

Time Out



Chuck Baker
News Sports Editor
cbaker@ajnews.com

Once A Coach . . .

Less than six weeks after leading the Apache Trail Wolfpack to an Arizona Charter Athletic Association "Class B" State Championship title in just their second season of eight-man tackle football, head coach Dave Wagner was laid off as a teacher and coach due to "budget shortfalls." Wow, can you say recession?

But not to worry about Coach "W." It didn't take him long to get up off of the canvas and back on his feet, nor did he have to go very far to do so. On Wednesday of last week, Wagner, who got his Bachelor degree in criminal justice at Northern Arizona University and his Master's degree in business from Webster University (Missouri), started his new job as Dean of Students at Imagine Prep @ Superstition, a college preparatory high school and middle school located about a mile south and west at 1843 W. 16th Avenue in Apache Junction.

After receiving notice of his impending lay-off, Wagner went to meet with Imagine Prep School Leader Bridget Carrington.

"Hi, I'm Dave Wagner, your new head football coach," was his greeting."

A day or two later, Wagner interviewed with a regional administrator for Imagine Prep schools, and shortly after, the position of Dean of Students was created.

Wagner, who you might say is somewhat of a free spirit, passionate about his football and the kids he coaches, is also teaching an English class and a Criminal Justice class in addition to his duties as Dean of Students.

He was a popular teacher and coach at Apache Trail High School, so much so, that three of his former

see *Time Out*, page B-3

Prospectors Win Three In Holiday Hoops

By Chuck Baker
The News

For a team that won only three games in each of the past two seasons, Apache Junction's performance during the Copa Hoops Tournament played at Maricopa High School during the Christmas break may have been the best stretch of basketball the AJHS kids have played since 2007. The Prospectors equaled their win total from the 2009 and 2008 seasons in just two days, winning three close games against Tucson Empire, Phoenix South Pointe and Fountain Hills, before losing by ten to the host school, Maricopa.

In their tournament opener against Empire, the two teams were deadlocked 44-44 with two minutes to play and Apache Junction went on an 8-0 run to close out a 52-44 victory.

Colt Grandstaff poured in 30 points to lead the Prospectors while guard Dimario Hill netted 12 points.

Next up for Apache Junction was the game against South Pointe, who led



Prospector senior guard Mike Cano (#10) puts up a jump shot in last Tuesday's game against Raymond Kellis

most of the way until Hill knocked down a three-point shot with :38 left in regulation to put the Prospectors out in front 52-50. Guard Mike Cano then came up with a steal at the defensive end and Hill sank a pair of free throws to give Apache Junction a 54-50 win.

Against Fountain Hills, a team that featured a trio of front court players standing 6-9, 6-8 and 6-5, the Prospectors played a run-and-gun style from the opening tip and kept the score close

throughout. Then Grandstaff made five consecutive points down the stretch and AJHS center Paul Miles played what Coach Dale Richardson said was his best of the season, scoring 17 points in the paint against the much taller opponent. Hill led the Prospectors with 19 points, Grandstaff finished with 12, sophomore Jared Kraps contributed eight points, and Cano, with his defensive skills, shut down the Fountain Hills guards as Apache Junction held on for

a 60-56 victory.

In their final game against Maricopa, the Prospectors went cold from the court early on, making just three of twenty-three shots, and fell behind, unable to recover.

Grandstaff netted 12, Cano tossed in 10, Hill scored eight and Kraps added seven points.

"We won three games and I couldn't have been happier," Coach Richardson said about the Copa Tournament. "The kids played hard as usual and actually hit some shots."

The Prospectors continued their hard play this past week but unfortunately came up on the short end of two games, falling at home to (Glendale) Raymond Kellis on Tuesday by a 73-66 score, and losing at Queen Creek on Friday 65-54 in the Desert Sky Region opener for both teams.

In the loss to Kellis, Grandstaff tossed in 30 points, grabbed eight rebounds and dished out a pair of assists in a losing effort. Kyrel Parker contributed 11 points and six rebounds, Dalawn

Caldwell came off the bench in the second half to score 10 points and grab five rebounds, Cano netted eight points, Miles scored four points and Hill and Lawrence Johnson both added a bucket.

In the loss to Queen Creek, Grandstaff scored 15 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, Cano netted 10 points, Miles scored eight points, Hill added seven points and two steals, Parker scored six points to go with five rebounds, Caldwell also netted six points and Kraps added a bucket.

Apache Junction, who finished last week with a 5-10 overall record, will play three games this week. On Tuesday, AJHS takes on McClintock in Tempe, will host Maricopa on Wednesday, and on Friday, the Prospectors travel to Scottsdale to take on Saguaro. The McClintock and Saguaro games are region contests and Wednesday's game with Maricopa will be the third time these two teams have met this season. Mari-

see **Hoops**, page B-3

Lady Prospectors Take Region Hoops Opener

By Chuck Baker
The News

The Lady Prospectors opened Desert Sky Region basketball with a big 41-24 win over Queen Creek last Friday on the road despite missing four players due to injury or illness. Emily McGann led a balanced attack with 10 points.

