

Home opener
Lewiston at Hermiston
5:45 p.m., Friday
The Dawg House



Hermiston's Jordan Thomas launches a shot during the Feb. 27, 2018 state play-in game against St. Helens at the Dawg House.

Towering above the competition

At 6-4, Hermiston's Jordan Thomas presents a challenge

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

There's one thing basketball coaches say they can't coach — height. But when they have it, it's a luxury, especially at the high school level. Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez counts himself a lucky man with 6-foot-4 senior Jordan Thomas on his side of the court. "It's a big deal in high school basketball to have a 6-4 girl who can finish

around the basket," he said. "She has the talent to play college basketball." Which is a dream for Thomas, but first there is her senior season to take care of. "Honestly, I love it," Thomas said of basketball. "It's a stress reliever and it makes me happy." The Bulldogs will open their season Friday, hosting Lewiston in a nonleague game. They will host La Grande on Tuesday before beginning Mid-Columbia Conference play Dec. 8 at Kennewick. Thomas and fellow senior Mati Byrd have been playing basketball together since grade school. With Byrd standing 6-2, they are Hermiston's version of the Twin Towers, though they do not play at the same time. "I hope coach makes the decision

and looks at us and sees two girls over 6-2," Thomas said. "It's intimidating. It could be a huge threat." Rodriguez said their offense isn't designed for two post players. He said Byrd will come off the bench to relieve Thomas. While Thomas is one of the two tallest players in the school — Hermiston boys player Blake Davis also is 6-4 — she also is the tallest in her family. Her dad John is 6 feet tall, while her mom Barbara is 6-1. Her older siblings Mitchell (6-1) and Vanessa (5-10) also are shorter. She believes her height comes from her mom's side of the family. Her mom's brother, Larry Bush, is 6-9.

See THOMAS/2B

QB Watson leads Texans to record 8th straight win

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON — Deshaun Watson threw for 210 yards and two touchdowns and ran for a third as the Houston Texans set a franchise record with their eighth straight win, 34-17 over the Tennessee Titans on Monday night. Demaryius Thomas scored his first two touchdowns as a Texan and Lamar Miller ran for 162 yards, including a 97-yard TD. In the first game since founder and owner Robert "Bob" McNair died on Friday, the Texans (8-3) honored him by wearing decals on the back of their helmets in the shape of a football with white block letters bearing his initials of "RCM." With that reminder on their helmets, they became the first team in NFL history to win eight games in a row after starting 0-3. They lead Indianapolis by two games in the AFC South. The Texans trailed by 10 early before reeling off 27 straight points. Tennessee (5-6) finally scored again on a 48-yard reception by Corey Davis late in the third quarter, but the second TD by Thomas — this one for 10 yards — made it 34-17 with just more than eight minutes left. Marcus Mariota, who missed the second half of last week's game after suffering a stinger, was 22 of 23 for 303 yards and two touchdowns. He completed his first 19 passes before an incompletion with just more than a minute remaining.

NFL


Houston
34


Tennessee
17

Gonzaga leaps into No. 1 spot

By JOHN MARSHALL
AP Basketball Writer

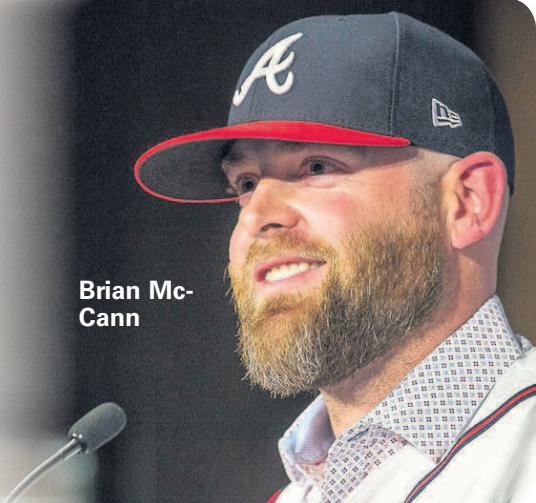
Gonzaga pulled off what some considered impossible, stopping the Duke juggernaut in the Maui Invitational title game without one of its best players. Now the Zags are No. 1 again. Third in last week's poll, Gonzaga leapfrogged No. 2 Kansas to the top spot in The Associated Press Top 25 released Monday. The Zags received 32 first-place votes from a 65-person media panel, edging the Jayhawks by one. No. 3 Duke received one first-place vote despite losing to Gonzaga in Maui and No. 4 Virginia the other one after winning the Battle 4 Atlantis title. No. 5 Nevada has its highest ranking ever after winning the Las Vegas Invitational, with Tennessee, Michigan, Auburn, Michigan State and Kentucky rounding out the top 10. Gonzaga (6-0) is missing do-everything forward Killian Tillie for the first two months of the season because of an ankle injury and was a big underdog heading into the Maui title game last week. Duke (5-1) and its cache of lottery-pick freshmen were an unstoppable force the first four weeks of the season, blowing past then-No. 2 Kentucky in the season opener and winning its first three games in lopsided fashion.

Sports shorts

Braves make free agent splash

ATLANTA (AP) — Brian McCann slipped on the No. 16 jersey he wore for so many years. "It feels right," he said, over and over again. Looking to improve on their first division title in five years, the Atlanta Braves agreed Monday to one-year contracts with McCann and former AL MVP Josh Donaldson — a pair of low-risk moves that give the team a chance to make another postseason run while not hindering the long-term devel-

opment of all those talented young players. Donaldson agreed to a \$23 million deal that matches what the third baseman made during a forgettable 2018 season, a person familiar with the agreement told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal was subject to a successful physical. McCann's \$2 million contract was announced by the Braves, reuniting the team with a catcher who was a seven-time All-Star from 2005-13.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1947 — Howie Dallmar of the Philadelphia Warriors sets an NBA record for the most field goal attempts with none made, 15, in an 81-59 loss to the New York Knicks. 1960 — Trailing 38-7, the Denver Broncos score 31 points to salvage a 38-38 tie with the Buffalo Bills. 1994 — Joe Montana of the Kansas City Chiefs becomes the fifth quarterback to surpass 40,000 passing yards in a 10-9 loss at Seattle.

Contact us at 541-966-0838 or sports@eastoregonian.com