

HEPPNER: ‘We were like a well-oiled machine’



Heppner’s Patrick Collins tackles Kennedy’s Angel Mendez in the Mustangs’ 48-0 rout against the Trojans in the state 2A championship game Saturday in Hermiston.

Continued from 1B
them with ease.

Kennedy mustered just 105 yards of total offense in the game and a mere four first downs. The Trojans rarely had the ball in Heppner territory, and even had a drive that started at Heppner’s 21 yard line following a turnover, but would end after just four plays, nine yards and a turnover on downs.

“We tackle well and our defense is really quick,” said Grant. “They are smart kids and they all did their jobs really, really well tonight.”

Junior defensive lineman Kevin Murray led the Mustangs with 11 total tackles, while Tommy Bredfield added 10 tackles and Putman had nine and earned a sack. Senior linebacker Patrick Collins also contributed eight total tackles one sack and 2.5 tackles for loss.

The Mustangs also forced four Kennedy turnovers — two interceptions and two fumbles — and turned three of the four into touchdowns.

The first came on the first play of the second quarter, when Traeger’s pass over the middle of the field was picked off by Heppner’s Caden Hedman at midfield. A few plays later, Kindle dove into the end zone on fourth-and-goal to put the Mustangs up 14-0 in the second quarter.

That’s when the snowball started for Kennedy.

The Trojans fumbled on the first play of the ensuing possession and the ball was recovered by Mustangs defensive lineman Kevin Murray at the Trojans’ 15 yard line. And then on Heppner’s first play, junior Logan Grieb took a receiver sweep around the left edge of the Mustangs’ offensive line and sprinted all 15 yards for the touchdown and a 28-0 lead for Heppner.

As the teams headed into halftime, Putman said there was a definite buzz in the Mustangs locker room, but he knew their job was not finished quite yet.

“I knew we couldn’t let up because one play could give (Kennedy) the momentum back,” he said. “We were in the locker room and I told every one ‘we scored 34 in a half, they can too’ so we just have to keep the pedal down.”

In the second half, the Mustangs scored just two times on a pair of touchdown passes by Clark — the first a 38-yard bomb that was perfectly placed to receiver Logan Grieb and the second a 24-yard connection to a wide-open Kindle on a cleanly-run post route in the middle of the field.

Clark finished the game 6-8 with



Heppner’s Weston Putnam (20) and Logan Grieb (5) celebrate with teammates and coaches in the final seconds of the Mustangs’ win.



Heppner’s Tommy Bredfield, bottom, and Jacob Wallace wrap up Kennedy quarterback Brett Traeger in the Mustangs’ win.

153 yards and those two touchdowns, contributing a chunk of Heppner’s 386 total yards of offense. Putman led the Mustangs ground attack with 110 yards on 15 carries, while Grieb added 73 yards as well as 75 yards receiving.

“We were like a well-oiled machine tonight,” said Clark. “We got on the backs of our offensive and defensive lines and just rode them to victory, so that was pretty cool.”

After the final horn had blown, the trophies were handed out, and celebra-

tions had calmed, the Mustangs lined up for several team photos which featured 36 players and numerous coaches grinning from ear to ear, taking in a moment which Grant told them to embrace.

“I think it’s great for these kids, and fantastic for the community,” said Grant. “I think the kids and community are going to have this memory forever.”

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TIMBERS: Portland has never made title game

Continued from 1B

The Timbers advanced to the MLS Cup for the first time, next Sunday at Columbus. The Crew beat the New York Red Bulls in the Eastern Conference finals.

Borchers didn’t care where they play. “I’m just happy with the way we’ve played on the road,” he said

Portland won its final three road games during the regular season, and has a win and a tie in two road playoff games.

On Sunday, Fanendo Adi’s left-footed goal from 10 yards in front of the net gave the Timbers a 1-0 lead in the 54th minute. Captain Diego Valeri and Dairon Asprilla assisted.

“I knew that we would find spots between the defensive box and the outer box,” Valeri said. “I got the ball there and I knew that Adi was there in that spot, and he did a great thing.”

Dallas came back with goals by Ryan Hollingshead and Perez 5 minutes apart, and had another 17 minutes to win the series, or tie the Timbers and go to overtime to decide the conference title.

“In the second half, I thought it was ours,” FC Dallas coach Oscar Pareja said. “We created a lot of chances. Unfortunately, we couldn’t put the ball in the back of the net in those last 10 minutes.”

The five-year-old Portland franchise is in the playoffs for just the second season. The Timbers won the first leg against Dallas 3-1 to take a two-goal cushion into Sunday’s match.



Portland Timbers forward Lucas Melano, right, sneaks a goal around FC Dallas goalkeeper Jesse Gonzalez during the second half of the MLS soccer Western Conference championship match Sunday.

