

Hermiston's Stefani headed to ISU for softball

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Sydney Stefani began her career on the diamond with the boys, playing Little League baseball in Ione.

She started playing softball in the sixth grade, and her game has blossomed from there.

The Hermiston senior shortstop signed a letter of intent Wednesday to play Division I softball at Idaho State University.

"College softball is something I have wanted to do," Stefani said. "Where I was originally going to go (Montana) didn't work out, but coach (Kate) Greenough has a lot of connections and got me in with Idaho State."

Greenough played at Utah State for Cindi Letts, who now is the coach at



Staff photo by Annie Fowler/East Oregonian
Hermiston's Sydney Stefani signed a letter of intent Wednesday to play softball at Idaho State University.

ISU.

"Sydney is a stud," Greenough said. "She works so hard, and it's nice to see that hard work pay off."

Stefani, who moved to

Hermiston in the eighth grade, is coming off a spectacular junior year, where she was named co-MVP of the Columbia River Conference with Hood River Val-

ley junior outfielder Haylee Baker.

The Bulldogs finished 17-10 and reached the 5A state quarterfinals, where they lost 11-8 to Lebanon.

Stefani also was a Class 5A first-team all-state selection as an infielder.

"As the season progressed, it was within my reach," Stefani said of the CRC honor. "I was shocked. They couldn't discredit one over the other."

Stefani hit .571 last season as the Bulldogs' lead-off hitter. She also had nine RBIs, 13 runs scored, five stolen bases, and let's not forget the six home runs.

"She'd run through a wall for you," Greenough said. "Not only is she a good athlete, but she's a team leader. She is a shining light, always ready to do anything

for her teammates. She is always up for a challenge."

That will come this spring when the Bulldogs enter the Mid-Columbia Conference, where the likes of Kamiakin and Richland have dominated the softball scene for years.

"It will be great," Greenough said. "She will walk into this conference and be one of the best. But that would be the same for any conference."

Stefani said she will miss the CRC.

"The programs are so tough," she said. "Each game we had to show up and play our best game. The bus rides were so much fun. I'm going to miss going to the The Dalles and Hood River. This could have been our year."

