

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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1B

HERMISTON

Lake Oswego extends bracket with rout

Hermiston shut out in first championship match-up

East Oregonian

GOLD HILL — Hermiston was unable to cool Lake Oswego's red-hot bats on Thursday

as they fell 16-0 in four innings in the Little League baseball state championship series.

Hermiston, which was unbeaten in the 9-10-year-old bracket coming into the game, used five pitchers and none was able to escape unscathed except for Grant Olsen, who threw just two pitches to get the final out in the top of the fourth. None of Hermiston's pitchers threw more than 24 pitches and starter Austin



Baseball

Garberg was saddled with the loss.

Hermiston had played its way into the final round by beating Lake Oswego 11-9 on Tuesday. Lake Oswego defeated The Dalles 3-2 in the consolation bracket final to earn the rematch.

Since it's a double elimination format, Lake Oswego and Hermiston will play again today at 6 p.m. to decide the title.

Brycen Jones, who pitched 4 1/3 innings

against Lake Oswego on Tuesday, did not pitch on Thursday and neither did quarterfinals starter Aiden West, leaving manager Tony Garberg with plenty of options on the mound.

Whoever takes the mound for Hermiston will need to get some more run support from the offense, which was held to four hits by a trio of pitchers — none of which threw more than 21 pitches.

See LITTLE LEAGUE/2B

MLB

Mariners trending in wrong direction

Seattle looking for answers as second half begins

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — After the Seattle Mariners posted the biggest comeback in franchise history to win in San Diego 16-13 on June 2, they headed off to a series in Texas tied for the lead in the AL West.

There was a buzz and optimism about the club. They were playing better than expected, were more entertaining than expected and were giving credence to the idea that maybe the longest playoff drought in baseball could come to an end after 15 years.

Then the rest of June happened. And by the time the All-Star break arrived, the Mariners were 45-44, facing a nearly double-digit deficit in the division race as part of a season defined thus far by inconsistency.

When Seattle's pitching was strong, the offense lagged. When the offense picked up, the pitching often faltered. The Mariners were powerful away from home early in the season, but lost 16 of 20 road games heading into the break. They swept the first place Orioles at home, but were also swept at home by the last place Angels and last place Twins.

That's not to say there weren't bright spots. Robinson Cano returned to All-Star form. Nelson



AP Photo/Gregory Bull

American League's Robinson Cano, of the Seattle Mariners, hits during the MLB baseball All-Star Game, Tuesday, July 12, 2016, in San Diego.

Cruz has 23 home runs at the break. Korean slugger Dae-Ho Lee has been a pleasant surprise.

There are a number of reasons why Seattle has gone from legitimate contender in the AL West to now trying to get back into the playoff discussion. At the root of Seattle's struggles in June was the fragility of the roster created in the offseason.

While the makeover that general manager Jerry Dipoto undertook

with the Mariners after taking over at the end of the 2015 season created a more competitive, more versatile roster, there is still a lack of depth that was highlighted by key injuries to center fielder Leonys Martin, shortstop Ketel Marte and ace Felix Hernandez.

Between May 22 and June 9, the Mariners defense was ailing with Marte and Martin sidelined. Seattle went 8-10 during that stretch and it was the beginning of the downward

trend that saw the Mariners finish June at 10-18.

Hernandez, meanwhile, has been out since June 1 with a calf injury. Combined with other injuries, that left Seattle putting together a makeshift rotation for most of the last six weeks.

Not all lost is for Seattle. They are only five games back in the AL wild card race and after an eight-game road trip in late July the schedule becomes far more

favorable.

Here are a few other things to watch for as Seattle enters the second half trying to climb back into contention:

FIND AN OUTFIELDER: The Mariners expected Nori Aoki to be their leadoff hitter and left fielder the majority of the season. But Aoki's struggles at the plate could not justify keeping him in the lineup. That's left Seattle's outfield rotation thin and in need of an experienced option in left field. That is likely the top priority for Dipoto prior to the trade deadline.

LAY OFF THE BULLPEN: Seattle's bullpen was taxed in the first half of the season, especially in June when the starting rotation struggled to pitch beyond five innings. The Mariners' relievers made a combined 248 appearances prior to the All-Star break and threw more innings than manager Scott Servais wanted. The overuse began to show in June during Seattle's swoon after the bullpen had been an area of strength the first two months.

