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Welcome to the Postseason

Mustangs finish undefeated, claim fourth consecutive league championship

Pershing County begins playoff run at home against Battle Mountain

By Peggy Jones

LOVELOCK — The Pershing County High School football team capped an undefeated regular season Thursday, Oct. 29, with a commanding 68-8 victory over West Wendover, securing its fourth consecutive regular-season league championship.

The win improved the Mustangs' overall record to 9-0 and completed a perfect 6-0 run through 2A league competition, earning them home-field advantage as the playoffs begin.

Playing at home for the first time in nearly a month, the Mustangs celebrated Senior Night against a West Wendover team that entered the contest with just one league loss.

"We hadn't been home in almost a month and it was Senior Night," head coach Mike Brooks said. "West Wendover is having a great season and came in with a lone league loss, so there was some extra excitement for the competition."

Pershing County wasted little time establishing control. After forcing a quick defensive stop, the Mustangs put together a sustained scoring drive behind strong offensive line play and the rushing of Eduardo Aceves.

The defense quickly returned possession to the offense, and quarterback Ryan Houston connected with Thomas Brooks for a touchdown pass.

Another turnover gave the Mustangs an opportunity to extend their lead, and they capitalized with another touchdown.

"We got a great start, led by our defense and their ability to force punts," Brooks said.

Houston later connected with Anthony Gibson on a 30-yard touchdown pass as Pershing County continued to build its advantage.

West Wendover answered with a touchdown and successful two-point conversion late in the second quarter, but the Mustangs carried a comfortable 38-8 lead into halftime.

The Mustangs continued their offensive dominance after the break.

Quinton McKinney broke loose for a 70-yard touchdown run in the third quarter and later added a 42-yard scoring run.

Aceves contributed another highlight with a 30-yard rushing touchdown, while Aaron Zelaya successfully converted a two-point rushing attempt.

By the end of the third quarter, Pershing County had extended its lead to 59-8.

The fourth quarter brought a memorable moment for Israel Knight, who scored his first career touchdown on a 2-yard run. Knight also earned recognition from Brooks for his defensive performance.

Brooks singled out Houston and Gibson for outstanding offensive performances, while Adolfo Gonzalez and Knight were defensive standouts. Jaxson Happy contributed two interceptions.

The victory marked another milestone for a Mustangs program that has now captured four consecutive regular-season league championships.

Pershing County will open postseason play at home against Battle Mountain on Friday, Nov. 6, with kickoff at 6 p.m.

Brooks thanked the community for its continued support throughout the undefeated season.

"Thanks to all the fans for the support and thanks to our seniors!" he said.



PERSHING COUNTY FOOTBALL

Pershing County High School's senior football players pose with head coach Mike Brooks during Senior Night on Thursday, Oct. 29. Pictured from left are Aaron Zelaya, Amare Rosas, Lorne Maita, Brayden Padgett, Coach Brooks, Bryan Lora, Eduardo Aceves, Jorden Fitch and Israel Knight.



PEGGY JONES • Great Basin Sports

Pershing County's Quinton McKinney (22) carries the ball while fighting off a West Wendover defender during Thursday night's game.



PEGGY JONES • Great Basin Sports

Pershing County Mustangs Quinton McKinney (22) and Aaron Zelaya (1) leap into the air to celebrate a touchdown during Thursday night's game against West Wendover.

Eureka football looking to make another 1A state championship run

By Tony Erquiaga

EUREKA — The Eureka High School football team ran its winning streak to seven games and clinched the No. 1 North seed with an impressive 34-26 win over Mineral County this past Friday night In Eureka.

Both teams entered the contest undefeated in league play.

Since a late-August loss to Pahranagat Valley, the reigning 1A state champion, Eureka rolled in final seven league games, outscoring its opponents 282-56.

Before their regular-season finale with the Serpents, the Vandals allowed just 30 points in six games.

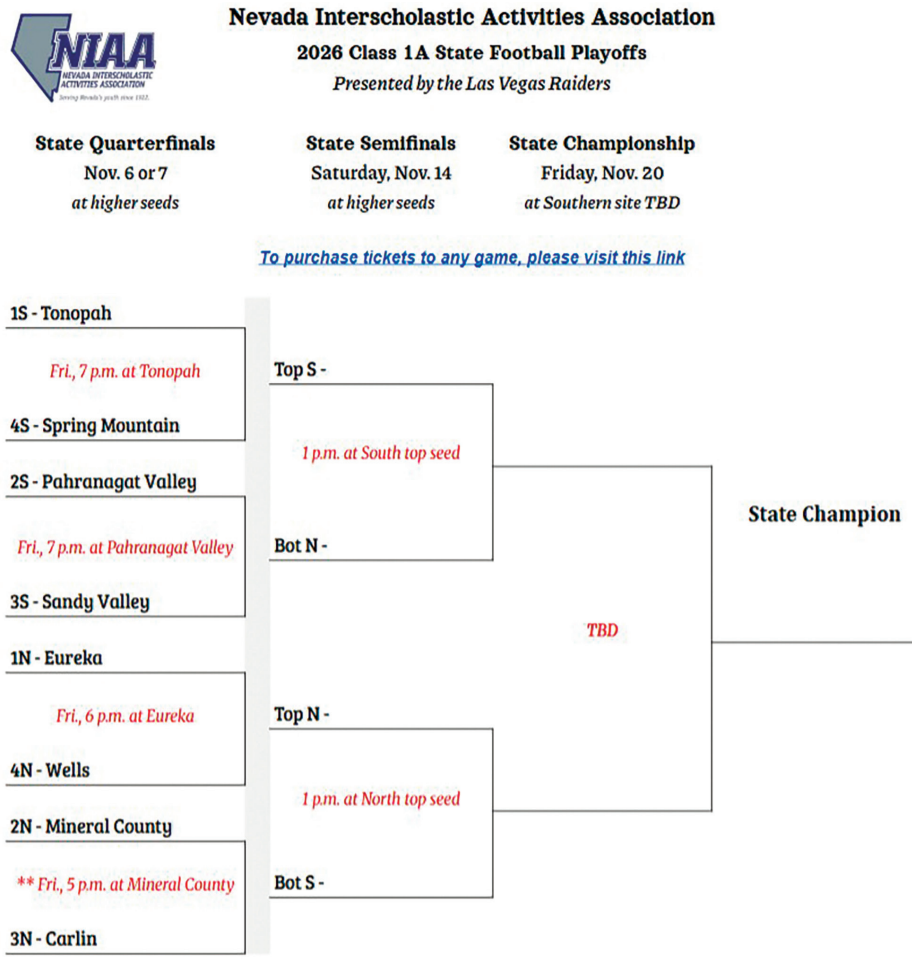
The opening-round state game will be a familiar one, as Eureka hosts Wells on Friday at 6 p.m.

