

Top-seeded Buckaroos cruise 5A quarterfinals

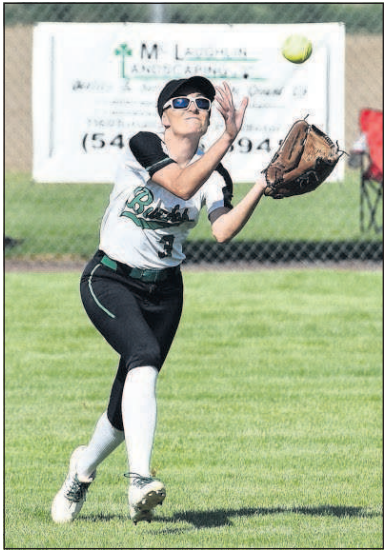


Pendleton's Josie Wilson slides into third base as Sandy's Brooklyn Adams misses the catch in the Buck's 19-3 win against the Pioneers on Wednesday in Pendleton.

Pendleton sluggish, but still thumps Sandy 19-3

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — In the post-season, it does not matter how a team goes about winning a game as long as it gets the win. That is certainly the takeaway for the Pendleton softball team's first-round win over Sandy in the Class 5A playoffs on Wednesday. At first glance it would appear that the Buckaroos had their way with the Pioneers to the tune of a 19-3 final score. However, it wasn't a necessarily sharp performance for the top-seeded Buckaroos (25-2). They managed only six hits, fumbled away two ground ball outs for errors, and pitcher Lauren Richards struggled with her command in the circle. But none of that mattered into the grand scheme of things, because the Buckaroos still did what they needed to earn the win.

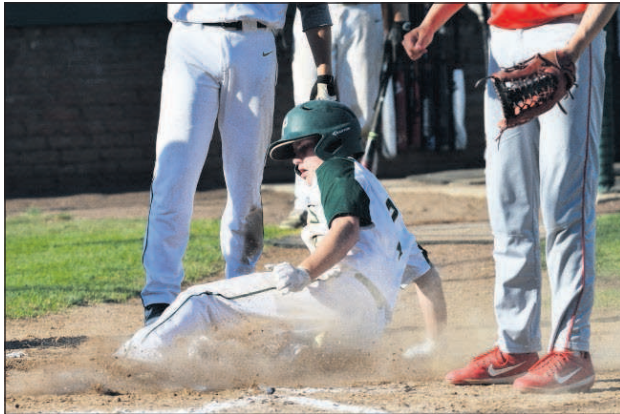


Pendleton's Elli Nirschl prepares to catch a fly ball in the Buck's 19-3 win against Sandy on Wednesday in Pendleton.

"A win is a win at this point of the season," Pendleton coach Tim Cary said. "But we're going to stay as positive as we can and say 'Great job, it's a win and you put 19 runs on the board.' But we can definitely get better and we're going to see a better team on Fri-

day, which means we have to get better." The Buckaroos led 8-0 after three innings, but took a stranglehold of the game in the fourth inning when the team took 16 at-bats and scored 11 runs. The Buckaroos strung together only two hits in the prolonged inning, but drew nine of their 14 total walks — six of which came before an out was recorded. "It was a bit hard to string hits together when they walked, what, 14?" Cary said. "They gave us plenty of free passes and it took a lot of the momentum out of the game ... the flow of the game slowed down so much." No Buckaroos had more than one hit in the game. Carissa Cooley picked up Pendleton's first hit and helped score the first run in the second inning when she blooped a single just inside the right field line to bring home Rylee Gentner, who finished with four runs scored. Richards then had a two-run single in the third inning and Gentner and Kila Solomon each had two-run singles in the fourth inning.

See [SOFTBALL/3B](#)



Pendleton's Tucker Zander slides into home plate on a passed ball in the Bucks' 5-0 win the North Eugene Highlanders on Wednesday in Pendleton.

Bucks blank Highlanders

Pendleton earns first playoff win since 2015

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — By now, it is no secret that improved pitching has been the backbone to the Pendleton baseball team's turnaround this season. And on Wednesday afternoon pitching was the backbone to Pendleton's first state playoff victory since 2015 as the No. 4 Buckaroos blanked the No. 13 North Eugene Highlanders 5-0 at Bob White Field. The trio of Daniel Naughton, Chris Large and Ryan Stahl pitched seven shut-out innings while allowing only three hits and one walk with 13 strikeouts. "It all started on the hill today," Pendleton coach TJ Haguewood said. "Daniel came in and dominated and I thought he threw very well, and so did the guys right after him. And I thought (catcher) Justin Duso called a good game behind the plate, kept all the guys in check and when they did struggle he got them right back." Naughton started the game on the hill for the Buckaroos (18-8) and was basically unhittable. The senior right-hander threw the first 2 2/3 innings, and seven of the eight outs he recorded were by strike-

