

COLLEGE SIGNING

Walchli headed to Utah State for football

By ANNIE FOWLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Garrett Walchli knew when he visited Utah State University last July that it was the place for him.

Hermiston’s top receiver and return man announced his commitment Thursday to play for the Aggies.

“I got recruited really late,” Walchli said. “The main thing, is you have to find a place you feel at home. It’s nice to get it done and get off the recruiting trail.”

Walchli had 49 catches for 634 yards and nine touchdowns in 10 games. He finished the season with 1,099 all-purpose yards, and was sixth in MCC scoring with 72 points.

He was named to the Mid-Columbia Conference second team as a receiver.

“Hands down, its more competitive in the WIAA,” Walchli said. “Every week you are playing an opponent you can’t underestimate. There are no slouches in the MCC.”

The Aggies finished 7-6 last season, including a 6-2 record in the Mountain West Conference.

Walchli had more than a dozen offers from other schools, including Idaho



Hermiston wide receiver Garrett Walchli (5) runs the ball in for a touchdown during the Nov. 1, 2019, game against Kamiakin. Walchli has signed to play football at Utah State.



Staff photo by Annie Fowler
Hermiston's Garrett Walchli announced his commitment on Thursday to play football for Utah State.

State.

“I turned down three or four full rides,” he said. “I had options, but not options like this.”

Hermiston football coach David Faaeteete said he is excited to see what Walchli does with the opportunity presented to him.

“Utah State has given him a great opportunity to earn

his way onto the squad,” Faaeteete said. “Talking to their defensive coach last night, they like his explosiveness. I’m excited for him. He has a great future ahead of him. His work ethic will carry him through.”

Walchli has been preparing for this opportunity for years. He plays on a 7-on-7 team out of Portland called

Team Lillard. The team is coached by Houston Lillard, former quarterback of the Tri-Cities Fever, and brother to Portland Trail Blazer Damian Lillard.

“Going into my sophomore year, I got on the team, and he (Houston Lillard) took me under his wing,” Walchli said. “I got out of Hermiston. We played in

Texas and California. To be the best, you have to compete with the best.”

At Utah State, Walchli said they are looking at him as a slot receiver and return man.

“Offense, 100%,” said Walchli, who also played defensive back for the Bulldogs. “I’m a lot better at it. They (Utah State) haven’t defined anything yet. I have to get down there and get to

work.”

As he wraps up his high school career, Walchli said he hopes he left an impression on the players to come.

“It has never been about me,” he said. “Hopefully me, Dustyn (Coughlin) and Chase (Bradshaw) have helped others see what they need to do if you want to go to the next level. It’s a chain of events. You have to put in the work as a team.”

1A STATE HOOPS

Cougars fall to St. Paul in 2nd round

By BRETT KANE
STAFF WRITER

The Echo girls basketball team suffered an early defeat, dropping a 20-10 first quarter to St. Paul as the Buckaroos proceeded to take them down 64-45 in the second round of the 1A state playoffs on Friday.

Six of Echo’s 10 points in the first quarter came from sophomore Faith McCarty, but even scoring from the Cougars’ starting five gave them the advantage.

Erin Counts and Isabelle Wyss each scored five points in the opening quarter, and Anabelle Davidson added four.

Counts would put up nine points in the third quarter and 10 in the fourth.

Echo managed nine points in the fourth quarter — five of which came from McCarty.

McCarty led the Cougars with 21 points, and Counts posted a game-high 27 points for St. Paul.

“I am extremely proud of my girls,” Echo head coach Heather Madison said. “They came out and played the best that they have all season as a team, and were really disciplined in everything that we try to do as a program.”

Echo (19-9, 10-2 BSL) finished their season as the No. 2 team in the Big Sky League standings. The Cougars’ previous season came to an earlier end after a 37-22 first-round home loss to Southwest Christian.

“We made it one step further than we did last year,” Madison said, “and we hope to push it even further next year.”

