



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The Hermiston Bulldogs get pumped up before the start of their 42-15 win over Pendleton on Friday in Pendleton.

## BULLDOGS: Pile up 505 total yards of offense

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just commit to the run game, and we can throw it when we need to.”

As it turns out, Hermiston wouldn't need to throw that often. James finished the night 4-for-8 for 142 yards and three touchdowns.

The Bulldogs ate up the first 12 minutes as Pendleton struggled to get anything going. Keaton Mikami played a big role in that, and sacked Pendleton quarterback Nick Bower twice, while Jonathon Hinkle wrapped Bower up to force one of many Pendleton three-and-outs just a few plays later.

“He played great tonight,” Faaeteete said of Mikami's performance. “He got off that block and contained the passer and made some great hits on the quarterback. It was just good.”

There was plenty that was just good on Friday night.

James went on to rush 191 yards and two touchdowns. Hinkle had 15 carries for 141 yards and one touchdown.

“There was good play calling all night, and just players making big plays,” James said after the win and earning the Great American Rivalry Series MVP.

Senior Joey Gutierrez got in on the action and took a short pass from James and ran it over 70 yards to put the Bulldogs up 29-15 going into the fourth quarter.

“I just got to score,” Gutierrez recalls thinking as he moved down the field. “I saw no body in front of me and I was just thinking in my head, keep going because I started to cramp at the 20, but I just had to keep going.”

Hermiston also kept going and going. The Bulldogs wore down the Buckaroos defense and racked up 505 total offensive yards — 363 on the ground and 142 in the air. Their physicality and improvement on defense gave Pendleton little if any chances.

“Going into the game we didn't expect their front five to be that physical and they were able to dominate our front seven,” Pendleton head coach Erik Davis said. “That's pretty obvious that they were able to run at will. We were able to shut down their big passing game but when you can't do both facets of the game usually you don't come out successful.”

Bower went 23-for-40 for 206 yards and two touchdowns.

The Bucks were able to take advantage of the few mistakes Hermiston made, and worked their way 68 yards — with the help of a well executed fake punt —



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Hermiston quarterback Andrew James gains yardage before Pendleton's Ian Banister brought him down Friday at the Round-Up Grounds.



Arch rivals Hermiston and Pendleton faced off for their last conference game Friday at the Round-Up Grounds.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton's Nick Bower breaks away from Hermiston's Keaton Mikami in the Bulldogs' 42-15 win against the Bucks on Friday in Pendleton.

into the end zone for a score. Cam Sanford's three-yard touchdown reception kept the game close for the next quarter and a half.

Pendleton entered halftime down 14-8, and fired a 63-yard connection from Bower to Sandford to take a one-point lead after a successful two-point conversion. That was the last successful drive the Bucks would have.

After Gutierrez's touchdown pass put the game back in Hermiston's favor, he came back on defense to make a game-changing play that he attributed to luck.

“It was a lucky play,” he said. “I'd say but it was where I was supposed to be. Thank the guy for not catching it, because I did.”

From there Hermiston ran away with the game. Hinkle ran in his lone rushing

touchdown — 24 yards on a third down. James sprinted 54 yards down the field to extend the game-ending score of 42-15. It was the cherry on top of Hermiston's OSAA Farewell Tour.

“We just want to play great football going into the playoffs,” Faaeteete said. “It was a great rivalry game, a great battle early on and our guys just outlasted and outworked and it was just a fun effort for anybody. As we get ready for whoever we're playing next, we're just going to prepare like we normally do. Dot our I's, cross our T's and have some fun.”

Hermiston will have to wait until Saturday to find out who it will play in the first round of the postseason, and Pendleton is hoping it can squeak through with its No. 14 ranking.

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## ZABRANSKY: The 2002 Hermiston alum now lives in Boise

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trying to tackle Bisnett and Lambert and get dragged 10 yards in the defensive backfield. Those were always exciting though. You prep for those games, your focus was 100 percent for those games first and foremost, and if you didn't win that game it didn't really matter what the rest of the season looked like.”

**EO: What does it mean to you to be inducted into the Great American Rivalry Series' Hall of Fame?**

JZ: “Oh this is a pretty cool honor. I don't quite know the history behind this precisely, but I know the history behind this rivalry and it's a long-tenured and pretty heated, pretty ferocious rivalry. These guys have always been a good opponent for us Bulldogs. You get ready primarily to try to win a state title when you start out, but this is as big of a game as any for any sport. That's almost 100 years of playing each other and that's extremely unique. There's not a lot of rivalries like that in America maybe, so it's bittersweet to get this award on the last time these guys play each other but I'm pretty honored and humbled to receive it here.”

**EO: After your football career ended, what did you get into?**

JZ: “For the past 10 years my home base was in Houston, Texas, where I followed (my) pro football career for five years and then got into a career in the oil and gas industry. But I moved back to Boise in January and opened a real estate company called Zabransky & Clark Real Estate. I'm onto my third career and hopefully this one will stick for longer than five or six years.”

**EO: What are your thoughts on this 2017 Hermiston team and how Friday's game is playing out?**

JZ: “I didn't really know a lot about this team, but this is about twice as many kids as we had on the field when I was playing. But they're playing well and the offense moved the ball well for the first quarter-plus. The running game is good, but I'd like to see a few more deep passes. You know as a quarterback I always like to see those

explosive plays, but it's been an entertaining game. I'm really impressed with Pendleton's QB, too. The kid throws it well, he threw a swing pass right on the money and a good deep ball, people don't realize how tough those throws are to make and he does it well and he's impressed me.”

**EO: Are you still involved with the sport of football at all?**

JZ: I have a couple of clients in Boise that I do some skill development stuff, so I stay around the game. Also I color commentate for AM630 The Fan Game of the Week in Boise. I try to stay around it as much as possible.”

**EO: Looking back on your athletic career, could you have dreamed of having the experiences you did coming from a small town in Eastern Oregon?**

JZ: “When I was a little kid I dreamt of being a professional athlete. I told my mom when I was seven when she dropped me off at Mighty Mites (youth football) practice ‘Hey I'm going to play professional sports’ and she was like ‘oh that's so nice.’ And as I started getting closer and closer to graduating high school it became fairly real that I was a pretty decent athlete and that I might get a shot at the next level, but you go from being a big fish in a small pond to a small fish in a big pond and you do that again and again from college to the pros and you can't fear the challenge. You just have to go in and work as hard as you could. That was something that was never an issue, hard work was not something that was foreign to me and as long as a man applies that and puts his head down and is coachable they've got a shot. It's not always about the fastest guy on the field or the strongest, a lot of the time it's grit and determination that will succeed. I knew I had a chance, but to write that sort of a script and to finish off my college career the way that it did? No, I couldn't have foreseen anything like that. It's crazy how it all turned out like it did, kind of capped off my college career at the ESPY awards and winning those two awards and putting my college life to bed per se, it was so unique.”