

Pro Basketball

Jazz top
Blazers
in OT

Associated Press



SALT LAKE CITY — Faith became the keyword in Quin Snyder’s postgame press conference. The Utah Jazz coach talked about his faith in rookie Donovan Mitchell, his faith in Ricky Rubio and his faith in his team. Mitchell scored a career-high 28 points and the Jazz beat the Portland Trail Blazers 112-103 in overtime Wednesday night.

The game was tight throughout, with 17 lead changes and 14 ties — and neither team ever leading by double-digits.

The Jazz ran their offense through Mitchell in overtime and he didn’t disappoint. The No. 12 overall pick accounted for the first six Utah points with a 3-pointer, a pair of free throws and Rudy Gobert’s two free throws that Mitchell set up with a pass to the cutting big man.

Rubio, who finished with a season-high 30 points, buried a 3-pointer from the top of the arc with 30.9 seconds left in overtime to give the Jazz a seven-point lead and put the game away.

“Each thing has to be better and a little bit sharper,” Blazers guard Damian Lillard said. “We can take pressure off each other by screening a little bit better, throwing better passes on time and on target.

“I think part of it is our execution. We’ve got to get to our spots, we’ve got to scrape for each other, we’ve got to sprint and make hard cuts and just be strong with the ball.”

Lillard put the Blazers on his shoulders in the fourth quarter, but was kept in relative check in overtime. The two-time All Star finished with 33 points, and Jusuf Nurkic had a season-high 19 points.

DAWGS: Ready for final run through OSAA state playoffs

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good enough and a solid group of core guys that could allow us to be a high seed.”

That they did. Going into the Pendleton game week, Hermiston thought with a win it could end the regular season ranked as high as No. 4. After defeating the Buckaroos 42-15 and some math working in their favor, the Bulldogs now enter the playoffs with their highest seed ever.

“They know they have a goal and they want to achieve it,” Faaeteete said.

And after the big rivarly win Friday, “(they got) right back to business. It’s playoff time and on to the next win,” he added.

Hermiston will host La Salle at 7 p.m. Friday. The Falcons (5-4) are going to make the three-hour trip fresh off a loss last week, suffering a 44-20 defeat at the hands of Wilsonville. The loss, however, is not indicative of La Salle’s season and the Falcons will present many challenges of their own.

Faaeteete has stressed the importance of the Bulldogs dotting their I’s and crossing their T’s, something

that has helped them to a six-game winning streak.

In their latest victory, Hermiston was able to test some other weapons down the field.

Senior Dayshawn Neal has been a reliable target for junior quarterback Andrew James, but when Pendleton double and triple teamed him, James had to look for other play makers. Junior Jordan Ramirez and senior Joey Gutierrez had some big catches against the Bucks, and Faaeteete plans on taking advantage of the lack of film La Salle has on these two and using “a lot of weapons we haven’t really unleashed.”

Hermiston will have to find its offensive rhythm against a tough defense found in La Salle.

The Falcons efforts have been led by a trio of seniors who have a commanding presence at the line of scrimmage. Linemen Tony Huynh, Ben Wease and Shak Saidjanov — whose combined mass is 640 pounds — and junior Lucas Van Wagner have been a big part of La Salle’s success.

Huynh has notched a team-high 48 tackles, 25 tackles for loss, and 13.5 sacks. The defense as a whole

has given up 203 points on the season, one of the lowest totals of any team that Hermiston has faced all season — only Mountain View (111) and Pendleton (168) have given up fewer.

Their efforts pushed La Salle to a blowout victory in Week 7 when they defeated St. Helens 45-6, and played a big role in two back-to-back wins in Weeks 3-4 — including a 41-31 comeback victory over Hillsboro in which the Spartans were held scoreless in the second half.

But shutting out Hermiston will be no easy task. The Bulldogs pack an offensive punch that has led to four wins by 25 points or more and have scored in 27 of 36 quarters this season.

