

Utti back in form for Fresno State

By GARY HENLEY The Astorian

Maddi Utti and the Fresno State University women's basketball team is back in action.

After a nearly three-week break between games, the Bulldogs returned to play with a 65-63 loss at Wyo-ming Jan. 2, then bounced back with an 83-80 win over the same team two nights later.

Following a 102-93, double overtime loss at San Francisco Dec. 13, Fresno State's Dec. 17 home game vs. Cal-State Bakersfield was canceled because of health precautions within the Roadrunners' program.

Due to COVID-19 contact tracing in the Fresno State program, the Bulldogs' home game last Friday vs. San Jose State was postponed.

Meanwhile, Fresno State's Maddi Utti, the high-scoring senior forward from Seaside, missed a pair of games in December due to shoulder problems.

She had previously played in all 100 games since joining the program in 2017 and had started 94 straight games.

Utti returned for the Jan. 2 game at Wyoming and pulled down a team-high 11 rebounds but collected three fouls and finished with two points in 25 minutes of action.

She returned to usual form two nights later against the same team, scoring 23 points in 42 minutes, with 10 boards, three assists and two steals. Utti highlighted her night by knocking down a career-best five 3-pointers on five attempts.

The Fresno State trio of Utti, Haley Cavinder and Uanna Cavinder and



Fresno State

Fresno State's Maddi Utti, the senior forward from Seaside, receives her 2020 conference championship ring in a Dec. 17 ceremony.





wood

Farm

and Hanna Cavinder combined for 65 points, with Utti recording her first double-double of the season.

The Bulldogs received their 2020 Mountain West Championship rings in a ceremony Dec. 17. Utti was the Mountain West Conference Player of Year for the 2019-20 season.

Utti was the Mountain West Conference Player of the Year last season.

Recycling: Seniors miss in-person instruction

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bulk of the money for the celebration by running concessions at sporting events.

"This year's fundraising has been really weird, because we can't do concession stands, we can't do our normal stuff," Emma Taylor said.

The recycle drop-off was one of the creative solutions to that problem.

Led by Christy Taylor, the fundraising group has also conducted a raffle drawing with gift baskets and a handful of other projects. The hope is that they can still throw a grad party for the Class of 2021 after commencement. If not, she said, they may repeat what transpired last year when the grad party had to be canceled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The seniors instead received goodie bags with gift cards and certificates from local establishments.

The innovative approach to fundraising and the lingering uncertainty about whether a grad party will be possible are not out of place in a year still deeply affected by the ongoing pandemic.

Emma Taylor discussed how several of the clubs she's involved with are meeting online. The Associated Student Body leaders are collaborating virtually and trying to move forward with different projects feasible under the existing circumstances.

For Key Club, she said, "We've been trying to come up with service projects that don't involve being out in the community, which is what we're used to."

Meanwhile, the Oregon chapter of Future Business Leaders of America is planning virtual conferences at least through July and students are preparing online projects.

"That's been interesting," Taylor said.

Sarah Sills, another senior who is typically involved in several extracurriculars, said she continues to hope that onsite learning will resume this school year.

"I miss being in-person," Sills said. "I'd like to at least play soccer this year and do a couple of other things."

She echoed sentiments similar to her classmates, stating this is "not the way my senior was planned to be." However, she strives to maintain a positive outlook and continue planning for life after graduation.

"It's not going to be like this forever," she said. "And this is my last year, so I want to make the most of it."



Christy Taylor, the parent of a Seaside High School senior, was the primary organizer of the recycling event held Jan. 9 to raise funds for the senior class.

