

Cougars girls win state title

Coronado bowlers take every game en route to win

By TIM MULLIN

Coach Bob McKee had only one thing to say to his Coronado girls bowling team before the Feb. 1 state championship game at The Orleans.

He pulled out a picture broken into four squares.

In three of the squares was pictures of state championship rings. The girls had won state the previous year and the Coronado boys the two years before that.

The fourth square was empty.

He showed the picture to his team and said:

"This is why you are here tonight. Win that fourth ring."

The motivation worked.

In the first frame of the first game, Coronado opened with three straight strikes and never looked back en route to a 7-0 (2,373-2,010) win over Sunset regional champs Palo Verde.

"It feels great to see the girls repeat," McKee said.

"They played as a team."

Coronado team captain Maddie Pellegrino, who bowled a 568 series, said she was excited to win her second straight title.

"It is amazing," she said. "It is kind of depressing because I am senior, but I am happy to win. I'm happy and sad at the same time."

The sweep also gave Coronado a piece of history, becoming the first team since Green Valley in 2002 to win every game in every match.

Coronado dominated from the beginning.

In the first game, the Cougars only left one frame unfilled in storming out to a 809-669 advantage.

Bowlers from both teams had a hard time stringing together strikes, but Coronado filled its frames, while Palo Verde didn't.

"They stayed clean, made their spares," McKee said. "No matter what they did we were going to be there at the end because we were clean."

On 21 different occasions during the first two games Coronado left only one pin standing after its first ball. And on all 21 second balls they picked up the spare.

Palo Verde's Galit Melnick was the top individual bowler at 660, followed by Coronado's April Urban with 617 and Alyssa Madrid at 614.

For Palo Verde, the spares just weren't falling. The Panthers had nine opens, and five during that last two frames.

During those spare opportunities Palo Verde bowlers got within centimeters of picking it up, but none of them fell.

For Palo Verde it was the end of a Cinderella run. The girls entered the Sunset regional tournament as the No. 4 seed, but dominated early to knock off top seeded Durango 7-0 on the first day.

Just being in the championship game was a reward in itself.

"We are just happy to be here," Melnick said. "We bowled our best and there is nothing else we could do. They threw good balls."

On for the boys side, Clark narrowly defeated Chaparral 4-3 (2,289-2,154).

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Maddie Pellegrino,
Coronado captain