

NASCAR

Logano focused on title chase with Kenseth absent

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**
Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Joey Logano arrived at Texas with a clear conscience, an easy smile and a new focus after being intentionally wrecked by Matt Kenseth last weekend.

Kenseth's two-race suspension begins Sunday after his appeals were rejected. Logano said the incident at Martinsville when he was leading might not have been such a bad thing.

"Our team is more fired up than ever, I'm more focused than ever, I'm pretty pumped up about being

here at the race track," Logano said Friday. "We've still got plenty of confidence."

Logano is last among the eight drivers still in contention for the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship. He had won three consecutive races and was leading with 47 laps left when he was wrecked

by Kenseth as payback from an incident three races earlier.

NASCAR suspended Kenseth, so Erik Jones will be in the No. 20 Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing for Sunday's race. Kenseth's probation was reduced from six months to the end of the year, but he remains suspended and promised Thursday

to race as he always has going forward.

With Logano qualifying fourth and Jones sixth, they will start nose-to-tail Sunday. Brad Keselowski earned the pole, and will be on the front row with Kevin Harvick, the defending Chase champion who is currently fourth in the standings.

TIGERS: No. 1 awaits in second round

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helped us was us eating up clock and sustaining long drives," he said. "Vernonia scored on four big plays, but at that point we were up so big and we kept running the ball and relying on our power running game."

Quarterback Dylan Grogan led the team with 20 carries for 180 yards and four touchdowns, and added a passing touchdown to Jason Fitzpatrick on 2-of-6 passing for 43 yards.

Thyler Monkus, a game-time decision with a tender ankle, added 18 carries for 120 yards and three touchdowns. Makiah Blankenship

added 62 yards on 12 rushes.

A package of aggressive blitzes held Vernonia's offense in check.

"Offensively and defensively we challenged our line because their quarterback is really quick and can really make things happen with his feet," Salas said. "We were able to collapse the pocket tonight, we were sending blitzes all night."

Vernonia hadn't been to the state postseason since 2008.

Stanfield moves on to face No. 1 Central Linn in the second round since the Cobras beat No. 16 Nestucca 42-14 on Friday. That game will be next Friday in Halsey.



Hermiston's Robert Coleman rumbles up field in the Bulldogs' loss to Wilsonville on Friday in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris



Hermiston sophomore Tyler Rohman returns an interception in the Bulldogs' loss to Wilsonville on Friday in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

FUTURE: Faaeteete eager to promote talented underclassmen

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In all, Hermiston was without six offensive starters and a handful of defensive starters in its 49-14 home playoff loss to Wilsonville. Faaeteete said the Bulldogs started 11 different sophomores throughout the 2015 season.

For a program that was returning just a handful of starters from last year's state championship run, "next man up" became the rallying cry for the Bulldogs as the injuries and losses mounted.

Guys stepped up. Hunsaker took over under center and took the offense from stumbling to sprinting. Coleman and Hayden Simon took over the running back slot for the injured Jonathan Hinkle, and turned it into a physical ground game that wore down opponents.

"I think if people work hard enough, with hard work that's how the program runs," junior center Kaden Caldwell said. "I think we'll be OK next year. (The graduating seniors) were big guys for us, but I think we'll be OK."

In all, 13 Bulldogs played their last game Friday night. But many strong contributors will return. Neal, a sophomore, will return. Kick returner, wide receiver and defensive back Brady Chris-

tensen is just a junior. Wide receiver Tucker Salinas, H-back Jerry Ramirez, line backer Ty Knutz and offensive lineman Beau Blake will all return, as well.

Faaeteete is especially excited about some freshmen and sophomores who didn't get any snaps at the varsity level this season.

"It's tough to replace guys like Bob and Tre and Hayden," he said. "Those guys played a lot of games, won a lot of games, made a lot of plays. Those are big shoes to fill, but we got a young class of juniors, some sophomores and some freshmen. Watch out world, here we come."

Unlike last season into this season, Hermiston will return with depth. And something to prove.

"We're good, just lock ourselves in the weight room. We know what we want," Faaeteete said. "We wanted to upset a team who thought they were gonna do what they did tonight. We wanted to fight. Our program's good, just keep working. It's hard to replace those guys, Bob Coleman, Tre Neal, Nathan Hunsaker — our steady Eddy, the guy who works hard — it's tough. We'll put our nose to the grindstone and get better."

