

FOOTBALL: Bucks last win came in 2011

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their affairs well enough to minimize the damage done. Wins over Mountain View and Bend in Weeks 3 and 7, respectively, give them the head-to-head tiebreaker with the only other teams capable of snaring a Special District 1 playoff spot.

That and Pendleton’s (3-5, 2-4) 22-7 loss to Bend last week that eliminated them from the playoff hunt means when the rivals meet at Kennison Field on Friday night the biggest thing on the line will be bragging rights — something Hermiston’s had plenty of recently in the 89-year series.

The Bulldogs have won the last four meetings in a row, and took last year’s game 28-12 at the Round-Up grounds.

This year the Bulldogs will be relying heavily on two players making their debuts against Pendleton as sophomore quarterback Andrew James and junior wide receiver Dayshawn Neal have become arguably Class 5A’s top passing duo having hooked up for 43 completions, 766 yards and 11 touchdowns.

“It’s a great opportunity. I can’t wait, it should be really fun,” James said.

But first things first, the Bulldogs are looking to wash away the bad taste left by the loss at Redmond by putting a strong foot forward in practice this week.

“After the loss last week we’ve got to come out hard,” said Neal after Tuesday’s practice. “We didn’t prepare real good, and we came out and we played bad. We can’t turn the ball over and expect to win.”

“I think it all comes down to our Tuesday practice, and today we were pretty crisp,” said senior lineman Kaden Caldwell. “Last week I don’t think our Tuesday practice was as good as it should have been, we weren’t really that focused. But this week we should be going in strong knowing what they’re doing and watching enough film ... to be ready.”

For the Buckaroos, the knowledge that this will be the last game of the season, and the last of some of their high school careers is providing plenty of motivation to put in a little extra effort this week.

“A lot of us are going to be going all out because we have nothing to lose, but we still need to keep our heads in focus also, just to stay in it,” said Pendleton senior wide receiver Nick Lani. “We have nothing to lose so we’re going to go as far and as hard as we possibly can until that last second goes to zero so it’s definitely going to be all-out.”

The game will also be Hermiston’s senior night, and kick-off is scheduled for 7 p.m.

SCOUTING HERMISTON

The Bucks won’t be able to key on Neal because Hermiston’s offense has plenty of ways to beat a team and is averaging 385 yards and 27.6 points a game.

Hermiston as averaging 5.3 yards per carry with James and junior Johnathan Hinkle leading the way at nearly 70 yards a game each.

“I think we’re pretty confident going in,” Caldwell said. “I think we’re a better team than Pendleton and it’s just a matter of how we play in the trenches and on the O-line.”

Pendleton coach Erik Davis said keeping an eye on James will be the first matter of business on defense.

“I think we do need to put pressure on that quarterback, but he is dangerous with his feet,” he said. “So at the same time we have to contain. He’s proven on film over and over to be pretty deadly with his feet so even though we’d like to put pressure on him we have to be cognizant of the run. They’ve got some pretty talented athletes and

their tailback runs hard and we’re going to have to put in a Herculean effort Friday to stay in this game and hopefully come out on top.”

Lani said he likes the way the Bucks match up in the passing game, where Hermiston’s next leading receiver is senior Tucker Salinas with 26 catches for 324 yards and three touchdowns.

“Hermiston’s got some quick players but I think we’re just as skilled as they are,” he said, “we just have to have good coverage and if we can stop their passing game we can key on their run game.”

SCOUTING PENDLETON

Offensively, the Buckaroos try to stay as balanced as possible, but have had to lean on the pass game when the offensive line has struggled.

Quarterback Nick Bower has thrown for 1,592 yards and 12 touchdowns, but has completed just over 48 percent of his passes (112-231). He is coming off of his worst performance of the season, completing 5-21 passes for 37 yards and an interception.

It was his first game without his top two wide receivers, junior Shaw Jerome and sophomore Cam Sandford, as both suffered season-ending injuries in Week 7 against Hood River. Davis said that’s not going to affect play-calling this week.

“I’m not going to squeeze my playbook and I think going over to a good field at Hermiston allows us to open it back up a bit more,” he said. “We’re going into this last game preparing to win the football game, a lot of people say it’s tough to play for pride but it’s not real hard to get up for this game.”

Senior running backs Deven Page and Gabe Walker will be hungry to leave a mark in their final game. Page leads the team with 382 rushing yards and five touchdowns, while Walker will be playing in just his second game this season after missing the first seven games due to a preseason knee injury.

On defense, the Buckaroos have been susceptible to the run game all season long, allowing an average of more than 250 yards over the past four games.

SERIES: Pendleton holds the advantage in the all-time series between the schools, 76-13, but the Bulldogs have been the dominant team over the past five years.

