

Pioneers, Eagles closely matched

by DAVE MAGNUSON
Staff writer

The football game between the Sandy Pioneers and the Centennial Eagles on Friday may not have quite the hype of other Mount Hood Conference games scheduled this weekend, but it may have just as much flair.

Check the standings and check the schedule — there are more than just wins and losses determined Friday and Saturday. Playoff spots and league titles will hang in the balance this weekend.

Whoever designed the MHC football schedule created a nice array of spectacles for Week 8, including the Pioneer/Eagle matchup.

The Pioneers and Eagles are tied for sixth place. So the game itself will not determine much — except which of the teams will be in sixth place. But the teams involved could be spoilers next week for a couple of perennial playoff teams in the league.

Next week, the final week of the season, the Barlow Bruins travel to Sandy and the Reynolds Lancers face Centennial.

Here are some of the possibilities:

• If Barlow beats Gresham and Central Catholic beats Columbia this Friday, the

Bruins would be 6-1 in league competition while Central Catholic would finish 7-1 in the league, no matter what happens the following week. The Bruins already have beaten the Rams, so if they want a conference title, they would have to beat the Pioneers in the final week.

• If Reynolds beats David Douglas Saturday night, in order to assure a playoff berth, the Lancers would have to beat Centennial in the final week of games — or hope that Gresham beats David Douglas in the same week.

The spoiler role is not as glamorous, as prideful or as satisfying as making the playoffs, but it does give coaches and players a feeling of consolation, and maybe the satisfaction of revenge.

So the winner of the Sandy/Centennial battle may gain enough "umph" to give Barlow or Reynolds a tougher time than expected.

Centennial and Sandy each have 2-5 records and are 2-4 in the league. Both teams' wins have come against Parkrose and Columbia. Last year's contest was the closest of the year for Sandy, as the Pioneers won 23-20.

This year is expected to be just as close. "They're a big-play football team," Pioneer coach Mike Funderburg said of the

Eagles. "They run a big option and they run a big pass play."

The primary matchup in the game is between Centennial wide receiver Marty Bartholomew and Sandy defensive end Randy Wheeler.

"We're going to try to stop Bartholomew. That's our No. 1 key," Funderburg said. "We're going to put Randy Wheeler on him one-on-one and just let them go out there and play basketball with each other."

Funderburg's word choice was appropriate, as Wheeler and Bartholomew have met each other a few times on the hardwood. But the game is football and Funderburg is looking to get out of the hole his team is in — a three-game losing streak. To do that, the team's new offense will be used again.

"We're going to stay with the wishbone. I think we do better there," he said. "I thought Rob Barrett ran really hard Friday night and we're going to give the ball to him."

Regarding Friday night, it was Sandy's homecoming, but for the folks on the Sandy sidelines, Homecoming 1987 will be a painful memory.

The Sandy Pioneers managed to control the Gresham Gophers for 36 minutes, but for 12 minutes — namely the second quarter — San-

dy was more-or-less a phantom, as Gresham clinched a playoff berth with the 25-7 Mount Hood Conference triumph.

Defense was the key in this game, as the Gophers intercepted four Pioneer passes, including two key pick-offs in the second quarter.

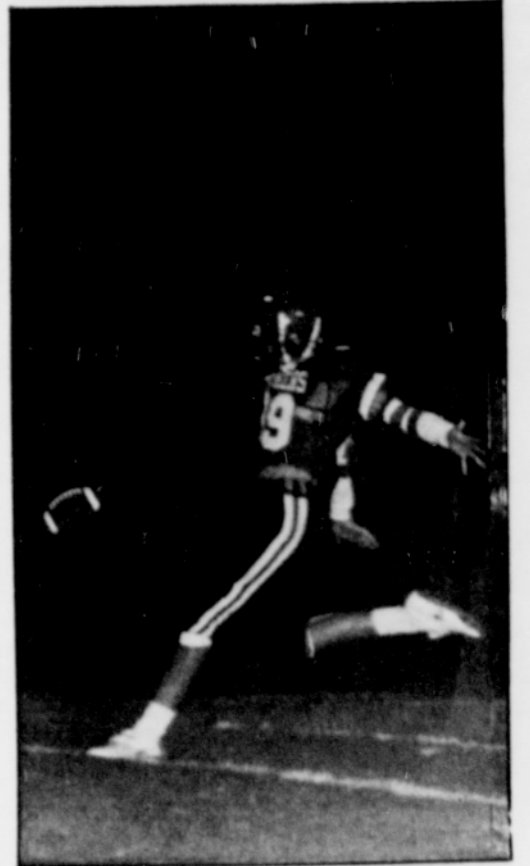
Twenty-one seconds after an interception by Gresham's Steve Hoecker, Gopher running back Travis Cain broke away on a 35-yard outside run. The Pioneers blocked the point-after try, leaving Gresham with a 6-0 lead.

