

Prep Football

Honkers aiming for statement win on Thursday

East Oregonian

The Arlington Honkers are aiming for a statement victory on Thursday evening when they host the No. 2-ranked Dufur Rangers at 7 p.m.

Arlington (5-1 overall, 1-0 SD4) has won five straight since a season-opening loss to Echo, out-scoring opponents 315-32 in that span, including a 66-0 win over Prarie City last week. Dufur (5-0, 2-0), the defending state champion, is coming off of a 54-22 victory over Sherman.

A quick look at the rest of this week's prep football meetings:

PERRYDALE (3-3) AT PILOT ROCK (2-3), 6 P.M. — Pilot Rock brings some momentum into Thursday night's game coming off a 22-14 win at Enterprise six days ago.

The Rockets host a Perrydale team that has beat up on lesser competition, but has struggled against good teams. Last week, Perrydale defeated South Wasco County 64-6.

MAC-HI (3-2, 0-1) AT LA GRANDE (5-1, 1-0), 7 P.M. — The Mac-Hi Pioneers continue league play on Friday with a trip to the No. 7-ranked La Grande Tigers.

Mac-Hi started Greater Oregon League play with a tough 50-6 loss to Ontario last week, while La Grande went on the road and beat Baker 39-6. La Grande's lone loss came in Week 3 to a solid Sunnyside (WA) team 40-28.

IRRIGON (3-2, 1-1) AT NYSSA (4-0, 2-0), 7 P.M. — Irrigon is coming off of a setback last week with a 50-6 loss at home to Vale and has another tough opponent this week with unbeaten Nyssa on Friday.

Nyssa is unbeaten this season and appears to be the top team in the Eastern Oregon League, fresh off of a close 34-28 win over Burns last week. The Bulldogs' offense has scored at least 30 points in three of the four games this season.

RIVERSIDE (2-3, 0-2) AT BURNS (3-3, 1-1), 7 P.M. — After a strong start to the season, Riverside has slumped hard over the past three weeks with three consecutive losses.

Last week, Riverside's offense scored the second-most points in a game this season with 16, but still lost 44-16 to Umatilla. The road doesn't get easier on Friday as it travels to Burns, a team that comes in off a close 34-28 loss on the road to Nyssa but has won two of its last three games.

UMATILLA (4-2, 1-1) AT VALE (3-3, 1-1), 7 P.M. — Umatilla got back in the win column last week with a big victory over Riverside, but head back east this week for a meeting with Vale.

The Vikings have struggled to match the physicality of the far-east teams of Vale, Nyssa, and Burns, the latter of which beat the Vikings 42-13 just two weeks ago. Meanwhile, Vale has now won two of its last three after a 50-6 win over Irrigon.

CULVER (0-6, 0-1) AT HEPNER (2-3, 1-0), 7 P.M. — Heppner appears to be getting things back on track with two straight blowout wins with a winless Culver team coming to town on Friday.

The Bulldogs lost 52-7 last week against Grant Union. A win for the Mustangs will set up a winner-take-all CBC title game against Stanfield next week.

JOSEPH (2-4, 0-3) AT ECHO (4-2, 2-1), 7 P.M. — Echo's offense is clicking on all cylinders, scoring 68 points in back-to-back weeks, but the Cougars' defense still has work to do.

Friday should be a good match up for Echo, as Joseph comes off of an 80-36 loss to Cove and has scored more than 30 points in just three games this season.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton's Nick Bower (15) stairs down Mt. View's Luke Schulz while handing the ball off to Kirk Liscom in the Bucks' loss to the Cougars on Friday.

BUCKS: Starting RB out for remainder of season

Continued from 1B

But the Eagles do bring a different challenge to a Buckaroos defense that has faced a string of run-heavy teams recently. The Eagles have a balanced run-pass offense headlined by junior quarterback Caden Leiblein and senior running back Michael Jones, which has sparked some personnel changes with the Buckaroos defense.

Seniors Shaw Jerome and Cam Sandford will see more time at defensive back to help defend the pass. The two players rarely, if ever, saw time on defense in recent games in favor of extra run-stuffing bodies up front. The balanced threat also prompted Pendleton to run defensive 7-on-7 drills in practice for the first time in a few weeks as well.

"I feel really good where we are in the run defense, but we just have to knock the rust off the defensive secondary," Davis said. "We have to take care of their tailback because he (Jones) is a good one and their quarterback (Leiblein) is pretty savvy in the pocket. He's not going to blow your doors off running a la an Andrew Peasley (from La Grande), but he's elusive. So we have to make sure we contain him with our ends and go let our athletes be athletes in the secondary."