The Vandals beat the Leopards 42-0 in the regular season. Eureka led 22-0 at halftime and used two touchdowns in the fourth quarter to pull away.



A Eureka victory would put them in the semifinals on Saturday, Nov. 14, at 1 p.m., where they would host the lowest seed from the Southern 1A, which will likely be Pahranagat Valley.

The NIAA 1A State Championship is set for Friday, Nov. 20, at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas.



Lowry girls cross country team finishes third at 3A regional championships

Alyla Thomas places fifth in individual battle

By Tony Erquiaga

WINNEMUCCA — A year after finishing second at the 3A state cross country championships, the Lowry High School girls are looking to get back to that spot again.

The Buckaroos were in Reno this past Saturday at Rancho San Rafael Park in Reno for the Northern 3A Regional Championships. Lowry finished third in the team standings and qualified for the NIAA State Championships on Saturday in southern Nevada.

Truckee won the team title with 21 points, with Elko (63) and Lowry (67) second and third.

Lowry senior Alyla Thomas finished fifth in the 5,000-meter race in a time of 20 minutes, 50 seconds.

Her younger sisters Makaylah Thomas (22:10) and Ajerra Thomas (22:20), placed 13th and 15th, respectively. Both are freshmen.

The junior duo of Taylor Soderstrom (22:42) and Azure Sagers (23:10) crossed the finish line in 19th and 20th. Seniors Natalia Cassinelli (23:35) in 22nd and Adel Hall (24:52) in 31st rounded out the Lowry finishers.

Truckee had the top three finishers and five of the first 10. Avery Aldrich won the race at 18:55, followed by Autumn Burks (19:25) and Aurelie Dillof (20:32).

Three Lowry boys qualified for the state championships as individuals. That group includes juniors Anden Thomas (19:10), Patrick Moses (19:18) and sophomore Josiah Merki (19:33). Thomas was 22nd, Moses 24th and Merki 27th.

Freshman Francisco Renteria placed 34th in a time of 19:56 and teammate Ben Bayles was not far behind in 38th at 20:10. Edward Moyer (20:54) and Sebastian Fuchslin (22:00) rounded out the lineup.

Truckee's Connor Bilodeau won the race in a time of 16:32 and Wooster's Carson Boyer (16:56) was second.

The NIAA State Championships is scheduled for Saturday at Veterans Memorial Park in Boulder City. The 3A boys run at 12:10 p.m., followed by the girls at 12:45 p.m.

Three Pyramid Lake runners qualify for state cross country meet

By Robert Perea

PYRAMID LAKE — Three Pyramid Lake runners qualified for this week's 1A and 2A combined state cross county meet by being among the seven fasts at-large qualifiers at last week's Regional Meet at Rancho San Rafael Park in Reno.

The top seven runners not from qualifying teams at Friday's regional meet qualified as individuals for the State Meet.

Jayar Chavez had the best finish among the Pyramid Lake runners, placing seventh overall and he was the second individual qualifier with his time of 18 minutes, 45 seconds.

William Darrough placed 16th overall and was the seventh individual qualifier with his time of 20:10.

They were followed in the boys race by Zeke Davis, who was 23rd with a time of 20:45 and John Kelly, who finished 31st in 22:20.

In the girls race, Koge Redstone placed 10th overall and was the seventh individual qualifier with a time of 23:43.

The state meet is scheduled this Saturday at Veterans Memorial Park in Boulder City.

Arcoraci qualifies for state as Oasis Academy places sixth at regional meet

By Robert Perea

FALLON — Leonidas Arcoraci qualified for the state championships as an individual with a 15th-place finish in 20 minutes, 9 seconds at the Northern 2A regional meet in Reno, leading Oasis Academy to a sixth-place team finish with 115 points.

Arcoraci was one of the top seven runners not competing on a team that qualified for state, securing his spot in the state field after leading the Bighorns' effort.

Oasis packed its scoring runners closely behind Arcoraci. Keagan Craig finished 34th in 22:45, followed by Zayden Maynez in 35th with a time of 23:02.

Jose Montalvo placed 43rd in 23:44, Kamron Bracken was 44th in 23:55 and Conor Tolman finished 49th in 24:56. Elijah Jones added a 55th-place finish in 26:19.

The Oasis girls were led by Riley Davis, who placed 11th in 23:56, one spot behind the final state qualifier.

Sonora McInturff finished 28th in 34:23, and Faith Torres-May crossed the line 29th in 36:32.

While the boys fell short of a team state berth, Arcoraci will represent Oasis at the state meet after his top-15 performance earned one of the available individual qualifying spots.

The State Meet is this Saturday at Veterans Memorial Park in Boulder City.