“We’re going to do what we do,” Faaeteete said. “Run the football, set up the play action pass. If you don’t run the football it’s criminal. I’m sure La Salle will try to take away the (quarterback) run, but I don’t think in the last few films they have seen the receivers down the field catching the rock.”

James has recorded 1,608 yards in the air over nine weeks and a whopping 874 on the ground.

His ability to scramble through defenders has extending the minutes Hermiston’s offense is on the field. And even when they aren’t, the defense is just as potent.

La Salle senior Justin Owens and junior Ethan Edgerly have traded starts at quarterback, and have both relied on senior receiver Tae Brooks — who has 42 Catches, 670 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Brooks is to La Salle’s offense what Dayshawn Neal is to Hermiston’s, and the scoring charge in the wins over Putnam, Hillsboro, and St. Helens — recording a punt return of a touchdown against Putnam and turned his only two receptions into scores against St. Helens.

But with a Hermiston defense that has 12 interceptions over the course of the regular season (led by Gutierrez’s five), La Salle’s pass game will have to be sharp to beat the Dawgs.

A win Friday will again give Hermiston the home-field advantage in the quarterfinals.

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BUCKS: Face a solid Churchill team with Class 5A’s top offense

Continued from 1B

to freeze and see if their team earned a spot.

“We gathered together afterwards, sat around a fire and all stared at our phones and made phone calls to see when the rankings would freeze,” Pendleton head coach Erik Davis said. “It’s definitely nerve-racking. We watched ourselves bounce up from as high as No. 8 to as low as No. 14-15. It was one of our goals so it meant a lot for us to at least make the playoffs but we were pretty excited once we found out around midnight.”

It’s the first appearance for Pendleton in the postseason since a 54-6 loss to eventual state champion Silverton on Nov. 7, 2014. On top of that, Pendleton is still searching for its first playoff victory since 2002. For the Buckaroo seniors, this is an opportunity that the group has been waiting for in their three years as varsity players and are thrilled to be still be playing.

“We’re one of 16 teams left in the state so it gives you a little bit of swagger coming into the week,” senior Shaw Jerome said. “I was talking about it today, these are the things you dream about when you’re playing pee-wee football, you dream about playing in the playoffs

when you get to high school so it’s awesome.”

“This feels amazing,” senior Tanner Stephan added. “You’re in the last year of playing high school football and you’re still here, still have another week of practice with these guys is great. And we could still have many more weeks left too. We just have to play role football and continue going.”

However, the No. 13 seed Buckaroos face a tall task with their first round game Friday night, facing the unbeaten No. 4 Churchill Lancers. The Lancers (9-0) come roaring into the postseason as an all-around powerhouse, with the highest-scoring offense in Class 5A at 51.2 points per game and a defense that allows just 15.7 points per game.

Churchill comes into the playoffs off big wins over Eagle Point 76-26 and No. 11 seed Crater 63-21 just last week. Overall, the Lancers have wins against three playoff teams including Crater, No. 12 Marist Catholic (41-20) and No. 9 Thurston (40-35).

On offense, Churchill has a high-powered offense that goes through quarterback Jack Blackburn, with his 1,816 passing yards, 29 touchdowns and just four interceptions. Blackburn, a junior, has an easy job with a plethora of weapons

at running back and receiver.

In the backfield, seniors Dalton McDaniel and Tyson Bennion combined for 1,465 rushing yards and 23 touchdowns while averaging a staggering 10 yards per carry. At receiver, the Lancers have four receivers with at least 15 catches this season, including Myles Green-Richards (30 catches, 478 yards, 9 TD), Marshaun Tucker Jr. (26 catches, 548 yards, 5 TD), Lucas Schwin (23 catches, 430 yards, 5 TD) and Jax Arnold (16 catches, 283 yards, 7 TD).

“The initial scouting report is they’re fast, fast, fast,” Davis said of the Lancers. “They’re 9-0 for a reason. And they’re definitely a good football team, they’re deep and we’re just going to go in there and see if we can match up.”