out. He was lifted after 40 pitches so he can be available to pitch in Friday's quarterfinal game. Large then threw the next 2 1/3 innings and allowed one hit and a walk, and Stahl pitched the final two innings and struck out three. "Whoever pitches we have max confidence in them," senior Shaw Jerome said. "It's really nice that we can count on pitching when the bats aren't there." The Buckaroo offense did most of its work in the first two innings, which surely helped the pitching settle in. Naughton helped himself in the first inning with a double to center field that scored Gabe Umbarger, and Nick Bower followed with a single that scored Naughton for a 2-0 Buckaroos lead. Then in the second, the Buckaroos got two quick outs but stayed alive to load the bases. Tucker Zander scored from third on a wild pitch and later Bower drew a bases-loaded walk to score Umbarger for a 4-0 lead. "We've been doing a lot of good things with guys in scoring position all year," Haguewood said. "And against good teams, and especially in the playoffs you have to produce runs, and getting those early runs takes some pressure off of the pitching."

See [BUCKS/3B](#)

Hermiston moves onto quarterfinals after 4-3 win

Ashley Cameron's three-run home run and a complete game from Julissa Almaguer keep Bulldogs' season afloat

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Senior Julissa Almaguer was one pitch away from throwing her first complete game of the season. Hermiston's ace had missed most of the year due to a knee injury sustained in the season opener on March 13, but has been adding to her pitch count since the Bulldogs' 5-4 win over Pendleton a week and a half ago.

"It doesn't hurt as much," Almaguer said of her knee. "My arm is kind of sore though, I'm still getting there — practicing a lot to get where I need to be." On Wednesday, that practice would be tested against No. 10 Eagle Point. The Eagles of the Midwestern League made the trip to Hermiston, and with them brought a battle-tested squad. After three lead changes, the Bulldogs got the advantage back heading into the top of the seventh. An Eagle Point single put the tying run on base, but a highlight reel-worthy double play cleared the bases and put Hermiston one out away from its first quarterfinal appearance since 2011 — where the Bulldogs fell 7-6 to the then-future state champions, West Albany. On a 2-2 count, Almaguer was just one strike

away from sealing the victory and advancing the Bulldogs. But Eagle Point's Corie Dodge would give the ball one last rip in the hopes of knotting the score. Dodge sent the ball flying high, deep into center field. "I was like, 'Oh my gosh,'" Almaguer said. "I was nervous because I wanted Amanda (Barron) to catch it and I knew she would do anything to catch that ball." Barron did in fact record the out, ending the game to give Hermiston its fourth consecutive win. "I'm just so proud that they keep fighting," head coach Kate Greenough said. "There wasn't a moment where they looked like, 'Okay, they're going to be done now.' This little group is creative

See [HERMISTON/3B](#)



Sydney Stefani, of Hermiston, fields a ground ball during Wednesday's state playoff game against Eagle Point at Rocky Heights Elementary School.

Sports shorts

Gordon, Roush, Penske headline NASCAR Hall of Fame class

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Jeff Gordon has been selected to the NASCAR Hall of Fame. A four-time Cup Series champion who helped take stock car racing from a regional sport to the mainstream in the 1990s, Gordon received 96 percent of the votes from the Hall of Fame committee. He's third in Cup history with 93 victories. Car owners Jack Roush and Roger Penske also were selected to the Hall of Fame. They will be joined by drivers Alan Kulwicki, known for his unique "Polish victory lap," and Davey Allison, who won 19 Cup races, including the 1992 Daytona 500.

Caps blank Lightning 4-0, advance to Stanley Cup Final

Washington Capitals celebrate after defeating the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-0 in Game 7 of the NHL Eastern Conference finals hockey playoff series Wednesday.



AP Photo/Chris O'Meara

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Alex Ovechkin lifted the Prince of Wales Trophy, spun around and set it back down on a table. The rest of the Capitals joined him for a team photo after beating the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-0 on Wednesday night in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference final, a victory that sent Washington to the Stanley Cup Final for the first time in 20 years.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1935 — In the first major league night game, the Reds beat the Philadelphia Phillies 2-1 before 25,000 fans in Cincinnati. **1936** — Tony Lazzeri of the New York Yankees drives in 11 runs with a triple and three home runs — two of them grand slams — in a 25-2 rout of the Philadelphia A's. **1986** — The Montreal Canadiens win their 23rd Stanley Cup, beating the Calgary Flames 4-3 in five games.

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