BULLDOGS: 'Phantom interception' turns game

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But after the Bulldogs' second-straight punt to begin the game, Wilsonville's offense found its own rhythm and started to put the Bulldogs in a big hole.

"(Wilsonville) definitely came out to play, and I don't think we came out at nearly the level that they did," said Hermiston senior running back Bob Coleman after the game. "It's hard, because nothing was clicking for us and it's hard to build momentum that way."

On Wilsonville's second possession, stud junior quarterback Connor Neville led his team on 10-play, 73-yard drive that Neville capped off with a one-yard touchdown plunge to put his team up early in the first quarter.

But the drive did come with a little controversy.

On the second play of that drive, Neville threw an interception deep in Wilsonville's own territory that would have set the Bulldogs up well. However, a penalty flag was thrown for pass interference against Hermiston, giving Wilsonville new life.

Bulldogs head coach David Faaeteete said after the game that he believes that's where the game turned.

"That phantom interception pass interference when the guy trips over the line, that's a game changer," he said. "(It would have) gave us the ball on the 15 (yard line) going in, and we got a kicker that can boot it from a distance."

Following the touchdown, the Bulldogs still couldn't get the offense to click, turning in a three-and-out and their third punt of the game. A good punt return from the Wildcats set them up at Hermiston's 27 yard line.

And Neville didn't waste any time to cash in on the field position, as on the first play Neville connected with his brother Jonny Neville down the seam for a 27-yard touchdown pass to put Wilsonville up 14-0.

On Hermiston's next possession, the Bulldogs offense finally got a little spark on offense, as senior Hayden Simon bullied his way for a six-yard gain on third down to give Hermiston its first first-down of the game, coming at the 1:45 mark of the first quarter.

However, that spark would be short-lived as Bulldogs quarterback Nathan Hunsaker threw an interception on the very next play.

After having a career game against Pendleton last week, Hunsaker really struggled against the Wilsonville defense, completing 12 of 24 passes for 119 yards three interceptions and a pair of touchdowns.

In the second quarter, Wilsonville scored three touchdowns in a span of just under three minutes, with a pair of touchdown passes by Neville and a pick-6 of Hunsaker by defensive back Dom Schieres. The scores put Wilsonville up 35-0 on Hermiston, which the two teams would take into halftime.

Neville finished the game 13 of 25 passing for 297 yards and three touchdowns.

At halftime, Coleman said the Hermiston coaches gave the Bulldogs a speech which served as a bit of a wake-up call.

"It's a pride thing, and you're either going to be remembered as the team that got crushed in the first round, or the team that was getting crushed and stepped up and competed with them," he said.

And it seemed to work. On Hermiston's first offensive possession, Hunsaker led the unit on a seven-play, 77-yard drive that he capped off with a 15-yard touchdown pass to

Brady Christenson to cut the deficit to 42-7.

Then after forcing Wilsonville into a turnover-on-downs, Hermiston went on another long drive, once again finished off with a 16-yard touchdown pass from Hunsaker to Jerry Ramirez to cut the lead to 42-14 with 2:46 left in the third quarter.

"Anybody can just (throw in) the towel there at the half but our boys came out and fought," said Faaeteete. "It's not in us to quit and we kept going up till the end. Credit this group of seniors, nobody gave them a chance in heck to compete with these guys."

After the game, the entire Bulldogs team lined up in one end zone, linked arms and made one final walk across the Kennison Field turf, which sent a rush of emotions through Coleman's head.

"It's over," he said. "I mean it sucks that I'll never be able to suit up and play football at Hermiston High School again. Endings suck but they make everything you do more meaningful."

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VOLLEYBALL: Fourth place is best possible

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Friday's quarterfinal match with a 25-17 win, but the No. 2 Bulldogs pushed back for wins of 25-20, 25-6, 25-8 to advance to that evening's semifinals match again No. 3 Grant Union.

Culver advanced to the championship with another four-set victory with scores of 26-28, 25-20, 25-23, 25-19.

Friday's other semifinal saw No. 1 Burns take out No. 5 Kennedy 3-1 (23-25, 25-19, 25-20, 25-13).

Burns and Culver play for the state championship Saturday at 8:30 p.m.