Preece, Aguilar, Hart run at Northern 1A/2A Regional Cross Country Championships

By Tony Erquiaga

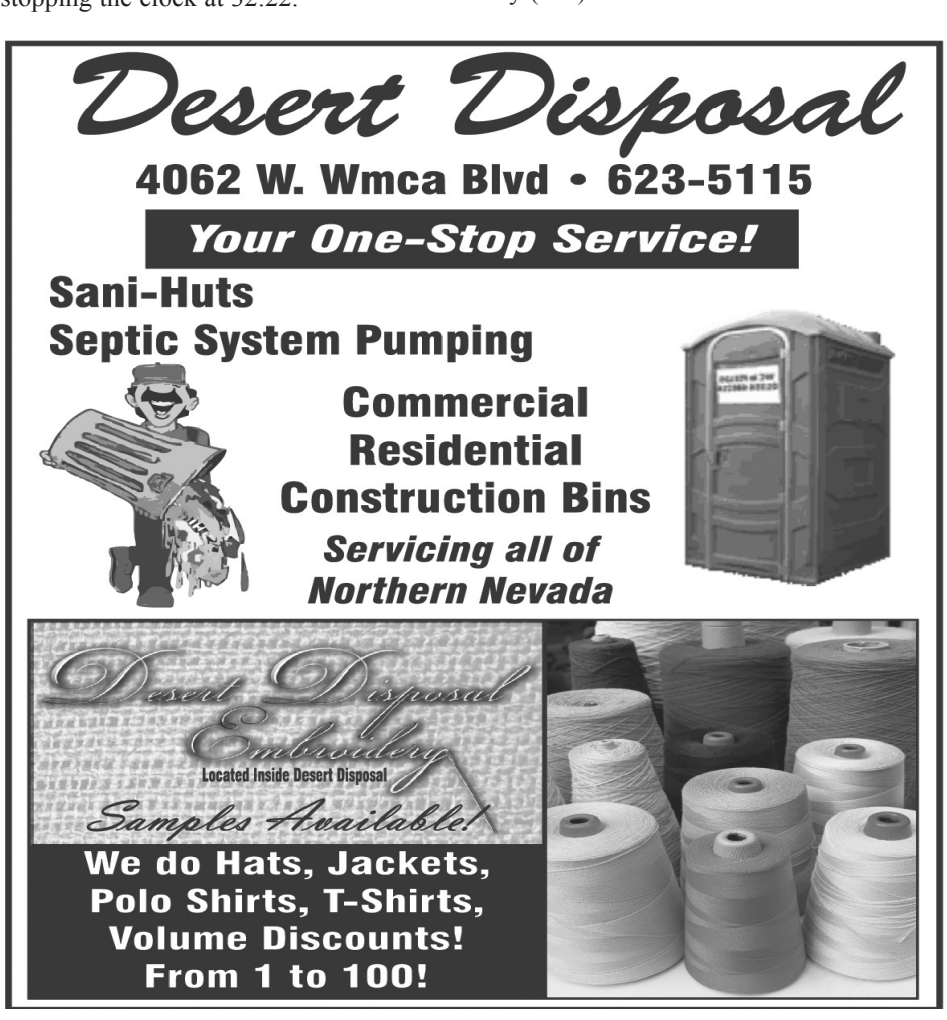
BATTLE MOUNTAIN — The Battle Mountain High School cross country team featured three runners at the Northern 1A/2A Regional Championships, this past Saturday at Rancho San Rafael Park in Reno.

In the girls 5,000-meter race, sophomore Libby Preece finished 16th in a time of 25 minutes, 28 seconds. Junior teammate, Megan Aguilar placed 25th, stopping the clock at 32:22.

North Tahoe's Lucia Avril won the race in a time of 19:01, the only runner to break the 20-minute mark. Incline won the team title.

In the boys race, sophomore Kaleb Hart was the lone Longhorn runner and placed 30th in a time of 22:09.

Coral Academy and Incline each finished with 51 points, with Coral winning the tiebreaker. North Tahoe (65), Wells (82), Virginia City (108) and Oasis Academy (115) rounded out the team scores.



Staying Put.... For Now....

Truckee, North Tahoe to stay in NIAA

By Robert Perea

Truckee and North Tahoe High Schools will be staying in the NIAA at least until three court cases pending in the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals are resolved.

On. Oct. 28, the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD) Board of Trustees voted to approve a Stay Agreement between the school district, the California Department of Education and an anonymous coalition of stakeholders and taxpayers of the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District.

During the special meeting on Oct. 28, to consider the agreement, TTUSD Superintendent Kerstin Kramer said attorneys representing the anonymous stakeholders led the negotiations on the agreement.

Kramer said the stay agreement pauses a corrective action ordered by the California Department of Education (CDE) on Sept. 29, 2025, ordering TTUSD to transition from the NIAA to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) for the 2026-27 school year. CDE later extended that deadline to the 2027-28 school year.

In April 2025, the NIAA adopted a policy regarding student-athlete eligibility based solely on biological sex, which conflicts with California laws regarding gender identity.

On Oct. 29, 2025, TTUSD requested reconsideration of these corrective actions, citing concerns that crossing Donner Pass in winter would restrict their athletic opportunities for the district's students and that CIF organizes athletics on a four-year cycle that currently runs through 2028, and a transition in the middle of that cycle would place TTUSD on "independent status" for at least one school year, without meaningful playoff or championship opportunities.

Under the agreement, the CDE agreed not to enforce its action requiring TTUSD to leave NIAA and transition to CIF until 60 days after the final resolution of all appeals in three cases that have been appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court.

The agreement states that the anonymous group of stakeholders contends that those court cases are likely to resolve or produce binding precedent on whether sports can be segregated based on gender identity or biological sex, which they argued preempts the basis for the corrective action.

The stakeholders also anticipate that the Supreme Court may ultimately decide that issue.

The stay agreement is effective immediately and ends 60 days after the resolution of the three court cases cited in the agreement.

"It allows our sports program to continue with no disruption, disruptions, while the legal cases make their way through the courts and hopefully resolve this and get our states back on the same page," Kramer said.

She told the TTUSD Board at the Oct. 28, meeting there's no way to predict when those cases might be decided and they could take several years.

"I think there's a lot of frustration across the nation about this issue that perhaps it will be move more quickly, but we know that there's many appeals and due process in the justice system," Kramer said.

All of Truckee's and North Tahoe's athletic teams compete in the NIAA except for Nordic skiing and downhill snowboarding, which compete in the CIF.



Leanne Cruz, Cruz Down Memory Lane Photography

Fernley's Brendon Magill (6) tackles Spring Creek's Aiden Keim on a kickoff return during last Friday's playoff game.

Turnovers, fourth-down swings end Fernley's season at Spring Creek

By Robert Perea

FERNLEY — The fine margins of playoff football ultimately cost the Fernley Vaqueros in their season-ending 27-7 loss at Spring Creek last Friday.

Three critical fourth-down plays and a devastating turnover with less than a minute left in the first half put the No. 6-seeded Vaqueros into a hole too deep to climb out of.

"In the end, it comes down to executing, it comes down to valuing the football and making tackles and I think we did two of the three of those," coach Anfernee Sloan said. "I'm proud of them because they gave themselves the best opportunity to go in and win the game, and I don't think they understand that when they look at that score."

Spring Creek capitalized on two second-quarter turnovers to go into halftime with not just a 21-0 lead, but with a devastating shift in momentum.

