whole lineup doing their job and getting stuff done,” Woods said. “It’s uplifting knowing the bottom of the lineup is doing good, then the top of the lineup comes and we keep rolling. That’s how we’ve always worked.”

Two batters later, Damian Curiel crushed a two-run double into the left-center field gap, and TJ Smith followed with a sacrifice fly RBI to give the Tigers a 5-0 lead. The Tigers then played add-on in the fourth with an RBI groundout by Renner and

a RBI bloop single to right by Keeney to make it a 7-0 game.

Woods added an RBI single in the sixth for the final run.

“We dropped one game to them (Joseph) in league, and we knew we just had to come out and play baseball, play our game like we’re supposed to,” Woods said, “and we played pretty dang good.”

Stanfield will now prepare to host a Class 3A Round 1 state playoff game at Madigan Field on Wednesday.

	R	H	E	
E JHS	000001	0	1	2
S SHS	005201	X	8	7
1				

(J. C. Bathke, Staigle (6) and Z. Ramsden (5) B. Woods and A. Renner. W — Woods, L — Bathke. 2B — D. Curiel (SHS).

## Cougars win first district title ever

HERMISTON HERALD

ECHO — The Echo Cougars captured the 3A Special District 1 championship as they defeated the Riverside Pirates 9-3 on Saturday afternoon.

The Cougars (19-6 overall) scored three runs in the first inning and two runs in the third for an early 5-0 lead, putting pressure on the Pirates from the start. Riverside did not score until the sixth, on an RBI single by Abby Hernandez to make it a 6-1 game. Echo then put the game on ice in the bottom of the sixth with an RBI single from Marti Huff followed by a two-run home run by Kendra Hart to make it a 9-1 game.

The Pirates did get two runs back in the seventh on a two-run single by Megan Hegar, who went 2-for-4 in the game. Hernandez led the team by going a perfect 4-for-4 at the plate, while Rae Elliott was 2-for-4 with a double. The Pirates managed 13 hits off of Echo pitcher Alyssa Ray, but Ray stranded 11 runners.

Hart and Ray each had two hits at the plate to lead the Cougars’ offense, with Ray adding a triple and Hart finishing with three runs scored. Michelle Weems also had one hit with an RBI. Ray pitched all seven innings and struck out 10.

Echo will host a first-round playoff game on Wednesday, while Riverside will likely start on the road.

	R	H	E		
RHS	000001	2	3	13	1
EHS	302013	X	9	8	0
W	A. Ray, L	S. Wightman.			
2B	R. Elliott (RHS), 3B	A. Ray (EHS).			
HR	K. Hart (EHS).				

RIVERSIDE 6, IRRIGON 4 — At Echo, Riverside’s Megan Hegar and Michaela Miller both produced run-scoring singles in the top of the seventh inning to push the Pirates past the Irrigon Knights 6-4 in the district semifinal.

The Pirates trailed the Knights 4-3 as the seventh inning began, three outs away from possible playoff elimination.

However, the Pirates started their rally when Skylar Wightman and Rae Elliott each drew a walk and JoJo Hernandez followed with a single to load the bases with nobody out. Hegar then stepped to the plate and hit a two-run single to put the Pirates on top, and then after back-to-back strikeouts, Miller ripped a run-scoring single for a key insurance run.

In the bottom of the seventh, the Knights’ Bailey Botevuh led off with a single up the middle. But Riverside’s Wightman induced a line out, pop fly out and a strikeout to seal the win.

Riverside started the game with single runs scored in each of the first three innings.

Irrigon scored once in the third on an RBI single by Karisma Luna, and then took the one-run lead with three runs in the sixth behind a RBI triple by Luna, a RBI bunt by Makenna Collins and a RBI hit from Jessica Cain.

	R	H	E		
RHS	111000	3	6	11	0
IHS	001003	0	4	10	2
W	S. Wightman, L	M. Chapman.			
2B	M. Chapman (IHS), 3B	M. Hegar (RHS); K. Luna (IHS).			