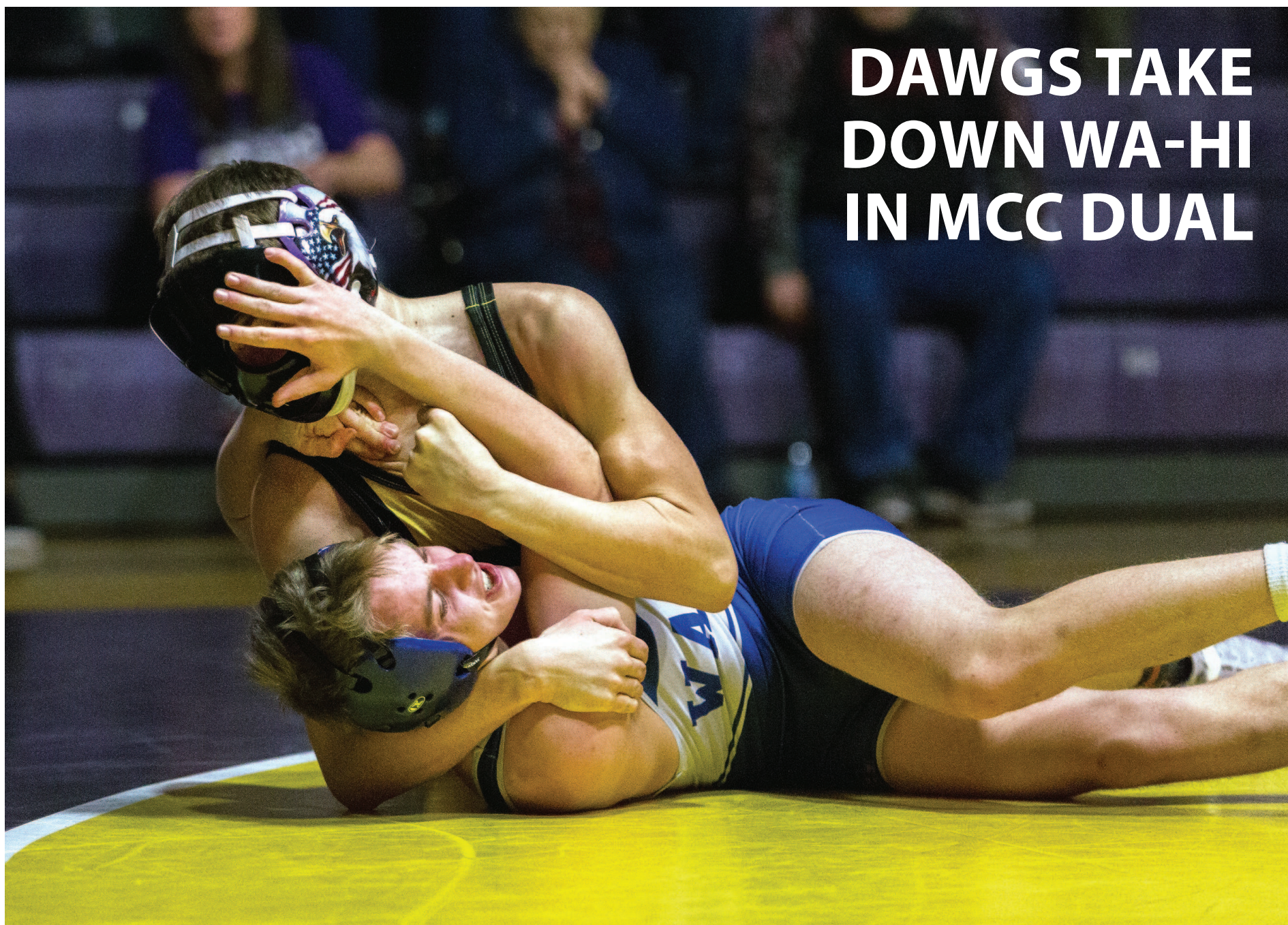
Stefani will be famil-

iar with some of the players in the MCC after playing with the Washington Angels club team the past eight years. She will finish her last season with the team this summer.

"I'm really privileged to have awesome parents (Dennis and Misti) who made sure I had what I needed for club, and they got me to where I needed to go," she said.

Stefani didn't start playing softball until the sixth grade, and still has fond memories of playing baseball.

"My last year, I played on the John Day All-Stars," Stefani said. "My team played Hermiston, which had Andrew James, Jordan Ramirez and Wyatt Noland. I struck out Jordan in that game. He still denies it."



DAWGS TAKE DOWN WA-HI IN MCC DUAL

Hunter Dyer, of Hermiston, wrestles Walla Walla's Tanner Bollinger in the 126-pound weight class on Thursday night at the Dawg House. Dyer pinned Bollinger.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

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On the final night of Mid-Columbia Conference wrestling, the Hermiston Bulldogs put on a show for their fans.

The Bulldogs (3-5 MCC) won their first six matches, and took advantage of four forfeits in the upper weights to cruise to a 61-18 victory Thursday night over visiting Walla Walla (1-7).

"It's fun to finish our league duals with a win," Hermiston coach Kyle Larson said. "Not only did we win, but in a lot of those matches we got bonus points. We like it when we push the pace and try to pin a guy when it is 14-0 instead of getting a technical fall."

Blue Devils coach Jacob Butenhoff did not like giving away four matches. He said he simply does not have the men to fill the weight classes.

"We are in that rebuilding phase," he said. "We are struggling to fill the lineup. The guys



Jordan Franklin, of Hermiston, wrestles Walla Walla's Emilio Sardina in the 145-pound weight class during Thursday's match at the Dawg House. Franklin won by decision.

we do have get out and scrap. We are young and green, and don't realize we are in trouble until it's too late."

It was senior night for the Bulldogs, who got wins from Gage Shipley at 132 and Isaac Lambert at 120. Om Pakdee was not as fortunate, but the exchange student from Thailand still had a smile on his face after the match.

"I'd rather him go out and fight than forfeit a match," Larson said. "We have thrown him to the wolves a few times. He's a great kid. He's happy to be here. I wish some of our others guys had his attitude."

Hermiston Zayne Helfer started the match with a first-round pin of John-Mark Whitaker at 106. Adrian Delgado (113) followed with a 5-2 deci-

sion over Ruben Lozano, and Lambert pinned Bernardo Bautista in 3:10 to give the Bulldogs a 15-0 lead.

"He put up a good fight," Lambert said of his opponent. "But I wanted it more. This was our last night, and everybody was excited. It's fun to win your last dual your senior year."

Hunter Dyer (126) pinned Tanner Bollinger in 57 seconds, and Shipley needed 4:36 to pin Camrin Henzel.