But the Gophers scored less than five minutes later on an eight-yard keeper by quarterback Matt Scales, then again scoring with 10 seconds to go in the half, racking up a 19-0 lead in the period.

It has become a trend for the Pioneers to play well except in the second quarter. Fifty-five percent of the opponents' scoring is done in the second quarter, while Sandy has only scored a field goal.

Take away the second quarter scoring and opponents are outscoring the Pioneers by only four points overall.

Friday's matchup will be held at Centennial's football stadium, with game time set at 7:30 p.m.



Randy Wheeler gets off a punt in the Pioneers' 25-7 loss to Gresham.



Sandy's Matt Taylor (12) dribbles past a Columbia defender, en route to teammate Bill Fisher (14).

League play ends with win for boys

With the newly reinstated Pacific Standard Time, the sun set early on the Columbia Chargers boys soccer team in Sandy on Tuesday.

But, although it was dark, there was nothing less than sunshine in the hearts of the Sandy Pioneers team, as it held on to defeat the winless Chargers, 2-1 in Mount Hood Conference season-ending action.

Sandy took a 1-0 lead about 23 minutes into the match, as sophomore forward Fernando Hodgson drew the Charger goalkeeper away from his post with his footwork, then kicked in the first score of the match from close range.

The Pioneers had much more control of the ball during the bulk of the first half, showing Columbia that, although the Chargers' defense was seemingly tough, Sandy could still penetrate and handle the ball.

Columbia turned the tables a bit by controlling the ball a little more in the first portion of the second half, but still the Pioneers found the holes necessary for getting their second score of the

game. Junior midfielder Sean Reynolds took a pass from teammate Matt Taylor, as Reynolds took the hurried attempt from about 10 yards away on the left side of the goal. As the ball went into the net, Sandy upped its lead to 2-0.

About 10 minutes later, Columbia cut the Pioneers' lead to 2-1, as one of the Chargers' shots-on-goal was a head shot that slipped past Pioneer keeper Roger Edwards. He deflected the ball, but at the wrong angle for Sandy.

Sandy then controlled the ball for the remainder of the match, bearing with the darkness and holding on to defeat the Chargers, 2-1.

The Pioneers' record in the MHC went to 3-5 for a tie for sixth place with Gresham.

"It took about 20 minutes of dark there to assure a victory for us," Welsh said in jest. "It's amazing what you can do in the dark."

Although he said all players made an important contribution, Welsh noted the work of senior midfielders Clayton Hull and Bill Fisher and

junior defender Paul Gunderson.

"This is our best league season ever, we were 3-5," he said. "Had it not been for a one-point loss here and a one-point loss there, I think we'd be in the playoffs and I think the kids realize that."

"They're pretty pumped, pretty enthusiastic for next year."

In other recent Pioneer action, Sandy was stopped by the visiting Central Catholic Rams last Thursday, 4-1, as the Rams scored two goals late in the match to seal the victory.

Central Catholic got on the board first then scored later with a goal, giving the Rams a 2-0 halftime lead.

Then, in the second half, Hodgson broke away and kicked in a goal in the latter part of the second half, cutting the Central Catholic lead to 2-1.

But the Rams then scored back-to-back goals, boosting their lead to 4-1 which was too much for the Pioneers to overcome.

Spikers come alive to beat Centennial

by DAVE MAGNUSON
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Through the course of the Sandy Pioneers volleyball season, a favorite phrase used by the team has been "fire and desire."

And that phrase fit perfectly Tuesday night, as the Pioneers came from behind in each of the three games and in the Mount Hood Conference match, beating the visiting Centennial Eagles, 10-15, 15-11 and 15-12.

The "fire and desire" was certainly evident in each of the games. The Eagles got out to a 13-3 lead in the first game, despite good efforts from hitters Trixie Meier, Renae Aschoff and Tanya Schwartz.

