

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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1B

## HERMISTON

# Bulldogs are playoff bound

### Hermiston wins play-in game over St. Helens

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Before tipoff of Tuesday's Class 5A play-in game at Hermiston, head coach Juan Rodriguez challenged one of his players.

He wanted Jordan Thomas, the 6-foot-3 junior post, to notch 30 points for the game, however there was a small problem: she was under the weather.

Struck with the flu over the weekend, Thomas came out scoring just five points while four other Bulldogs split the remaining 10 of their 15 first-quarter points.

Then, in the second quarter Thomas began to use her height and physicality to drive to the hoop to notch 13 points before the break.

"I just realized that as I started posting up more that they were so much shorter than me so I just used my height to my advantage and just needed to go for it," she said.

Thomas finished with exactly 30 points in Hermiston's 67-40 victory over St. Helens to keep its season alive.

She was getting rest throughout the matchup. Often subbed out in favor of senior Maddy Juul, Rodriguez wanted to use Thomas in short bursts to help keep her fresh. After Thomas scored her first points of the second half to reach 20 total at that point, she was ready to throw in the towel. Hermiston was already up by 10 and its lead was growing.

"I honestly didn't think I could do it," Thomas said of reaching 30 points. "I was at 20 and I was giving up."

That's when Rodriguez looked at Thomas and said, "30." Thomas

Girls  
5A Play-in

St. Helens  
40

Hermiston  
67



Hermiston's Jordan Thomas launches a shot during Tuesday's state play-in game against St. Helens at the Dawg House. Thomas had a game-high 30 points for the Bulldogs in the victory.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

responded with an "OK" and went on to score 10 more points — eight of which were in the final quarter.

"That's the dominant force she can be when she wants to," Rodriguez said of the game's top scorer.

"I was really happy. I challenged her before the game and said, 'Hey, you need to score 30 points for us,' and she did."

Before Thomas started racking up the points, the Lions (9-16 overall)

gave the Bulldogs (12-13) some new looks they weren't expecting.

St. Helens freshman Maria Reardon hit three 3-pointers in the first quarter to help keep the score. See BULLDOGS/3B

## Prep Basketball

# All-EOL teams released

East Oregonian

Umatilla senior Kaden Webb and Irrigon senior Johnny Phillips led their teams to the Eastern Oregon League regular season and district championships, respectively, this season. And because of that leadership and their performance, the two players were voted as Co-Players of the Year in the EOL by the league's coaches.

Webb, the Vikings' point guard, led his team in points and assists in nearly every game this season, and was a huge reason for the Vikings' back-to-back regular season championships. Phillips, a center, used his height and finesse around the rim to dominate opponents all season long and had a knack for making crucial plays down the stretch.

The Vikings and Knights each had four other players selected to the all-league teams as well. For Umatilla, Sebastian Garcia (first team), Trent Durfey (second team), Seth Cranston (second team) and Uriel Garcia (honorable mention) earned honors. For Irrigon, Eric Carillo (first team), Adrian Roa (second team), Keith Flemming (honorable mention) and Abe Gomez (honorable mention) made the cut.

The Riverside Pirates had three selections, with Felix Aparicio (second team), Christian Rea (honorable mention) and Mason Hegar (honorable mention).

On the girls side, the Irrigon Knights and Riverside Pirates each had three all-league selections. Beginning with the Knights, senior Jada Burns snagged her second straight first team all-EOL selection and her fourth total first team all-league selection of her career. See EOL/3B

## Pro Basketball

# Lillard has 26 points and Blazers beat Kings

By ANNE M. PETERSON  
AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND — Damian Lillard did not hesitate when asked about how well the Portland Trail Blazers have been playing recently.

"It's the best place I think we've been in years," he said.

Lillard had 26 points and 12 assists, and the Blazers won their fourth straight with a 116-99 victory over the Sacramento Kings on Tuesday night.

Jusuf Nurkic added 17 points and nine rebounds for Portland, which sits in fifth place in the Western Conference — a game back of San Antonio — after winning five of its last six games. The current four-game winning streak matched the team's longest of the season.

