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Redskin bowlers rally for title

Daily Leader staff report

The boys did exactly what they needed over the past week to capture back to back WAC Championships.

“You could not have asked for a better finish,” Liberal coach Robert Burkey said. “We beat No. 1 Dodge last week and turned right around and beat the new No. 1 Great Bend Panthers this week. We then went to the quad in Dodge City, and beat everyone. It was a great feeling.”

The team finished the season 5-0 down the stretch and ended up 6-3 to capture their second straight WAC championship. Dodge City finished second at 5-4, Great Bend took third with a 4-5 record, and Garden City took fourth with 3-6.

Led by Senior Chris Flowers and his 659 series, the Redskins got great support from Jr. Carl Hammock (638) and Jared Hall (622).

“We started the season kind of bad, but we improved a lot,” Flowers said. “We performed when it counted. All the teams improved in the WAC. It was a lot more difficult to get wins, even at home. We took our first home loss ever this year.”

Flowers had support from his team to earn the WAC title with a strong finish.

The Redskins ended the season with a 6-3 record, "It was a real good team effort," Burkey said. "Jared had the first nine strikes in a row to start the second game, that really helped out. Every team had someone get hot, we just had the better over all team today."

League awards and honors were also handed out in Dodge City.

Flowers was awarded 1st Team All-WAC (1st), Most Valuable Bowler in WAC, and High Average.

"He got what he deserved," Burkey said. "He finished 10 pins higher than anyone else in the league. This was his year. We expect him to bowl well at regionals and State."

Carl Hammock was named First Team Honorable Mention (7th) and Landry Mastellar was also First Team Honorable Mention (12th).

Burkey took home Boys Coach of the Year.

The Lady Redskins put in a strong performance, but was too far behind to move from fourth to first. The Lady Redskins finished second.

"They really put up a good effort," Burkey said. "I was proud of the way they finished."

The girls got strong series from Erica Fowler (542) and Morgan Johnson (507). Only down 15 pins after the first game, the girls found themselves down 60 after two.

"We won the last game, but just could not overcome the 60 pins,"

Burkey said. The girls had to finish first and have Garden City finish second, Dodge third, and Great Bend fourth in order for the girls to win the WAC.

“Anytime you don’t control your own destiny, it is tough,” Burkey said. “That is why it is important to win at home. If we would have won our last two at home, WAC would have been ours.”

Freshman, Kylie Jennings was First Team All WAC (2nd) along with senior Heather Vanley (4th). Morgan Johnson just missed out on the Honorable Mention team by .4 pins on average.

Both the boys and girls team travel to Hutchinson Feb. 28 for Regional competition. The top two teams, and the top six bowlers not on a top team, advance to State.

“It is going to be a tough road,” Burkey said. “Hutchinson and Buhler both bowl out of that bowling center. We have to beat two home teams to advance. But, then again, the odds were stacked against us winning the WAC Title.”

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