But Sandy then earned three non-consecutive points, with fine hits by Aschoff and Schwartz.

Centennial then reached game point, but hit the ball too far and out of bounds. Schwartz served two nice plays, one ace and one soft fingertip stuff by Aschoff, pulling the Pioneers to 14-8.

Soon after, the ball was spiked on back-to-back service points for junior setter Ali Lake, as Sandy cut the Eagles lead even more, 14-10.

Centennial quickly served up an ace, winning game point.

The Eagles in the second game got out to a 6-2 lead before junior hitter Melissa Schwartz performed heroics behind the service line.

Schwartz got Sandy back into the game with consecutive aces. Then Aschoff gently stuffed a soft Centennial return, followed by two more consecutive aces by Schwartz, as the Pioneers took the lead for the first time in the match, 7-6.

After the Eagles tied the game up again, Lake served two non-consecutive aces and took advantage of two Centennial errors, as Sandy regained the lead, 11-7.

The Eagles again tied the game at 11-11 before Melissa Schwartz earned four service points, thankful for the finesse fingertip spikes by Aschoff and two Eagle errors. Sandy tied the match with the 15-11 second-game triumph.

Then in the third game, each team played close. Neither team led by more than four points throughout, the biggest lead being an 8-4 Centennial advantage.

Sandy evened the game at 9-9, utilizing good heads-up accurate hits

from juniors Kim Kennedy and Jenny Sah and saves by senior Pixie Meier and freshman Michelle Buckner. But the Eagles shortly regained the lead, 11-9.

After each team gained a point, Tanya Schwartz served an ace, followed by a return off Lake's fist that dropped in Centennial's court. The game was tied 12-12.

Then Aschoff hit a cross-court spike that would not have been possible had Tanya Schwartz not dived for a save earlier in the volley.

Schwartz then displayed the prettiest serve of the night, a knuckleball that merely bloomed over the net and dropped, putting Sandy in a game-point position.

On game point, Aschoff tipped a ball cross-court that could not be controlled by the Eagle defense and Sandy won the come-from-behind game, 15-12.

"It felt like we won the Olympics or something," said Melissa Schwartz, who did not play in the first game at all, but still managed nine service points (including five aces) and had a fine defensive game. "We talked like we'd never done before and that was our team goal. Before, in our games, we weren't moving our feet as much and talking (to each other)."

"I think everybody had an individually good game," she said, adding her thoughts while she was serving. "I try to keep it out of my mind, to not think anything negative. And so I just kept thinking positive."

Said Pioneer coach Warren Johnson, whose team record was boosted to 4-9: "The 'fire and desire' was there. I was loving every minute of it."

"I can't think of one player who did not do a good job out there," he added. "And everybody was supportive. The whole time they were out, whoever was on the bench was a cheerleader. That kind of support is real important. That's why we're playing like a team."

Last Thursday was not nearly as successful for the Pioneers, as the Barlow Bruins quickly ousted Sandy from the Barlow gym by winning in straight games, 15-2 and 15-3.

Next for the Pioneers is another home match Thursday evening at 6 p.m. against the Parkrose Broncos. Parkrose is winless in 13 MHC contests. Sandy defeated the Broncos in a three-game match on Sept. 22.

Rams down Sandy 2-0

Confusion on location delays final girls game

Tuesday should have been the last day of match play in the Mount Hood Conference girls soccer season.

But the final day was changed to Wednesday because of confusion as to the location of the Sandy Pioneers matchup with the hosting Columbia Chargers.

With the Pioneers waiting at Mt. Hood Community College for the Chargers, who were waiting for the Pioneers at Columbia High School, no match between the two teams was played Tuesday.

Schedules of the two schools showed the different locations, thus creating the mixup.

Since the final regular-season match of the year was postponed until Wednesday, results were unavailable at press time.

In earlier action, Sandy went down to defeat last Thursday at Delta Park, where the Central Catholic Rams slipped past the Pioneers 2-0.

Obviously, no Sandy player scored any goals, as the Rams used their two goals to their advantage.

The loss put Sandy's MHC record at 1-4-2. The Rams, who will go on to compete in the MHC district playoffs, clinched a playoff berth with the win.

The Chargers were winless through seven MHC matches prior to Wednesday's contest.

Sandy is coached by Robert Karsten, who will be completing his eighth year as the Pioneers' mentor.