Weston-McEwen (22-10) faces No. 6 Bonanza in an elimination game Saturday morning at 8 a.m. The winner will play either No. 4 St. Paul or No. 9 Imbler in the 4th/6th place game at noon. Weston-McEwen's most recent state trophy was fifth place in 2013.

CLASS 1A
NORTH DOUGLAS 3, IONE 1 — At Redmond, the No. 7 Ione Cardinals

could not hang on in their quarterfinal match on Friday, falling to No. 2 seed North Douglas in four sets at Ridgeview High School.

The Cardinals won the first set 25-17, but North Douglas rallied to win the final three 25-13, 25-19, 25-22.

The loss drops Ione (21-7) into the consolation bracket with fourth place their highest possible finish. The Cardinals will play No. 6 Crane in an elimination game Saturday at 10 a.m. The winner plays either No.

9 Perrydale or No. 5 Powder Valley in the consolation final at 2:15 p.m. Ione's most recent state trophy was 2011 when it won the championship.

North Douglas went on to lose to No. 3 Hosanna Christian in Friday night's semifinals in five sets. Hosanna Christian won 25-17, 23-25, 25-23, 23-25, 17-15.

In the other semifinal, No. 1 Country Christian beat No. 4 Trinity Lutheran in three 25-18, 25-12, 25-16.

The championship game is Saturday at 6 p.m.

CONCUSSION: Echo student-athletes undergo baseline testing on Friday

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"Through (Dr. Earl's) support and help, it's really been impactful to have a specialist in concussion management who is on a national training level with concussion management, who can come in and help me understand why we should do the ImPACTing, and how to do it right," Echo Superintendent/Athletic Director Raymond Smith said. "If just would've implemented it under the pattern I was told to implement it without Dr. Earl, we would've been doing it wrong."

The test, Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing or ImPACT, is administered

Dr. Earl and measures reaction times and impulse control. The participant begins with words flashed on the computer screen, and he or she must remember those words. Then they move to remembering the orientation of various geometric shapes, called "squiggles." After that, a grid of X's and O's is shown with three yellow characters. The test taker must remember where the yellow characters were.

Next they must count down from 25 on a grid with the numbers mixed up. After the first countdown three letters are flashed on the screen, and after counting down from 25 again the participant types in those three letters.

Finally, the words and

squiggles are flashed again as they were at the beginning of the test. The idea is brains function slower and less efficiently after concussions, so a baseline test, which some Echo student-athletes completed Friday, can be compared to a test after a potential concussion to determine if further action needs to be taken.

"It gives us an opportunity to get kids back faster because we know where they started," Echo boys basketball coach Ben Campbell said. "Otherwise, we never really know because it's the brain."

"We have the data, hopefully by the end of this year we'll have all our athletes tested. Dr. Earl has access to that, so when the kids go in he has their baseline, he

can retest, and figure out what they need to do to get better. With the big push in the media right now, it's important we get this right and take care of this. Because that's what it comes down to, the health of the kids."

Senior Kelsey Ranger, who completed her baseline test Friday, said it wasn't difficult.

"Concussions are serious, so it's good to (monitor them)," she said.

The test also gives coaches and faculty hard data to tell them whether to hold an athlete out of competition or send them back in. It eliminates the possibility of a player convincing a coach he or she is fit to play when actually in the throws of a

concussion.

One of those two Cougars football players ended up in a situation comparable to that. During the game in question, there was no indication he was concussed. He showed no symptoms — no unsteadiness, no memory loss, nothing. So he finished the game and went home still showing no symptoms. It wasn't until the next morning when he awoke with dizziness and nausea did anyone think that he might have been concussed the night before.

"It shows even more in depth of how we have to make sure we have a specialist working with us because the standard protocol doesn't apply to every kid," Smith said. "A concussion is

not a standard interchangeable injury."

The whole focus of the program, though, isn't just to make athletes fit to compete. It's to be as safe as possible when dealing with brain trauma.

The three-step process implemented by Earl is "Get 'em back to life, get 'em back to education, then get 'em back to sports." Athletics is intentionally at the bottom of the list.

"Kids struggle enough as it is," Smith said, "let alone having to come to school with a concussion. If you're sitting in calculus and you're struggling with it anyway, and now the numbers are moving on you, it just doesn't work."