"It felt really good to come out and win my last (dual) match," Shipley said. "I gave it my all."

Jordan Franklin picked up a 17-2 technical fall at 138 to give the Bulldogs a 32-0 lead.

The Blue Devils recorded their first win at 145 as Tanner Siller pinned Brock Remmer in 2:46. Alejandro Mata followed with a second-round pin of Pakdee at 152 before Trevor Wagner earned a 16-0 technical fall over Jesse Easley at 160.

Walla Walla forfeited at 170, 182, 195 and 220, giving Hermiston a 61-12 lead.

In the battle of the big men, Wa-Hi's Jerry Corona pinned Dustyn Coughlin in the second round.

Hermiston will host the District 8 championships Feb. 1-2. The top four in each weight class will advance to the Regional Tournament Feb. 9 in Yelm. Action will begin at 3:30 p.m. Friday, and at 10 a.m. Saturday.

"It's fun to have it at home," Larson said. "Hopefully we come out and put on a show. We have all the advantages of sleeping in our own beds and such. It should be real comfortable for us."

MATCH RESULTS

Team scores — Hermiston 61, Walla Walla 18. 106 — Zayne Helfer (H) p. John-Mark Whitaker, 1:30. 113 — Adrian Delgado (H) d. Ruben Lozano, 5-2. 120 — Isaac Lambert (H) p. Bernardo Bautista, 3:10. 126 — Hunter Dyer (H) p. Tanner Bollinger, 57. 132 — Gage Shipley (H) p. Camrin Henzel, 4:36. 138 — Jordan Franklin (H) tf. Emilio Sardina, 17-2. 145 — Tanner Siller (WW) p. Brock Remmer, 2:46. 152 — Alejandro Mata (WW) p. Om Pakdee, 3:22. 160 — Trevor Wagner (H) tf. Jesse Easley, 16-0. 170 — Michael Ramirez (H) won by forfeit. 182 — Blake Betz (H) won by forfeit. 195 — Stanley Scott (H) won by forfeit. 220 — Jon Lee (H) won by forfeit. 285 — Jerry Corona (WW) p. Dustyn Coughlin, 3:58.

Boys

Continued from Page A10

Mayer said. "We really wanted to defend No. 1 (Andreason), and Blake VanderTop's defense on him was awesome."

Hermiston at Richland

Hermiston coach Casey Arstein didn't mince words Saturday night. His team did not get the job done defensively against Richland, and it paid dearly.

The Bombers had three players score 20 or more points, and they shot 80 percent from the free-throw line, to cruise to a 96-57 Mid-Columbia Conference victory over the Bulldogs in Richland.

"Defensively, that was one of the worst games I have had to watch," Arstein said. "I know Richland is good offensively, but we didn't help ourselves out. We let them get too many transition baskets. We got our butts kicked."

Richland (17-2 overall, 15-0 MCC) clinched its seventh consecutive MCC title, and have won 36 consecutive MCC games dating to a Jan. 14, 2017, loss to Kamiakin.

"I thought we shared the ball really well," Richland coach Earl Streufert said. "We have been working hard the last couple of weeks making adjustments. We had three with 20 or more and the ball moved all night."

Cole Northrop scored nine of his 20 points in

the first quarter, seven of which were free throws, as the Bombers raced out to a 27-14 lead.

Hermiston's only lead of the game was 2-1 with a basket by Cesar Ortiz. From there, the Bombers drained three 3-pointers and made 12 of 14 free throws.

The Bulldogs (12-6, 8-6) held their own in the second quarter, with Cole Smith coming off the bench to chip in six points, but they could not make a dent in the deficit from the first quarter.

"I thought offensively, our guys attacked the rim," Arstein said. "Ryne (Andreason) went to the rim hard. Offensively, we were in attack mode, but we have to defend and make them earn every basket."

The third quarter got out of hand, and the Bombers led by 30 at one point — 73-43. Andreason hit a pair of free throws as the Bulldogs trailed 73-45 at the end of the quarter.

In the fourth, Jacob Kreutz hit a pair of bas-

kets to give the Bombers a 41-point lead with 3:52 to play.

Hermiston went on a 5-0 run to make it 91-54, but the Bombers just kept coming. Kirby Robertson had the last word with a basket with just 9 seconds remaining.

Hermiston got 15 points from Andreason, 12 from Jordan Ramirez and 11 from Smith.

Dhaunye Guice led the Bombers with 22 points, while Cody Sanderson had 21.