"We can't be satisfied with where we are and what we've been doing," Lillard said. "It's got to be on to the next thing, and keep trying to take it to the next level."

NBA  
Sacramento 99  
Portland 116

Zach Randolph had 20 points for the Kings, who lost their fifth straight overall. Sacramento has dropped 10 straight games at Portland's Moda Center.

With just 18 wins, Sacramento is in second-to-last place in the West, above only the Phoenix Suns. The Kings have lost four straight and six of their last seven.

"We gave ourselves a chance multiple times tonight but when you have a team that's played with each other for a while, when things get chaotic and you need to settle down they know where to get the ball and they do a great job of that," Kings veteran Vince Carter said. The Kings were playing the

second of a back-to-back, after losing to Minnesota 118-100 on Monday night. Randolph sat out that game but returned against the Blazers. Randolph played six seasons in Portland.

Lillard had scored 197 points in the past five games, the most points for a Blazer over a five-game stretch in franchise history.

He had 15 points and five assists in the opening quarter against the Kings, including three 3-pointers, to give Portland a 36-26 lead. He was up to 19 points by the half, when the Blazers led 66-53. None of the Kings players were in double figures.

The Blazers led by as many as 17 points in the first half, but the Kings closed the gap in the third quarter, closing within 88-80 to start the fourth.

But CJ McCollum's jumper from out front extended the lead for Port-

See BLAZERS/3B



Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard shoots in front of Sacramento Kings forward Skal Labissiere during the second half of Tuesday's game in Portland.

AP Photo/Craig Mitchell-Edley

## Sports shorts

### LeBron earns triple double and career milestone as Cavs beat Nets

CLEVELAND (AP) — LeBron James scored 31 points and finished a month averaging a triple-double for the first time in his career, and the Cleveland Cavaliers defeated the Brooklyn Nets 129-123 on Tuesday night.

James had 12 rebounds and 11 assists for his 12th triple-double of the season and 67th of his career. He also reached 8,000 assists and became the first in NBA history to reach that milestone, along with 30,000 points and 8,000 rebounds.

"With the long list of so many great players that have come through this league, in the history of this league, for me to be the only (person) in a category, I think it's pretty cool," James said.

Rodney Hood's three-point play with 40 seconds left gave Cleveland a 123-121 lead. James and George Hill hit two free throws each in the final 16 seconds to seal the win.



James

"We need to work with the players' association, who oversees the agents, and figure out what do they think the solution is. These kids deserve advisers as they're moving through this process. But the way it's done right now, it's an issue."

— John Calipari

University of Kentucky men's basketball coach in a news conference on Tuesday advocating that the NCAA work closer with the NBA Players Association to fix some of the issues in college basketball.

### Washington State finalizes new football assistant coaches

PULLMAN, Wash. (AP) — Washington State football coach Mike Leach has filled out his staff after losing six assistants in the offseason.

The Cougars announced that Leach filled the final openings on his staff with the hiring of Mason Miller, Matt Brock, Steve Spurrier Jr. and Tyson Brown.

Miller comes from Nevada and is the new offensive line coach. Brock replaces Eric Mele as special teams coordinator. Mele will now coach of the running backs. Spurrier will be the outside receivers coach. He is the son of legendary coach Steve Spurrier.

Brown replaces Jason Loscalzo as the head of the strength and conditioning program.

The Cougars previously hired Tracy Claeys as defensive coordinator, Kendrick Shaver as safeties coach and Darcel McBath as cornerbacks coach.



## THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1940 — College basketball is televised for the first time. Station W2XBS broadcasts a doubleheader at New York's Madison Square Garden: Pittsburgh vs. Fordham, New York University vs. Georgetown.

1960 — The U.S. hockey team scores six goals in the third period to beat Czechoslovakia 9-4 and win the gold medal in the Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley, Calif.

2010 — Ai Miyazato wins the HSBC Champions to become the first LPGA Tour player in 44 years to sweep the first two events of a season.

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