Hermiston is 4-1 against Pendleton since 2011, and has won four straight in the series by an average margin of 47-17. Pendleton’s last win came in 2011 when the Bucks took down the Bulldogs 26-12 at Round-Up Arena.

The Bulldogs won last year 49-14, which clinched the Columbia River Conference title, but Hermiston coach David Faateete said anything can always happen in rivalry games.

“Anytime you get into a game when both towns have been at it a long time, and the kids’ parents have played in the game, it’s football,” he said. “A lot of the guys on both teams are friends, they get along with each other, they talk with each other and whatnot, but we know that when it’s Friday night it’s time to strap up. We’re going to put our best foot forward and give our all.”

PLAYOFF PICTURE: The Bulldogs’ loss last week dropped them to the fourth-and-final playoff spot in Special District 1. Hermiston will make the playoffs, but the team needs to win over Pendleton as well as a loss or two from either Bend or Redmond ahead of them in order to earn the chance to host a first-round playoff game at Kennison Field. Redmond travels to Ridgeview and Bend will host Mountain View this week.

Prep Roundup

Vikings secure playoff return

Umatilla boys beat Irrigon; Riverside girls wrap up league title

East Oregonian

UMATILLA — Looking to secure their program’s 15th straight trip to the state postseason, the Umatilla Vikings came out fired up to face the Irrigon Knights on Tuesday and raced to a five-goal halftime lead and held on to win 5-2.

The win gave Umatilla (7-4-2, 3-2-1 SD4) second place in Special District 4 and the final available post-season berth.

Vikings coach Pedro Ortiz said he had pushed the importance of pressuring Irrigon (6-4-1, 2-3-1) early and the players responded, and even though the tactic seemed to wear on his team toward the end of the game it was what made the difference.

Ben Binene put the Vikings up early when he took a pass from Armando Espinoza and then beat Irrigon’s goalkeeper in the third minute.

Diego Saldana kept the pressure up with a goal that ricocheted off the post in the sixth minute, then Binene netted the eventual game-



Irrigon’s Marcos Mejia attempts to clear the ball moments before Umatilla’s Ben Binene scores a goal in the Vikings’ 5-2 win against the Knights on Tuesday in Irrigon.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

winner in the ninth minute off a setup by Luis Castro.

Castro got a goal in the 35th minute after taking a pass from Isidro Fonseca and penetrating into goal box before unleashing his shot. Cesar de la Cruz capped Umatilla’s scoring in the 39th minute unassisted.

Ortiz said Binene had a chance at the hat trick, but his shot went off the post.

Umatilla will be off until the first round of the 3A/2A/1A playoffs on Wednesday, Nov. 2. The 16-team playoff bracket will be seeded based on OSAA ranking, and at No. 23 as of press time the Vikings would be in line for a road game in

the first round.

The loss ended the season for the Knights.

Elsewhere in Special District 4 action, Riverside concluded its league slate with an 11-0 drubbing of City Christian in Boardman. The Pirates (9-3-1, 6-0) have one more game left to tune-up for the playoff and host Walla Walla Valley on Thursday at 4:15 p.m.

IHS	0	2	—	2
UHS	5	0	—	5
Goals				
3’—	UHS Ben Binene (Armando Espinoza)			
6’—	UHS Diego Saldana			
9’—	UHS Ben Binene (Luis Castro)			
35’—	UHS Luis Castro (Isidro Fonseca)			
39’—	UHS Cesar de la Cruz			
49’—	IHS unknown			
64’—	IHS unknown			

GIRLS SOCCER

RIVERSIDE 3, UMATILLA 1

At Umatilla, the Pirates secured the Special District 2 championship with a win over the Vikings on Tuesday.

Riverside (7-3-2, 7-0-2 SD2) led 2-0 at halftime, no other details were reported.

The Pirates will finish the regular season on Thursday when they host league foe Horizon Christian at 4:15 p.m.

Umatilla (5-7-1, 4-5) will end its season short of the playoffs when it plays at Portland Christian for its finale on Thursday at 4:15 p.m.

BLAZERS: Stay home to host Clippers on Thursday

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Noah Vonleh gave the Blazers a spark off the bench and his 3-pointer put them ahead 34-28. Portland stretched the lead to as many as 13 points in the first half, paced by Lillard with 16 points.

Johnson’s short jumper tied the game at 68 midway through the third quarter. Hood hit consecutive jumpers to give the Jazz a 77-71 lead. Hood would go on to split a pair of defenders with his dunk and Utah outscored the Blazers 37-23 in the quarter.