Pendleton has the offensive firepower with quarterback Nick Bower, receivers such as Jerome, Stephan, Cam Sandford and Blake Davis, and running back Aiden Patterson to match Churchill point-for-point, but it will come down to execution for the Bucks. The unit flashed potential again and again in Week 9 against Hermiston, but couldn’t execute on enough drives to keep up with the Bulldogs. Which has led to the Buckaroos focusing on that aspect this week in practice.

“We just have to get better at what we do offensively and defensively,” Jerome said. “Our coaches have done a good job of preparing us but it just comes down to executing. We’re going down to win a game, that’s what it comes down to and it comes down to executing too.” While the Lancers may have an advantage on paper, the Buckaroos know that anything can happen in the postseason. The team has embraced an underdog role for nearly the entire regular season, and have relished in the role, and aims to thrive again on Friday.

“This isn’t a trip for fun to be one-and-done, we’re going down there to win a football game in the 5A playoffs,” Davis said. “I think we’ve played well on the road this year and our kids have a mindset that they’re kind of tired being the underdog, they relish that role, don’t get me wrong. But they want to go and prove something and want to prove that Pendleton is a good football program and that hopefully we’re on that climb for the next couple of years and this would be a good start.”

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PIGSKIN
PICKERS

Week 9

Overall: 64-16
Last Week: 8-2
La Salle at Hermiston
Pendleton at Churchill
NKN HS at Heppner
Echo at Falls City
Stanford at WSU
Okla. at Okla. St.
OSU at California
Wash. at Seahawks
Raiders at Dolphins
Lions at Packers



Ron Gibbs

Overall: 64-16
Last Week: 8-2
La Salle at Hermiston
Pendleton at Churchill
NKN HS at Heppner
Echo at Falls City
Stanford at WSU
Okla. at Okla. St.
OSU at California
Wash. at Seahawks
Raiders at Dolphins
Lions at Packers



Clint Shoemake

Overall: 61-19
Last Week: 6-4
Hermiston at Churchill
Neah-kah-Nie
Neah-Kah-Nie
Falls City
WSU
Oklahoma
California
Washington
Raiders
Lions



Eric Singer

Overall: 59-21
Last Week: 5-5
Hermiston at Churchill
Heppner
Heppner
Falls City
Stanford
Oklahoma
California
Seahawks
Raiders
Packers



Mike Appleton

Overall: 59-21
Last Week: 9-1
Hermiston at Churchill
Heppner
Heppner
Falls City
WSU
Okla. St.
California
Seahawks
Dolphins
Packers



Zachary Orem

Overall: 57-23
Last Week: 5-5
Hermiston at Churchill
Heppner
Heppner
Falls City
WSU
Oklahoma
Oregon State
Seahawks
Raiders
Lions



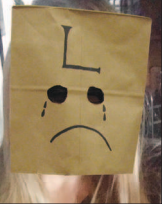
John Airolti

Overall: 55-25
Last Week: 5-5
Hermiston at Churchill
Heppner
Heppner
Echo
Stanford
Okla. St.
California
Seahawks
Dolphins
Packers



Brandon Case

Overall: 53-27
Last Week: 7-3
Hermiston at Churchill
Heppner
Heppner
Echo
WSU
Okla. St.
California
Seahawks
Raiders
Lions



Jodi Bloomberg

Overall: 51-29
Last Week: 4-6
Hermiston at Churchill
Heppner
Heppner
Falls City
WSU
Oklahoma
California
Seahawks
Raiders
Lions



Weston Putman

Overall: 51-29
Last Week: 6-4
Hermiston at Pendleton
Heppner
Heppner
Echo
WSU
Oklahoma
Oregon State
Seahawks
Raiders
Lions



Alexis Mansanarez

Overall: 43-37
Last Week: 6-4
Hermiston at Churchill
Heppner
Heppner
Falls City
Stanford
Oklahoma
California
Seahawks
Raiders
Packers

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