The Vaqueros drove to the Spring Creek 12-yard line on their opening possession, but a false start penalty on 4th-and-2 moved the ball back five yards and a pass on 4th-and-7 was incomplete.

Spring Creek drove 83 yards in 13 plays to take a 7-0 lead on a 5-yard run by Landon Boyle, thanks in part to a 4th-and-1 conversion that kept the drive alive.

Then the Spartans scored twice in the final three and a half minutes of the second quarter. The first came when Fernley fumbled on 4th-and-2 from the Spring Creek 44-yard line. Spring Creek recovered at its own 46 and drove 54 yards in nine plays, scoring on a 4-yard run by Boyle with 3:34 left in the quarter to go up 14-0.

The Vaqueros tried to answer before the half, but after getting a first down, a fumbled option pitch gave the Spartans the ball at the Fernley 22-yard line. On the next play, quarterback McCoy McArtor dropped a perfect pass right to the back corner of the end zone where Nolan Francis made the catch just before going out of bounds.

Where moments before they had been driving with the chance to tie the game at 7, the Vaqueros went to the locker room trailing 21-0.

"That's just the nature of the beast there, like that's just how football is," Sloan said. "What if they would have swung the other way? We're up 21-0."

Fernley came out of the half with its best drive of the game, 12 plays in 7 minutes, 7 seconds, to get onto the board with a 5-yard touchdown pass from Elijah DeVold to Jayse Jones.

Fernley forced an incomplete pass on fourth down on Spring Creek's next possession, but the Vaqueros got stuffed for no gain on 4th-and-1 from their own 45-yard line with 11:03 left in the fourth quarter, and the Spartans put the game away with a 15-yard pass from McArtor to Boyle with 7:12 left.

After the last of his players had left the field, Sloan said several of the seniors who endured two tough seasons on JV before being part of a good team last year, then won two straight games to give themselves an opportunity to make playoff a run this year.

"That's why it's emotional, because they put a lot of time into this and they're committed to the football program, they're committed to the city of Fernley, and they're committed to this brotherhood that we have established in our culture," Sloan said. "I'm grateful for it because I didn't create that, those guys did that, and their emotions speak thousands of words."



LOWRY HIGH SOCCER

The Lowry High School girls soccer seniors with coaches Chris Entwistle and Abraham Swensen.

Lowry girls soccer team season ends with regional tournament loss to South Tahoe

By Tony Erquiaga

WINNEMUCCA — For all the realtors out there, the Lowry High School girls soccer might be interested for housing in South Lake Tahoe.

The Buckaroos made their third trip to the resort city on Tuesday, Oct. 27, for the opening round of the Northern 3A Regional Championships.

Looking back to August, Lowry started its season with a tournament in South Lake Tahoe and made another trip to the lake for a crossover match.

Battling through injuries and concussions throughout the fall, the Buckaroos earned the No. 7 seed for the regional tournament.

Lowry battled tough with South Tahoe but the Vikings scored a late goal in the first half and added a goal in the second half to win 3-0.

"The girls didn't play bad at all," said LHS coach Chris Entwistle. "Every time we played it got better. The girls came as long way this year."

South Tahoe took a 1-0 lead in the 17th minute on a throw in from midfield. The Vikings too advantage of the fast turf and a defensive miscue and Valerie Flores-Marroquin was left alone for the shot.

South Tahoe added to the lead in the 30th minute, as Finley Mathews found the net from the left side of the field on a sharp angle.

The Vikings added their final goal in the 60th minute.

Yareli Garcia and Ava Swensen each had two shots on goal. Allyson Barajas stopped nine South Tahoe shots on goal.

Lowry finished the season 6-12-2 overall and 2-5-1 in the Northern 3A East.

"The girls played great and showed how much they improved over the course of the season," Entwistle said. "I am very proud of them, and they left the field (in tears) with their heads held high."

Mustangs return to soccer playoffs after 10-year absence

By Peggy Jones

LOVELOCK — For the first time in 10 years, the Pershing County High School girls soccer team advanced to the postseason, marking a milestone for the program despite a season-ending 6-1 loss at the NIAA 2A State Championships to top-seeded Yerington on Friday, Oct. 30, in Ely.

PCHS coach Kelly Brooks said the Mustangs played well against the No. 1 seed but struggled to capitalize on offensive opportunities.

Yerington took an early 2-0 lead, using its speed to break through the Mustangs' defensive line.

Pershing County answered when Desaray Vidrio dribbled up the outside and passed back to Camila Garcia, who sent a shot from just outside the 18-yard box over the goalkeeper's head and into the net.

Yerington scored twice more before halftime, including a goal just seconds before the break, and added two goals in the second half.

Despite the deficit, Brooks praised her team's determination.

"The great thing about our team is that they never give up," Brooks said. "They always have some fight left in them."

Brooks credited Mary McBride and Josie Brooks with stopping numerous attacks through the middle, while outside defenders Fatima Arteaga and Mili Gonzalez battled Yerington's speedy forwards.

Nayeli Acosta demonstrated her ball-handling skills, while Lily Reynolds and Elanie DeLosReyes contributed on both offense and defense.

Alejandra Piñeda consistently positioned herself to make plays, and Garcia worked across the field to support her teammates.

Brooks praised Vidrio's determination to create scoring opportunities, while Evelyn Gonzalez and Natalie Gonzalez provided strong contributions off the bench.

Goalkeeper Aaliyah Lora faced considerable pressure throughout the game, making numerous saves despite Yerington's six goals.

Brooks said Lora's improvement throughout the season was particularly evident in the playoff game.

The loss also marked the final high school soccer game for seniors Nayeli Acosta, Alejandra Piñeda and Mili Gonzalez, whose contributions Brooks said will be difficult to replace.

Gonzalez joined the team as a sophomore with no previous soccer experience but improved rapidly, earning a starting position by her second season.

Brooks said Gonzalez became such a dependable player that she rarely, if ever, left the field this season.

Piñeda demonstrated exceptional dedication to the program, attending summer practices beginning before her freshman year and missing very few throughout her high school career.

Her steady improvement helped her develop into a well-rounded player and team leader.

Acosta's graduation marks the end of a family tradition within the soccer program.

Coach Eva Nelson previously coached both of Acosta's older sisters, and Brooks also coached one of them.