“I’m proud of our guys for weathering the storm at the end,” Portland coach Caleb Porter said. “The maturity we showed after we gave up the two goals to not give up the third, and then to score the one to put it away was a really good testament to how far we’ve come as a club.”

Portland took its three-goal aggregate lead on Adi’s second goal of the postseason and 18th this year.

Asprilla, who had one goal and two assists in 26 regular-season matches, has one goal and three assists in five playoff games.

Dallas’ Hollingshead broke down the

left wing, took a pass from Mauro Diaz and shot into the right corner of the net in the 68th minute.

In the 73rd minute, Diaz sent a free kick in front of the net, and Perez headed the ball past goalie Adam Larsen Kwaressey. That free kick was set up by a foul that drew the Timbers’ Diego Chara a yellow card.

Melano didn’t enter the game until stoppage time. He scored by dribbling to the right goalpost, outmaneuvering Dallas goalie Jesse Gonzalez and nudging the ball just across the goal line.

SINGER: Heppner’s dominance the story of the football season

Continued from 1B

points per game on defense — tied for fourth in the entire state. The Mustangs’ average margin of victory was an incredible 38.5 points — including a 37.5 point average margin in its four playoff games — a feat which is remarkable in its own.

Elsewhere in Eastern Oregon, the Columbia Basin Conference, which Heppner won, had a solid year in 2015, putting four teams in the postseason. Irrigon made the playoffs for the first time in school history, and Stanfield improved from four wins in 2014 to a nine-win regular season and a trip to the 2A state semifinals. Weston-McEwen also used a dominant defense and a grind-it-out offense to make the postseason under first-year coach T.J. Bailey.

In the Columbia River Conference, mediocre play was the story of the season, as Hermiston followed up a 2014 state championship season with a 4-5 regular season, but did repeat as CRC champions. Pendleton started off slow and fell one game short of a trip to the postseason, as inconsistent play on offense and defense plagued the Buckaroos all season long.

In Class 3A, the Umatilla Vikings put together one of the more surprising seasons in the state, finishing with a 5-4 record after having a combined 1-17 record over the last two seasons combined. Coach Mike Mosher still has some work to do to get his team on the same level as Nyssa and 3A champion Vale, but the Vikings are definitely on the up-and-up.

And in Class 1A, the Arlington Honkers were one of the biggest surprises of the season, as they started out as hot as anyone in the state, jumping out to a 4-0 start. But the Honkers could not sustain their high-flying pace finishing with three-straight losses — including a close 14-6 loss to eventual state champion Dufur — pushed the Honkers to fall just one game short of the postseason.

So after hundreds of practices, hundreds of games, and many long bus trips, we can close the book on 2015 and take in some winter and spring sports before looking ahead to 2016.

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College Basketball



Fresno State’s Karachi Edo, center, goes up for a shot under defensive pressure from Oregon’s Dwayne Benjamin, left, Dillon Brooks and Elgin Cook, right, during the first half Monday.

Brooks’ big game leads Ducks to win

EUGENE (AP) — Dillon Brooks had 21 points and 10 rebounds and No. 15 Oregon staved off a late rally by Fresno State for a 78-73 victory Monday night.

Chris Boucher and Elgin Cook added 14 points each for the Ducks (6-0), who led 70-52 with 6:35 to play before Marvelle Harris scored 13 points in a 16-2 run by the Bulldogs (5-1) that cut the deficit

Harris and Cezar Guerrero, held scoreless for the first 20 minutes.

The senior guards came in averaging 20.2 and 13.2 points per game, respectively.

TIP-INS
Oregon: The double-double was the second of the season Brooks and fourth of his career. The Ducks are 40-2 against nonconference opponents since moving into Matthew Knight Arena five years ago. The 6-0 start is Oregon’s second in the last nine years. The Ducks started 13-0 two seasons ago.

MBB



Oregon
78



Fresno State
73

KENTUCKY 75, ILLINOIS STATE 63 — In Lexington, Isaiah Briscoe scored 18 points, Jamal Murray added 16 and No. 1 Kentucky overcame a sluggish first half to pull away from Illinois State 75-63 on Monday night.

Outthustled on both ends of the court by the athletic Redbirds through 20 minutes while adjusting to playing without injured starting point guard Tyler Ulis (elbow), the Wildcats (7-0) emerged from half-time more physical and used that energy to gain some breathing room.

Outrebounded 20-12 in the first half, Kentucky beat Illinois State (3-5) 27-17 on the boards and held the Redbirds to 29 percent shooting in the second half.

Marcus Lee added 13 points and 12 rebounds for his second double-double in five games while Alex Poythress had 11 points for Kentucky, which shot 43 percent.