



EO file photo

Hermiston's Landon Clark-Gammel slide safely into home plate in front of the tag from Pendleton's Alex O'Rourke last season. The Bulldogs and Buckaroos finished tied atop the Columbia River Conference a season ago.

## Bucks green on the mound

PENDLETON — Much of last year's Columbia River Conference winning squad returns for another go at a league title and a run into the state playoffs.

Senior catcher Alex O'Rourke leads the way. The four-year starter was an All-State honorable mention a year ago and has already lined up a spot on the Oregon State baseball team once he completes his storied career with the Buckaroos this fall.

Four other All-League selections will join him. Junior Quinn Cockburn (pitcher), TJ Hancock (second base) and Kyler Lunny (center field) were on the second team last season, while Tony Papol was an honorable mention choice.

Aside from Cockburn, veteran coach Greg Whitten's squad will be fairly green on the mound. Seniors Brady Smith and Brandon Hergert had brief pitching stints

a year ago before having their seasons shelved due to arm injuries.

Junior James Bradt and varsity newcomers Caden Smith and Ryan Morse will also be given shots.

### BUCKAROO BASEBALL

**Coach:** Greg Whitten (10th year)  
**2014 season:** 18-10, 8-4 (Columbia River Conference)

**Postseason story:** The sixth-seeded Buckaroos were upset by league rival Hood River Valley 5-4 in the Class 5A quarter-finals.

**Key Returners:** Alex O'Rourke, sr., C; TJ Hancock, sr., UT; P/OF; OF; Tony Papol, sr., INF; Kyler Lunny, sr., OF; Quinn Cockburn, jr., P.



Bradt, Smith and Cockburn are three of eight players who will be thrust into competition after the basketball team made a deep state tournament run.

"I'm really excited about this year," Whitten said. "I do think when we get all of the kids back from basketball and they get into the swing of baseball, barring injuries, I think we can be pretty competitive. We have a chance to win our league and make some noise in

the state playoffs."

Reaching those lofty goals will hinge on the team's pitching, Whitten said.

The Buckaroos committed less than two errors per game last season.

#### 2015 Schedule

Tue., March 17	at Southridge (WA)	5 p.m.	Sat., April 18	vs. Hood River (2)*	Noon
Fri., March 20	vs. Hanford (WA) (2)	3 p.m.	Tue., April 21	at Hood River*	4:30 p.m.
Mon., March 23	vs. Roseburg (2)	Noon	Sat., April 25	vs. The Dalles (2)*	Noon
Thu., March 26	at TBA	TBD	Tue., April 28	at The Dalles*	4:30 p.m.
Fri., March 27	at TBA (2)	TBD	Fri., May 1	at Hermiston (2)*	4 p.m.
Sat., March 28	at TBA	TBD	Tue., May 5	vs. Hermiston*	4:30 p.m.
Tue., March 31	vs. La Grande	4 p.m.	Fri., May 8	at Hood River*	4:30 p.m.
Fri., April 3	at Walla Walla	3 p.m.	Tue., May 12	at The Dalles*	4:30 p.m.
Sat., April 4	vs. Walla Walla	11 a.m.	Fri., May 15	vs. Hermiston*	4:30 p.m.
Thu., April 9	at La Grande	4 p.m.	Mon., May 18	vs. Baker	4:30 p.m.

#### 2014 CRC Standings

	CRC	OVR.
<b>Pendleton</b>	<b>8-4</b>	<b>18-10</b>
<b>Hermiston</b>	<b>8-4</b>	<b>14-14</b>
<b>The Dalles</b>	<b>4-8</b>	<b>16-11</b>
<b>Hood River</b>	<b>4-8</b>	<b>14-17</b>

## Demanding start for Dawgs

HERMISTON — The Bulldogs baseball team has a brutal schedule to begin its season.

The Bulldogs play five games in eight days, and first-year head coach Lance Hawkins figures to learn as much as he can from that week-long stretch that's heavy with baseball.

"We're gonna play the game," Hawkins said. "These boys know from playing for me this summer, we're gonna be aggressive. We're gonna bunt, steal, do everything we can to score."

Hermiston returns most of its roster from last year, but lost the heart of its starting pitching.

The Bulldogs may lack an ace, but junior RJ Robles tossed four scoreless innings in the opener against Ridgeview, and a

number of other guys will get a chance to earn a spot in the rotation.

Hawkins is also flirting with starting a freshman every game at third base. Lucas Tolan appears to have the inside track to third base for the rest of the year.

Fellow frosh Dayshaun Neal will push to start in the outfield.

Hawkins is open to mixing and matching his starting lineup to figure out what he has and isn't shying away from starting his best nine, not his nine best.

"I'm not really sure what to expect," Hawkins said. "We got some guys that just play hard. Are they true baseball players? I'm not sure. But they're gonna give you everything they have. I'd rather work with guys like that than have prima donna baseball players."

## BULLDOG BASEBALL

**Coach:** Lance Hawkins, 1st year

**2014:** 14-14, 8-2, (CRC)

**Postseason story:** The twelve-seed Bulldogs lost to Sherwood 4-0 in Round 1 the Class 5A playoffs.

**Key Returners:** RJ Robles, jr.; Hayden Edmiston, jr.; Jay Lindeman, sr.; Landon Gammell, sr.; Cole Smith, sr.; Shade Gritz, soph.; Dylan Caldwell, sr.; Kyler Mikami, sr.



#### 2015 Schedule

Tue., March 17	vs. Ridgeview	(L 9-4)
Wed., March 18	at Pasco (WA)	5 p.m.
Fri., March 20	at Central Catholic	3 p.m.
Mon., March 23	vs. Redmond (DH)	11 a.m.
Wed., March 25	at Kamiakin	4 p.m.
Fri., March 27	vs. Century (DH)	Noon
Tue., March 31	vs. West Linn	4 p.m.
Fri., April 3	at David Douglas	4:30 p.m.
Fri., April 10	vs. Parkrose (DH)	3 p.m.
Sat., April 18	at The Dalles	Noon
Tue., April 21	vs. The Dalles	4 p.m.
Sat., April 25	at Hood River Valley (DH)	Noon
Tue., April 28	vs. Hood River Valley	4:30 p.m.
Thu., April 30	at DeSales	4:30 p.m.
Fri., May 1	vs. Pendleton (DH)	4 p.m.
Tue., May 5	at Pendleton	4:30 p.m.
Fri., May 8	vs. The Dalles	4 p.m.
Tue., May 12	vs. Hood River Valley	4:30 p.m.
Fri., May 15	at Pendleton	4:30 p.m.

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