STATE WRESTLING

Heppner’s Coe, Mac-Hi’s Jones earn state silver

By ANNIE FOWLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Mac-Hi senior Jesse Jones and Heppner sophomore Jace Coe brought home silver medals from the Oregon State Wrestling Championships this past weekend at Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

Coe, who upset the No. 1 seed in his first match at state, is the highest Heppner state placer since Cord Flynn won the 195-pound state title in 2017.

“Wrestling the No. 1 seed in the first round, I didn’t see it,” Coe said of making the finals. “I was surprised. I definitely came out with a result I’m happy with.”

Coe, who was not ranked going into state at 160 pounds, earned a 5-2 decision over German Munoz of Nyssa in the semifinals.

In the finals, Coe lost a 5-3 decision to Trenton Hutchinson of Toledo to finish the season 33-11.

“I went in wanting to win, expecting to win,” Coe said.



EO Media Group photo/Ronald Bond
Heppner's Jace Coe tries to escape the grasp of Toledo's Trenton Hutchinson in the Class 2A/1A 160-pound state championship match on Saturday at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland. Hutchinson won the match 5-3.



EO Media Group photo/Ronald Bond
Mac-Hi's Jesse Jones (right) wrestles Sweet Home's Jackson Royer in the Class 4A 138-pound championship match on Saturday at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland. Royer beat Jones 11-2.

“He was a tough opponent.”

At 170, Heppner sophomore Conor Brosnan was pinned in the blood round Saturday morning by Joseph Moore of Colton, falling one win shy of bringing home a state medal. He finished the season 28-16.

The 2A and 3A tournaments only award medals through fourth place.

Jones dropped the Class 4A 138-pound title match to Sweet Home’s Jackson

Royer by major decision, 11-2.

Jones pinned Tristan Spencer of Sweet Home in 5:29 in the semifinals to advance to the finals. He finished the season 36-1.

Class 3A

Riverside’s Fernando Ortega (24-9) finished fourth at 120 pounds. He beat Jackson O’Connor of Pleasant Hill 3-2 to advance to the third-place match, where he

lost a 7-4 decision to Jakob Jarvis of Yamhill-Carlton.

Also for the Pirates, Jacob Harris (152) was pinned in the consolation bracket by Skylar Peters of Pleasant Hill.

At 285, Riverside’s Jordy Mendoza was pinned by Teagan DeForest of La Pine

in his consolation match.

Irrigon’s Asher Hall still was alive Saturday morning in the 113-pound consolation semifinals, but a 13-0 major decision loss to No. 2 seed Ryan Penrose of Dayton kept him out of a medal match.

2A STATE HOOPS

Gervais defeats Stanfield in first round of state

By BRETT KANE
STAFF WRITER

The Stanfield girls basketball team capped off a season of tremendous team growth with their program’s first state showing since 1987.

The Tigers tied 32-32 in the third quarter, and trailed by just one at 35-34 heading into the final eight minutes when the Cougars took a 23-1 run to put the game away and take Stanfield down 58-35 in the first round of the 2A state tournament in Gervais on Friday night.

“In the third quarter, it was a good game,” Stanfield coach Daniel Sharp said.

“(The Cougars) play aggressive and kept the pressure on us. We were able to get back into it in the third quarter, but we couldn’t get any offense going in the fourth.”

Stanfield claimed the

third quarter 13-8, and was led by Maggie Sharp with 13 points. Nyah Tejeda chipped in nine, and Savannah Sharp six.

The Tri-River Conference’s second-ranked Cougars got a game-high 17 points from Isabel Vasquez, 12 points from Araceli Vasquez, and 12 more from Izzy Boyd. Arcaceli Vasquez led all players from beyond the arc with two 3-pointers on the night.

The Tigers (19-8, 8-4 BMC) finished the season as the second-ranked team in the Blue Mountain Conference.

“It was incredible,” coach Sharp said. “It was the first time the girls have been to a state game in 30 years. They battled hard. I think we showed a lot of growth. The seniors set the stage for years to come. We’ll see if we can find some more success.”



The Woodburn Independent Photo/Phillip Hawkins
Stanfield's Maggie Sharp (21) drives the ball up the court during Friday night's 35-58 loss to the Gervais Cougars in Gervais.