Offensively for Pendleton, the Buckaroos have spent the week of practice trying to get their timing back and work into the rhythm that they lost against Mountain View last week. After putting together an

80-yard scoring drive to open the game, Pendleton managed just 115 yards the rest of the way, including quarterback Nick Bower completing just 5-of-17 passes after that drive.

The unit was dealt a blow this week, though, as starting running back Shawn Yeager was diagnosed with a broken fibula in his right leg that required season-ending surgery. Yeager, who totaled 334 rushing yards with four touchdowns in six games, suffered the injury after while getting tackled on a run in the second half.

In Yeager's place Aiden Patterson and Kirk Liscom will get some carries, as will Alex Rendon, who Davis is excited about.

"Alex is a tremendous athlete, maybe the best athlete on our team. He's a tremendous wrestler and has great body awareness and really quick feet," Davis said. "He's a dynamic back so I'm excited to see him get some carries at the varsity level. The good thing about the position is we're fairly deep so it's just kind of a next-man-up mentality."

But even with the change at running back, Davis is confident that the Buckaroos offense will be back and roaring on Friday against the Eagles.

"(Bower) has to get in a rhythm early and I have to get in a rhythm with Nick," he said. "If we can get on that early and get Nick some completions early and often, we can go for a big night."

BULLDOGS: Beat Lava Bears 28-7 last season

Continued from 1B

season opener against Central — and are currently tied with Mountain View for first place in the district.

The young team has made strides since the 35-6 loss in Week 1 and boast a five-game winning streak, most recently defeating Summit in overtime. Hermiston head coach David Faaeteete knows the Lava Bears will come to town with the will to win, but the Bulldogs (4-2, 3-1) haven't shied away from success either.

"(Bend) is going to be excited and ready to play," he said. "The game plan (for us) is the same. We're going to try to be balanced and do what works, nothing more nothing less."

What's been working for Hermiston since its 28-7 loss to Mountain View on Sept. 15 is a balanced offensive attack led by junior quarterback Andrew James.

In its past three wins, the Bulldogs have either reached or eclipsed the 200-yard mark on the ground and in the air. James has completed 85-percent of his passes and has yet to throw an interception since the four he recorded in Week 1.

Hermiston's season made a turn for the better after it defeated Summit and since that Sept. 12 game, seniors Dayshawn Neal and Jonathan Hinkle

have been providing James with support. Neal proves to be James' favorite target, and is the most reliable receiver on the Bulldogs' roster. Hes put seven touchdowns on the board with a whopping 603 yards under his belt.

Once the run game is established with the help of Hinkle — who has the second most rushing yards behind James with 396 — James tends to let lose and more often than not it's Neal he hits.

But it's high school football, and each Friday comes with a new set of challenges. This week's will be the dynamic Bend brings.

The Bears had to replace its entire starting offense from last season and nine defensive starters. The inexperience at the varsity level showed in their lone loss but since then a entirely new Bend team has taken the field.

"Anything can happen on Friday night," Faaeteete said. "Guys just got to execute and we just have to worry about what we're doing — dot our I's and cross our T's. At the end of the day it's not what they are going to do that's going to beat us, it's how we're going to respond and to react to what's going on."

The Bulldogs have struggled responding to opponents who test their defensive line. Hermiston has given

up 550 rushing yards in its last three games, 300 of which were allowed in the 48-26 victory over Ridgeview.

Last season, the Bulldogs had no problem containing the Bears in their dominate 28-7 defeat. On its home turf, Bend ended the night with 193 total yards on offense.

This year, Bend has a number of senior running backs that will threaten the progress of Hermiston's defensive line. None, however, have been as successful as Haakon Kjellesvik lately — who in the past three games ran for a total of 138 yards.

To contain Kjellesvik and Bend's entire run game the Bulldogs will need to buy in to Faaeteete's new technique.

"The new technique is just effort, effort and understanding," he said. "These seniors have got three games left. If you don't take pride in your craft, it's going to be a short season."

A win Friday will give Hermiston a little breathing room, as its next opponent, Redmond, is in second to last place in the league standings.

But if they give Bend too much room to get comfortable and find its rhythm, the Bulldogs will be in trouble.

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PIGSKIN PICKERS

Week 6

Overall: 42-8
Last Week: 8-2
Bend at Hermiston
Pendleton at Hood River
Dufur at Arlington
Umatilla at Vale
Oregon at Stanford
Boise State at SDSU
UCLA at Arizona
Lions at Saints
Steelers at Chiefs
Colts at Titans



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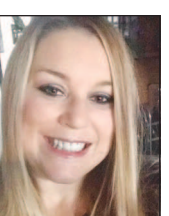
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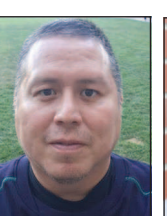
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