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## Open water tournament concludes at Foster

JAKE TABOR Albany Democrat-Herald Updated 10 hrs ago



Mark Ylen, Democrat-Herald

Willamette Valley's Julie Lang shoots over the Orcutt defense during a match on Tuesday.

**SWEET HOME** — For the fifth consecutive year, Foster Lake welcomed athletes for a water polo tournament unlike many others.

The fifth annual Oregon Open Water Polo Tournament began on Monday and concluded Wednesday, welcoming teams from California and throughout Oregon. In the past, teams have come from as far away as Canada to play in the tournament.

Rather than playing in aquatic centers, teams competed on the shores of Foster Lake and played under blue skies. At least, that was the plan.

The fifth edition of the tournament was different than any of the previous due to colder than normal water temperatures at Foster Lake.

"You can't predict it and you can't do anything about it, you just have to work through it," Willamette Valley Water Polo coach Steve Sessa said. "It's a little harder on the smaller kids, they don't have a lot of body fat to begin with and so you put them in a cold lake and they don't stay warm very long."

Being cold didn't seem to slow down the Willamette Valley Water Polo girls under-18 team through pool play. After finishing sixth last season, the U-18 girls won their first four games and entered the third day of the tournament looking to win a title.

WVWP lost its first game in the bracket, 12-10, to Blue Crush, a team out of Portland.

According to Sessa, fatigue played a factor in the third-place game as WVWP fell in an 8-6 game to Orcutt.

"We just couldn't pull it out," Sessa said. "It was just too many games in too short amount of time. They just ran out of gas."

Despite the rough final day, Sessa was encouraged by his team's improvement from last year, earning fourth place.

"It's an improvement definitely, the girls played well," Sessa said.



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Gallery: Foster Lake Water Polo

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