Individuals perform well in dual meet

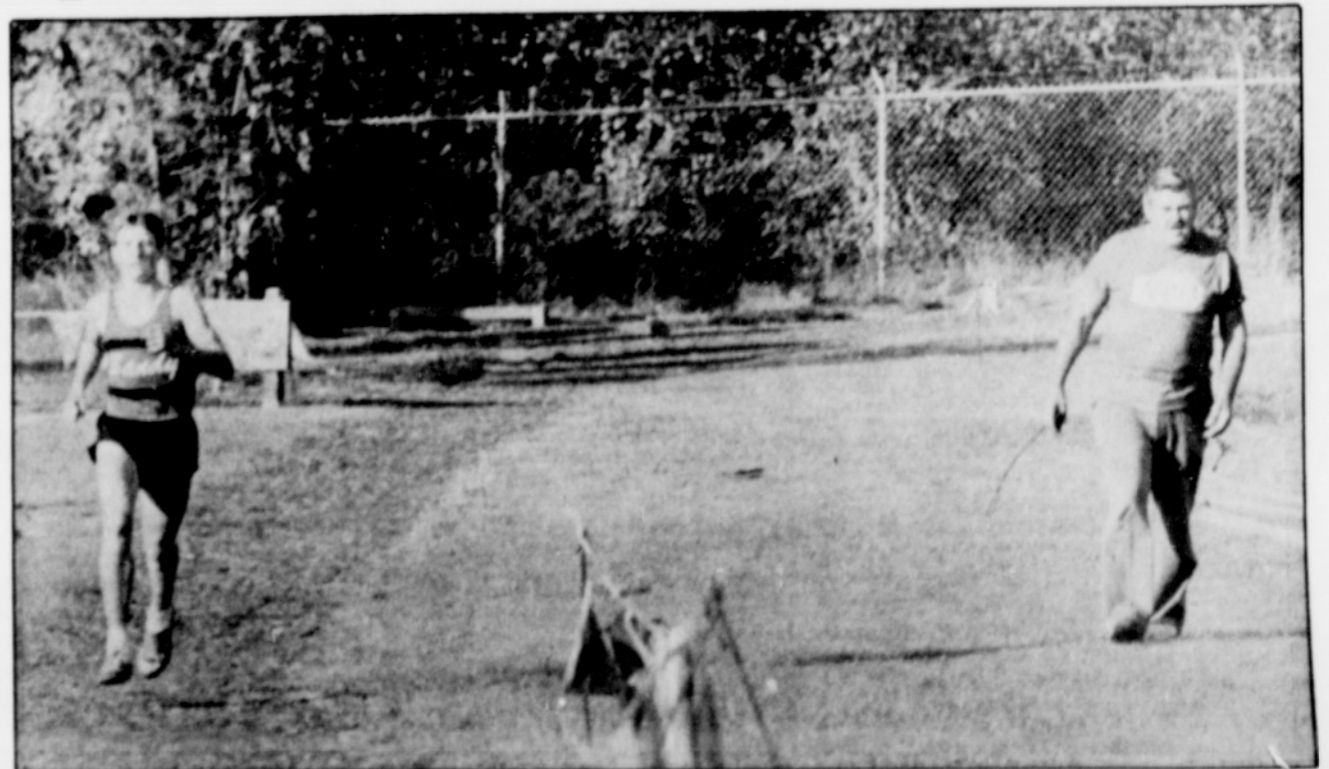
Taking individual honors last Wednesday in cross country were Sandy Pioneers Toby Chapman and Kris Kruger in the final Mount Hood Conference dual meet of the season against visiting Parkrose.

Chapman, a sophomore, took first place, covering the 5,000-meter course in 17 minutes, 15 seconds, which earned him another personal best this season. Chapman's time gave him the fourth-best all-time run by a Sandy High sophomore at 5,000 meters.

Sophomore Jeff Thomson also made the top 10, despite the fact that most people on the list ran a shorter course.

The boys team came up short of the win, losing to Parkrose, 23-37. However, Chris Keyser, Ed Ivens and Tom Romey each finished with personal-best runs in the meet.

The girls team was paced by Kruger, a senior, in its win over the Broncos, who could not fill a complete five-person roster. The Pioneers scored 18 points and had good runs from Danielle Jordan, Gayle More and Shawnee Summer.



Toby Chapman (left) receives words of wisdom from cross country coach Darold Beymer.