Apache Junction led 23-16 at halftime and came out in the third quarter with a 7-0 run to increase its lead to fourteen. Queen Creek never got closer than ten points the rest of the way.

Diana Woodruff knocked down three long shots from behind the arc and finished with nine points and three steals, Jessica Iniguez tossed in seven points and grabbed eight rebounds, Melissa Ochoa got the start and responded with seven points, Sierra Aulik netted five points and added nine rebounds, Monica Geer scored three points and Ra-



Lady Prospector varsity basketball player Melissa Ochoa (#14) plays defense in Friday's 41-24 win at Queen Creek

chael Bonow, playing in her varsity game, had an assists and a steal.

To fill the roster for Friday's game, Lady Prospector coach Brock Kearsley brought up three players from the junior varsity team, including freshman Carly Reid, who, like Bonow, got her first varsity experience

of the season.

Also last week, Apache Junction was rocked by (Glendale) Raymond Kellis 57-27, a team that is currently number four in the 4A-I power rankings.

In that thirty-point loss to Kellis, Coach Kearsley took

see **Girls**, page B-2



Apache Junction wrestler Dallon Bush lifts his Sierra Linda opponent off the mat in last Friday's first day of the A.J. Invitational. Bush won the match, needing just twenty-eight seconds to register a pin.

Wrestlers Hit Mat In A.J. Invitational

By Chuck Baker
The News

The Prospector wrestling team won three of their four matches last Friday on the first day of the 14-team A.J. Invitational, their only loss, a close 36-31 decisions against 5A power Tempe Marcos De Niza. And considering that Apache Junction was giving up 18 points each match with three weight-class forfeits, you would have to say that day one of the A.J. Invitational was a big success.

Apache Junction defeated Tolleson Sierra Linda 50-21, edged past Yuma Kofa 38-35 and downed Williams Field 45-36 and was still to wrestle against

Morenci and Avondale Agua Fria on Saturday in their seven-team "pool" on day two. The top two teams from each seven-team pool then advanced to the team championship round but results were not available when *The News* went to press.

Four AJHS wrestlers posted perfect 4-0 records on day one, including 125-pounder Chase Converse, 130-pounder Trent McMinn, 135-pounder Emerson Tucker, and 140-pounder Thomas Eckhardt. Tucker won all four of matches on Friday via the pin.

Dallon Bush won three of his four matches at 119

see **AJHS**, page B-6

AJHS Soccer Teams Back In Action

By Chuck Baker
The News

The boys and girls soccer teams from Apache Junction returned to action this past week against some stiff competition and came away empty-handed. The Prospectors fell to undefeated Phoenix Washington 7-1 on Tuesday and dropped a 5-1 decision to unbeaten Cave Creek Cactus Shadows on Thursday. The Lady Prospectors fell 4-0 to Washington and 0-0 to Cactus Shadows.

In the match with Cactus Shadows, after falling behind 4-0 at halftime, the Prospectors came out in the second half and matched Cactus Shadows stride for stride. The Prospectors scored their goal at the 13:20 mark of the second half when mid-fielder Andrew Gyenizse took a pass from Giovanni Garibay and slid a

nifty pass of his own ahead to Andrew Duarte, who finished off the drive with a great shot past the Cactus Shadows goalkeeper.

Cactus Shadows scored

its only goal of the second half with 8:22 to play but the Prospector offense, led by the aggressive play of Jesse Gonzalez, Kevin Angulo, Duarte, Gyenizse and



Lady Prospector Lauren Brownlee (right) battles a Washington player for the ball in last Tuesday's match

Garibay, and the defense led by David Gamboa, Jesus Godinez and goalkeeper Edson Lerma, played Cactus Shadows even throughout the second half.

In that loss to Washington, Alex Barraza scored the lone goal for Apache Junction.

In the Lady Prospectors loss to Washington, they trailed just 1-0 at halftime led by a strong first half defensive effort from defenders Chayla Langley, Cecilia Medina, Emily Cameron and Breanna Milkey and keeper Sabrina Crawford, who turned away seven shots.

But the in the second half, Washington scored three goals in less than ten minutes.

The AJHS offense didn't have many scoring threats in the match, although Cat

see **Soccer**, page B-6



Apache Junction wrestler Mark Uehling (on top) works over his opponent from Sierra Linda in last Friday's first day of the A.J. Invitational. Uehling earned a victory with a first period pin helping to lead the Prospectors to a 50-21 team victory.