Brooks recalled watching Acosta dominate the Lovelock youth soccer league before joining the high school team, where she made an immediate impact as a freshman.

A team captain for the past two seasons, Acosta became someone Brooks could rely on to reinforce expectations and encourage her teammates.

"Our next captains have some very big shoes to fill," Brooks said.

Although the Mustangs' playoff appearance ended in defeat, reaching the postseason for the first time in a decade represented an important accomplishment for the program. Lakers fall two points short of



PERSHING COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

The Pershing County High School girls soccer team reached the postseason for the first time since 2016. The Mustangs took on Yerington this past Friday at the NIAA 2A State Championships in Ely.

Battle Mountain boys soccer plays in postseason for first time since early 2000s

By Tony Erquiaga

BATTLE MOUNTAIN — Just a few years ago, the Battle Mountain High School boys soccer team was shuttered due to a lack of players. Times have changes recently, as the Longhorns are starting to rebuild the program.

The Longhorns returned to the postseason for the first time since the early 2000s, with a trip to the NIAA 2A State Championships, this past weekend at White Pine High School in Ely.

Battle Mountain took on top-seeded Yerington on Friday and lost 7-0. Yerington went on to defeat Dayton 2-1 to win the state title.

Lakers fall two points short of state tournament berth

By Robert Perea

PYRAMID LAKE — For the third time this season, the Pyramid Lake and Coleville volleyball teams played five sets last Saturday afternoon in the 1A West League Tournament in Smith Valley.

But for the second consecutive season, the Wolves denied the Lakers a berth in the 1A State Tournament.

Coleville beat Pyramid Lake 25-23, 15-25, 18-25, 25-20, 16-14 in the 1A West semifinals Saturday.

The Lakers outscored the Wolves 107-99 over five sets, but it was two-point differences in the first and fifth sets that decided the match.

The win put Coleville into the championship match, which Smith Valley won 25-6, 25-15, 25-20. Both teams advance to the 1A State Tournament in Las Vegas this week, with Smith Valley facing Beatty and Coleville taking on Round Mountain.

The Lakers finished the season with a 13-8 overall record and 9-3 in the 1A West.

Virginia City pulls away from Pyramid Lake in rivalry finale

By Robert Perea

PYRAMID LAKE — Virginia City built an early lead and never relinquished it, defeating Pyramid Lake 70-20 in the regular-season finale between the longtime rivals.

The Muckers jumped in front 12-0 before Pyramid Lake got on the board when quarterback Bradley Lara connected with Myron Rivers on a 3-yard touchdown pass and the 2-point conversion cut the deficit to 12-8.

After Daniel Costell broke free for a 75-yard touchdown run that extended Virginia City's lead to 20-8, the Lakers answered again.

Lara found Rivers for a 66-yard touchdown pass to make it 20-14.

Pyramid Lake recovered a Virginia City fumble and had an opportunity to take the lead, but the drive ended on downs at the Muckers' 13-yard line.

Virginia City capitalized immediately as Tyler Battaglia raced 58 yards for a touchdown, pushing the advantage to 28-14.

The Lakers responded on the ensuing possession when Lara connected with Uriah Coffman for a 68-yard touchdown pass, pulling Pyramid Lake within 28-20.

Virginia City then pulled away, scoring three more touchdowns before halftime to take a 50-20 lead into the break. The Muckers added two touchdowns in the third quarter and another in the fourth to seal the victory.

Pyramid Lake coach Brian Borden said both teams entered the game out of playoff contention, but the rivalry remained meaningful.

"It was the final game of the season. Both teams didn't make the playoffs, but it's always a great rivalry between the two," Borden said.

Borden said the Lakers had several chances in the first half to tie the game or take the lead, but key injuries hampered their efforts.

Despite the loss, Borden praised several individual performances.

"Troy Yazzie and Uriah Coffman had some great, tough runs as well as a very strong performance on defense," Borden said.

Eureka volleyball season ends with regional loss to Owyhee

By Tony Erquiaga

EUREKA — The Eureka High School volleyball team traveled to Elko last Saturday, looking to clinch a spot in the 1A state tournament.

The Vandals entered the 1A East Regional Championships as the No. 3 seed and a meeting with Owyhee in the semifinals. The Braves won both of the regular season matchups.

After dropping the opening set 25-15, Eureka tied the match after a 28-26 win in set two. The Vandals could not keep the momentum, as the Braves won the final two sets 25-16 and 25-17.

Eureka finished the year 13-13 and graduates five seniors in Mya Tognotti, Jazmine Martinez, Brooke Watts, Trinity Hudson and Danika Goff.





SHEA MURPHY • Provided to Great Basin Sports

The Pershing County High School volleyball team gathers for one final huddle following its season-ending loss to Yerington in the regional playoffs Saturday, Oct. 31, at North Tahoe High School.

Pershing County closes volleyball season at 2A regional tournament

By Peggy Jones

LOVELOCK — The Pershing County High School volleyball team entered the Northern 2A Regional Championships this past Weekend in Tahoe City, Calif., as the No. 3 seed after closing out the regular season with four consecutive victories.

The Mustangs swept sixth-seeded West Wendover in Friday's opening round before falling to Yerington in three closely contested sets Saturday.

For PCHS coach Monica Halverson, the season was about more than wins and losses. It was about developing a mindset that would serve her players both on and off the court.

Each season, Halverson selects a motivational theme intended to encourage her players to become better athletes, teammates and individuals. This year's theme was "Mustangs Mentality," emphasizing hard work and the importance of becoming the best version of oneself.

That mentality helped carry the Mustangs through the second half of their season.

By the midway point, the team had set its sights on reaching the playoffs and securing the highest possible seed. Four straight wins propelled Pershing County into third place heading into the regional tournament.

The Mustangs opened postseason play Friday against West Wendover, defeating the Wolverines 25-17, 25-14 and 25-16.

Halverson credited her senior captains and starters with maintaining the team's energy, communication and accountability throughout the match.

The Mustangs received strong performances from several players.

Khloe Montes led the offense with 14 kills while contributing three service aces, one block and 19 digs. Cami Watson added eight kills, three blocks and five digs.

Arya Garland recorded a team-high 24 digs and one ace, while Jerzie Jones contributed 17 digs, two kills and an ace. Katelynn Elerick finished with 12 digs, six assists and two aces. Avani Rosas contributed nine assists and five digs, while Magdalena Ramirez added six kills and six digs.