GET THE ROTATION HEALTHY: Hernandez wasn't the only starter to find his way to the disabled list in the first half. Left-hander Wade Miley and young righty Taijuan Walker also landed there for short stints. Nathan Karns started in the rotation before getting demoted to the bullpen because of his struggles. Hernandez and Walker are expected to return shortly after the All-Star break and both need to rediscover the top form they showed in spurts earlier in the season.

College Football

Pac-12 parity rooted in quarterback changes at power schools

Oregon one of many schools with QB questions in 2016

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Pac-12 has no clear football favorite this fall, and the biggest reason is obvious at the conference's annual Hollywood media days.

Of the 24 players invited to represent their schools from this famously pass-happy league, just one is a quarterback.

Most of the West Coast's usual powers still are uncertain who will be throwing the ball this fall. Stanford's Kevin Hogan, Southern California's Cody Kessler, Oregon's Vernon Adams, California's Jared Goff, Utah's Travis Wilson and Arizona State's Mike Bercovici are all gone.

In fact, only four teams — UCLA, Washington, Colorado and Washington State — have

clear returning starters.

Arizona's Rich Rodriguez is among the coaches who believe a quarterback competition takes place every week, which is why the prolific Anu Solomon isn't guaranteed to be his starter.

Other coaches, including USC's Clay Helton, value the leadership of an established starter — if they can just pick one.

"I've played quarterback, and I've coached the position," said Helton, who plans to choose between Max Browne and Sam Darnold two weeks before the season opener. "I know that your team wants to know who the leader is, going into that first game."

In a league stacked with talented tailbacks, the turnover behind center in the so-called Conference of Quarterbacks is glaring — and intriguing. New stars will be made this fall, but the holdovers could be the biggest ones of all.

UCLA was picked over USC as the preseason favorite in the South division, and star sopho-

See PAC-12/2B



Oregon head coach Mark Helfrich speaks at the Pac-12 NCAA college football media day in Los Angeles Thursday, July 14, 2016.

AP Photo/Reed Saxon

Sports shorts

Broncos offering record \$70M guaranteed over six years to Miller

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — A person with knowledge of the negotiations tells The Associated Press that the Denver Broncos have upped their offer to Von Miller by offering to guarantee a record \$70 million of the six-year deal.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity to share candid details of the blockbuster offer, which was also reported by ESPN and the NFL Network.

The sides agreed to the parameters of a \$114.5 million deal last month but Miller's camp rejected Denver's offer of \$38.5 million in guarantees.

GM John Elway's offer now surpasses the \$63 million in guarantees that Philadelphia's Fletcher Cox received last month and represents the most money ever offered a non-quarterback.

FACES



Miller

"They were better than us. They were better than Cleveland. They were the best team in the playoffs. They should've won a championship."

— Andre Iguodala

Golden State Warriors forward speaking about the Oklahoma City Thunder on Power 105.1 radio in New York. Iguodala said it was OK to admit it now that Golden State has signed former Oklahoma City superstar Kevin Durant, who became a free agent following the season. The Warriors beat the Thunder 4-3 in the West Conference Finals.

Stanford takes top spot in Pac-12 preseason football poll

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Stanford has been picked to successfully defend its Pac-12 football title in a preseason media poll. UCLA is the Pac-12 South favorite.

Stanford topped Washington as the favorite in the Pac-12 North, getting 24 first-place votes and 186 points to the Huskies' eight first-place votes and 163 points. Oregon was picked to finish third in the North, getting one first-place vote.

The Bruins drew 19 first-place votes and 180 points in the South to edge Southern California, which earned 12 first-place votes and 173 points.

Stanford received 20 votes to win the Pac-12 title game. The Trojans were second with five votes.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1912 — Jim Thorpe wins the decathlon at the Stockholm Olympics. At the closing ceremony, Sweden's King Gustav proclaims Thorpe the world's greatest athlete.

1978 — Jack Nicklaus shoots a 281 at St. Andrews to win his third and final British Open.

2005 — Michelle Wie misses a chance to play in the Masters when BYU junior Clay Ogden hands the 15-year-old high school junior a 5-and-4 loss in the quarterfinals of the U.S. Amateur Public Links.

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