Allen Crabbe’s 3-pointer tied the

game at 85, but the Blazers couldn’t take the lead until Lillard’s 3 made it 97-96 with 5:50 left. Johnson answered with a 3-pointer on the other end to put the Jazz back in front.

TIP-INS

Jazz: Hayward and Favors accounted for an average of 36 points per game for the Jazz last season. ... Trey Lyles hit a buzzer-beating 3-pointer at the end of the first half to narrow the Blazers’ lead to 54-46. ... Neither team missed a free throw in the game.

Trail Blazers: Portland returns 11 players, and boasts the most returning

minutes of any team in the league. “The learning curve is easier for those guys,” coach Terry Stotts said. ... The Blazers linked arms in unity during the national anthem. ... With his first assist of the night, Damian Lillard passed Jim Paxson for sixth on the franchise all-time list (2,008).

UP NEXT

Jazz: They host the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday.

Trail Blazers: Portland hosts the Los Angeles Clippers on Thursday. The Blazers ousted the Clippers in the first round of the playoffs last season.

BUCKAROOS: Play first round game on Saturday

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team came from to end up in the situation on Tuesday. Pendleton started the season very shaky, losing six of its first seven games, but finally clicked at the end of September and finished the season winners in seven of its last 12 to finish second in the CRC and earn the play-in berth.

“We did have a rough start but I think we rose when it mattered,” Greb said. “We definitely started shaky but we came though, worked through it in practice and that’s what it’s about at this level, seeing the improvement.”

Tuesday’s game against Hillsboro (9-11, 6-8) played out much like Pendleton’s regular season did — shaky at first, but then the Bucks found their groove. The Spartans kept the Buckaroos off-balance throughout much of the first set and ended up with a 25-17 victory, but then Pendleton settled down and rolled through the final three sets 25-22, 25-18, 25-22.

In that first set, Pendleton simply seemed out-of-whack defensively as Hillsboro’s offense was spreading out the Buckaroo players in multiple directions. Numerous hard hits from Spartan players were also causing hard rebounds on digs, which kept Pendleton setter Lauren Roberts out of a consistent pattern to help set up the Bucks offense.

“The girls kind of beat themselves in the first set by not being able to move their feet,” Pendleton coach Amanda Lapp said. “When they’re not moving their feet they’re not getting an offense going ... and that’s what we were trying to drive home.”

“We had a lot of tips off the blocks and couldn’t get hits totally in the court and had a lot of balls we couldn’t pick up,” Greb added. “But those games happen, and I think we came back and settled down and knew our goal coming in tonight and what our plan was and we played to that plan the rest of the way.”

Hillsboro started out



Kalan McGlothlan (9), of Pendleton, gets ready to hit the ball as Hillsboro’s Carissa Ramirez (9) and Mariah Owen (5) go up to block Tuesday at Warberg Court.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Maureen Davies, of Pendleton, gets a hit past two Hillsboro blockers Tuesday at Warberg Court.

the second set on a roll, winning seven of the first 10 points and eventually holding a 13-8 lead before Pendleton settled in and started to make its run. The Buckaroos earned seven of the next eight points to take a 15-14 lead — it’s first lead of the set — and carried that momentum all the way to the win.

From that point on, it was almost all Buckaroos. Pendleton breezed through

the third set and appeared well on its way to the fourth set win, too, building up to a 22-14 lead.

However, Hillsboro wasn’t ready to wave the white flag. The Spartans called a timeout and came out with a barrage of hard hits and clutch digs to win seven of the next eight points — including six-straight — and cut the deficit to just 23-21. But with Hillsboro serving with the two-point

deficit, Pendleton’s Aspen Garton made a diving dig at the ball that was on its way to the ground inside Pendleton’s defense. The serve had enough velocity that Garton’s dig sent the ball flying back over the net, and landed perfectly inside Hillsboro’s defense for the point.

“We just had to relax a little bit,” Greb said. “We were already like ‘We’re almost there, just two more points’ and I think it got in our heads a little bit. We just had to get that 24th point and it took a little bit but we did it and that was the most important part.”

Pendleton finished off Hillsboro two points later when Maureen Davies blasted a kill for the 25th and final point. Davies led the Bucks with 12 kills.

The win advances Pendleton to the first round of the 5A bracket, where it will play on Saturday. The Bucks opponent was not yet determined at press time.

HHS (9-11)	25	22	18	22	—	1
PHS (9-11)	17	25	25	25	—	3
Individual statistics						
KILLS	— M. Davies 12, H. Greb 10, R. Gerton 7, K. McGlothlan 5, E. Nirschl 1, A. Garton					
ASSISTS	— L. Roberts 28					
ACES	— A. Garton 1, H. Greb 1, L. Richards 1, M. Davies 1.					

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