Whitlee Diaz recorded two kills, one block, one ace and three digs.

Halverson singled out Watson and Diaz for bringing additional energy and competitiveness to the court. The victory advanced Pershing County to Saturday's second-round matchup against Yerington.

Although the Mustangs fell in three sets, they challenged the Lions throughout much of the match, losing 23-25, 15-25 and 24-26.

Pershing County battled back from an early deficit in the opening set, pushing Yerington to the final points before falling by two.

The second set proved more difficult as communication breakdowns and unforced errors allowed the Lions to build momentum.

Before the third set, Coach Courtney Brinkerhoff challenged the Mustangs' six senior starters to play with conviction and finish every point.

The response was a spirited final set featuring extended rallies and repeated exchanges of momentum. Pershing County remained within striking distance, but Yerington prevailed 26-24 to end the Mustangs' season.

Watson led Pershing County with nine kills, a season high, and added two blocks and an assist.

Montes contributed seven kills, two blocks and eight digs. Garland recorded 14 digs, two kills and an assist, while Jones added 15 digs, three kills, one ace and one assist.

Elerick finished with eight digs, three assists, two kills and an ace. Ramirez recorded seven digs and two kills, while Rosas contributed seven assists and four digs.

Despite the loss, Halverson praised her players for their determination and improvement throughout the season.

The Mustangs had entered the season considered underdogs, but through consistent practice, repetition and accountability to one another, they developed into a team capable of competing in the regional playoffs.

Their four-game winning streak to close the regular season and opening-round playoff victory reflected that progress.

Although the season ended one match short of advancing further, the Mustangs finished with a sense of accomplishment and a foundation for future success.

For Halverson, the season reinforced the message behind "Mustangs Mentality": that success is measured not only by victories but also by the effort, growth and commitment players bring to their team and to themselves.

Battle Mountain sees season end in five-set thriller to Sierra Lutheran

By Tony Erquiaga

BATTLE MOUNTAIN — When you get into a 4-5 matchup in the postseason, you know its going to be competitive. That is what fans got on Friday night in Tahoe City, Calif., as the Battle Mountain High School volleyball team took on Sierra Lutheran.

The Carson City school defeated the Longhorns both times in four sets in the regular season. The two squads were back at it in the Northern 2A Regional Championships and pushed the match to five sets.

Battle Mountain grabbed the early advantage, winning the first set 25-21. The Falcons came back to win the second set 25-21 and the third 25-16.

Sierra Lutheran had control of the fourth set, when everything fell apart and Battle Mountain rallied.

The Falcons had match point at 24-16 but gave up eight straight points to the Longhorns. Battle Mountain took advantage of a number of miscues by Sierra Lutheran and then used a couple kills to tie the set at 24 all.

Each team had a chance win the set, when trailing 30-29, the Longhorns scored the final three points to win 32-30.

Sierra Lutheran came back and took an early lead in the fifth set and held on for a 15-10 win.

"We faced a tough opponent and fought our way to the very end, which is all I ever asked of the girls," said BMHS coach Julia Ramirez. "From losing in four sets against Sierra Lutheran both times to almost winning in five sets is something I will keep smiling at as we conclude the season. All I ever wanted for them was to learn and grow, and they did just that. These seniors continued the momentum they had as a team from last year, and it's been amazing to watch them leave a lasting impact on this program and me as well."



Courtesy Laura Wilson

The Fernley High School girls cross country team of Kaylee Nicolas, Regan Scott, Wynter Angus, JoJo Cardinal and Corbyn Gillespie.

Fernley boys and girls each qualify two runners to state cross country meet

By Robert Perea

FERNLEY — The Fernley High School cross country team qualified four runners for the state meet, with two boys and two girls earning individual berths at last Friday's Northern Regional Championships.

The Fernley boys placed eighth as a team with 175 points, led by state qualifiers Cael Wilson and Zachary Peterson.

Wilson finished 15th in 18 minutes, 43 seconds, while Peterson crossed the line 18th in 19:01 to secure a spot at the state championships.

Ayden Johnson placed 33rd in 19:54, Logan Peterson was 53rd in 21:39, Daniel Hiles finished 56th in 21:57, Mason Varner took 61st in 22:47 and Addison Davis placed 62nd in 24:01.

The Fernley girls finished sixth with 159 points and produced two individual state qualifiers. Regan Scott earned a state berth with a 27th-place finish in 24:23, while Corbyn Gillespie qualified in 33rd place with a time of 25:11.

Kaylee Nicolas finished 37th in 25:56, JoJo Cardinal placed 39th in 26:03 and Wynter Angus was 40th in 26:13.

Fernley coach Kristian Slater said he was proud of the four qualifiers and their performances at regionals.

"It was a great cap off to a wonderful season for the four that qualified," Slater said. "For three of them it is a return to qualifying from last year and so there is always the expectation that they can do it again, but when you start crunching the numbers you never know for sure what will happen. To see them put everything together on the day makes me proud and excited for what they can do this weekend."

Wilson, Petersen and Gillespie are returning state qualifiers. Gillespie qualified as an individual last year, while Wilson and Peterson were part of the boys team that qualified as a team.



Courtesy Laura Wilson

The Fernley High School boys cross country team of Daniel Hiles, Ayden Johnson, Addison Davis, Cael Wilson, Logan Petersen, Mason Varner and Zachary Petersen.

Greenwave's regional volleyball tournament run cut short by South Tahoe

By Robert Perea

FALLON — Before they were varsity contenders, the seniors on this year's Churchill County High School volleyball team were just middle schoolers learning the game.

After the Greenwave's season, and the high school volleyball careers of those seniors, ended in straight sets against eventual regional champion South Tahoe last Tuesday, that's what head coach Tristin Johnson was thinking the most about.

"It was a memorable season for me," Johnson said. "Yes, it was full of ups and downs, but this team will always be special to me. I've coached them since they were middle schoolers — and some younger — and watching them grow up and improve as volleyball players and young women was a pleasure."

The Greenwave finished the season with a 14-16 overall record, including 5-5 in the Northern 3A East. They went through streaks of five straight losses and six consecutive wins at different points in the season but won three of their last four regular season matches to earn the No. 6 seed for the regional tournament.

Unfortunately, that put them up against South Tahoe in the quarterfinal round last Tuesday. The Vikings had rebounded from going 0-5 in a tournament in early October and finished in a three-way tie with Fernley and Truckee for the league lead but were relegated to the third seed because of a tiebreaker.

In a match where South Tahoe had 97 attacks at the net and Fallon had 91, the Vikings converted 37 into kills, compared to 24 for the Greenwave and came away with the win, 25-15, 25-20, 25-17.

Audrey Fruzza led the Greenwave with 11 kills and three aces, while Raegan Johnson added 10 kills.

Layla Walker recorded 13 digs, and Kalaya Downs finished with 16 assists and 10 digs. For South Tahoe, Viviana Wilson had 17 kills and Ayla Rodriguez added 12.

The Vikings followed their win over Fallon by making a mockery of the tiebreakers, beating Fernley in four sets and Truckee in three to claim the regional title. South Tahoe and Truckee will both represent the North at the 3A State Tournament in Las Vegas.

While that's a trip the Greenwave players were hoping to earn for themselves, Tristin Johnson said they will achieve plenty of other things in their lives.

"They're all going to go on and do amazing things and I'm grateful I had a front row seat to watch them play hard this season," Johnson said.

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Lowry's Julian Gourley heads the ball during the regional match with Spring Creek.

Controversy clouds Lowry boys soccer exit in Northern 3A regional tourney

By Tony Erquiaga

WINNEMUCCA — What could possibly go wrong when you start a playoff match at 4:15 p.m., on a field with no lights? The answer — just about everything.

The Lowry High School boys soccer team traveled to Spring Creek on Tuesday, Oct. 27, for the opening round of the Northern 3A Regional Championships. The match was scheduled to begin at 3:45 p.m., but officials were finishing up an Elko/Spring Creek girls match at Adobe Middle School. With school getting out at the same time, the officials were about 30 minutes late to Spring Creek High School.

In the regular season, the Spartans won both league matches, the most recent being a 2-1 victory.

The playoff meeting proved to be a physical, defensive battle without a goal in the first 40 minutes of play.

Lowry jumped on the board first midway through the second half and held that advantage until the final minutes when Spring Creek tied the match on a penalty kick. The Buckaroos were called for a handball in the box off a Spartan free kick.

As the sun set in the final minutes of regulation, both teams pushed to get the winning goal. They could not convert, as darkness set in, the match went into the first 15-minute period of extra time.

After a clean slate, officials started the second overtime but quickly stopped it due to darkness.

The Buckaroos came back to Spring Creek the following day to finish the match and the second extra period went scoreless as well, setting up a penalty-kick shootout. Each team gets five shots, as players are picked before the shootout starts.

Jonathan Leon gave Lowry a 1-0 lead on the first kick and Izayus Barajas stopped the first Spring Creek PK but was called for infringement. Spring Creek shot again and it went high but another infringement was called. On the fourth try, the Spartans tie it at 1-1.

Cris Arriola found the back of the net after that and Spring Creek tied it right back at 2-2.

Lowry missed on its third kick, when Barajas was called for another infringement after making a save. The Spartans made the next kick to go up 3-2.

In round four, Cruz Gomez found the back of the net, as did Spring Creek, as the Spartans led 4-3. Cris Arriola tied the shootout at 5-4, when Barajas made another save but was called again for infringement. Spring Creek made the next goal to win the shootout 5-4.

"As a coach, I have always made it my mission to teach these boys to keep fighting, even when things get hard or don't go our way," said LHS coach Cristina Cuevas. "From the moment this game started yesterday, it felt like everything was working against us. But these boys never gave up. They fought with everything they had until the very end, and that is something no one can ever take away from them. I am beyond proud of this group of boys. They have shown heart, resilience and determination, and they have represented Lowry with pride. As much as it hurts to see our season end this way, we have to hold our heads high and keep pushing forward. To my players — never let a difficult moment define you. Keep fighting, keep believing in yourselves, and never forget how far you've come. Sometimes life isn't fair, and sometimes things don't end the way we believe they should. But how we respond to those moments shows our true character."



ANTHONY MORI • Elko Daily Free Press

Lowry's Izayus Barajas makes a save against a Spring Creek shot.

Elko spoils return to playoffs for Fallon boys soccer team

By Robert Perea

FALLON — After missing the playoffs last season, the Churchill County High School boys soccer team earned the No. 6 seed for this year's 3A Northern Region Tournament.

But Elko, the No. 3 seed and winner of the East Division during the regular season, made the Greenwave's stay in the postseason a short one with a 6-1 win in the first round on Oct. 27.

The Greenwave got four shots on goal and found the net with one of them. No individual stats were available for Fallon.

Elko got three goals from Mateo Avila and two from Aritz Aizpurua to lead the Indians to the regional semifinals, where they lost in a penalty kick shootout 4-2, after a 1-1 tie in regulation. South Tahoe defeated Elko 4-3 in the region championship and both teams will represent the North in the 3A State Tournament Friday and Saturday at Reed.

Season ends in regional quarterfinals for Fallon girls soccer with loss to North Tahoe

By Robert Perea

FALLON — No. 4 seed Fallon saw its season come to an end in the 3A Northern Region quarterfinals with a 3-0 loss to No. 5 seed North Tahoe.

North Tahoe scored early, finding the net in the second and sixth minutes before adding a third goal in the 36th minute.

Fallon finished with 12 shots in the match but was unable to break through offensively.

Goalkeeper Shaylee Orduna recorded four saves for the Greenwave.

Fallon closed the season with a 10-4-2 overall record.

The Greenwave went 6-1-1 in Northern League play during the regular season to earn the No. 4 seed in the regional tournament.

Fernley falls to top-seeded Truckee in regional quarterfinals

By Robert Perea

FERNLEY — No. 8 seed Fernley saw its season come to an end in the 3A Northern Region quarterfinals with a 7-0 loss to top-seeded Truckee.

Truckee's offense was led by six different goal scorers as the Wolverines advanced to the regional semifinals.

Fernley finished the season with a 4-14-1 overall record after qualifying for the regional tournament as the No. 8 seed.

Truckee went on to win the region championship over South Tahoe, winning a penalty kick shootout 4-2 after the games was tied 0-0 after regulation and overtime.



Fallon girls place fifth, qualify two runners for state; Barbee advances for boys

By Robert Perea

FALLON — The Churchill County High School cross country team will send three runners to the state meet this week after the girls team placed fifth with 134 points at the regional meet and qualified two runners for the state championships, while Jackson Barbee earned an individual state berth for the boys.

Issabelle Walter-Chicas-Garibay led the Greenwave girls with an 11th-place finish in 21 minutes, :32 seconds, while Aubrey Strickland secured a state qualifying spot by placing 16th in 22:24.

Fallon's remaining scorers were Casandra Hooper, who finished 38th in 26:01; Ella Bassham, who posted a time of 28:00; and Kylee Moore, who placed 45th in 30:15. Zoe Rasmussen finished 46th in 30:17, and Abigail Lacow was 47th in 30:56.

The Fallon boys finished seventh with 175 points, tying Fernley on score but claiming the higher placement through the tiebreaker after the Greenwave's sixth runner finished ahead of Fernley's sixth runner.

Jackson Barbee qualified for state with a 30th-place finish in 19:44, earning one of the individual qualifying spots. Cody Frey narrowly missed a state berth after placing 31st in 19:47.

Lars Rasmussen finished 35th in 19:58, Tayven Martinez was 39th in 20:13, Levi Bradford placed 40th in 20:15, Michael Lister finished 49th in 20:47 and Cayson Lacow was 50th in 20:49.



ROBERT PEREA • Great Basin Sports

Fernley's Leah Holmes (8) and Emma Masters (33) team up to block a spike by Incline's Penny Nelson (7) during last Tuesday's quarterfinal match in the 3A Northern Regional Tournament.

Fernley volleyball finishes one win short of state berth

By Robert Perea

FERNLEY — Fernley opened the 3A Northern Regional Volleyball Tournament with a straight-set win over Incline before its season ended in the semifinals against South Tahoe.

The Vaqueros were seeded No. 2 for the tournament and hosted No, 7 Incline in the quarterfinals, winning 25-10, 25-15, 25-20 behind a balanced offensive attack that produced 32 kills. Emma Masters led Fernley with 11 kills, Trista Menesini added eight and Grace Chapin finished with five.

Alauna Escartin helped control the match from the service line and setter position, finishing with five aces and 25 assists while also contributing 14 digs. Jocelyn Escartin added 14 digs for the Vaqueros.

Fernley advanced to face South Tahoe in the semifinals, where the Vikings prevailed 25-20, 21-25, 25-22, 25-14.

The Vaqueros stayed competitive through the first three sets before South Tahoe pulled away in the fourth. Menesini led Fernley with 14 kills, Masters added nine and Chapin finished with eight kills and four blocks.

"I thought we matched up very well with South Tahoe in regards to talent and I thought we were a little stronger, we just didn't play our best match," coach Diane Chapin said. "In the set we won we were trailing 19-9 and won 25-21."

Fernley recorded 33 kills on 155 attacks, while South Tahoe finished with 47 kills on 165 attacks. Viviana Wilson led the Vikings with 21 kills.

South Tahoe's high-volume attack kept Fernley's defense busy throughout the match. Menesini and Jocelyn Escartin each recorded 19 digs, Alauna Escartin added 17 digs and Masters contributed 13. Alauna Escartin also finished with 26 assists.

"I think the season as a whole was very successful for the girls. We played very well all season and won the Northern 3A East league with a record of 9-1, we were undefeated at home this season," Chapin said. "We also were on a 7-game winning streak going into Friday's game. Unfortunately in our Friday we came out flat and kept digging ourselves holes that we fought out of."



ROBERT PEREA • Great Basin Sports

Fernley's Trista Menesini hits the ball into the block of Incline's Penny Nelson (7) and Sady Kelly (4) during last Tuesday's quarterfinal match in the 3A Northern Regional Tournament.



ROBERT PEREA • Great Basin Sports

Fernley's Emma Masters tries to get the over the block of Incline's Penny Nelson (7) and Maria Hershburger (14) during last Tuesday's quarterfinal match in the 3A Northern Regional Tournament.



SANDY BENGOA LUTZ • Great Basin Sports

The Battle Mountain offense gets ready for the snap in Friday's game against Coral Academy.

Battle Mountain drops regular-season finale to Coral Academy

Longhorns open playoffs Friday in Lovelock

By Tony Erquiaga

BATTLE MOUNTAIN — The Battle Mountain High School football team closed out the regular season with a trip to McQueen High School in Reno this past Friday night.

Up for grabs was a possible No.2 or 3 seed against up-and-coming Coral Academy of Reno. The Falcons are in the midst one of their best seasons in program history. Coral Academy raced out to a28-0 lead early in the first half on way to a 49-14 win over Battle Mountain.

The Falcons threw just five passes, completing four, while rushing for over 490 yards on the ground. Three different players rushed for over 100 yards. Sierra Lutheran had runs of 73 yards, 47, 38, 33, 20 and 17.

For Battle Mountain, it was its third loss in four games to close out the Northern 2A schedule.

The Longhorns are 3-3 in the Northern 2A and 5-4 overall.

Battle Mountain has the tough task of traveling to Lovelock on Friday to play Pershing County at 6 p.m., in the opening round of the state tournament.

The two rivals played on Oct. 23, in Battle Mountain, with Pershing County winning 66-27. However, Battle Mountain led in the second quarter.



SANDY BENGOA LUTZ • Great Basin Sports

The Battle Mountain defense looks on awaiting the ball to be snapped.



ANTHONY MORI • Elko Daily Free Press

McDermitt's Cree Camas passes to a teammate at the net during its regional match with Wells.

McDermitt volleyball knocked off at 1A East regional tournament

Bulldogs have just one senior on the roster

By Tony Erquiaga

MCDERMITT — The McDermitt High School volleyball team concluded its season this past Saturday at the 1A East Regional Championships, contested at Elko High School.

The Bulldogs entered the tournament as the No. 5 seed, meeting up with Wells, the No. 4 seed, in the opening round.

The two teams split their matches in the regular season, winning on each other's home floor.

All three sets were close and competitive, with Wells winning the first two sets 25-23 and 27-25. The Leopards closed out the match, claiming the third set 25-20.

The Bulldogs finished the year 7-16. Melissa Hunter is the lone senior on the McDermitt roster, which featured four freshman, two juniors and a sophomore.



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McDermitt's Chenoa Kelly serves against Wells.