

Bucks survive La Grande Tigers, 7-4

Sixth inning brings it close, but Bucks stay ahead for first home win

By **BRETT KANE**
East Oregonian

Despite a clumsy sixth inning, the Bucks held firm to ensure a 7-4 victory over La Grande for their baseball season's first home win on Thursday.

The Bucks led 5-0 through the first three innings until a slew of wild pitches in the top of the sixth brought the Tigers within one run.

"There are games like this every year where it comes down to one particular inning," said senior catcher Justin Duso. "But it's still early in the season. We'll build on this. I'm not worried — I know we'll improve from here."

Senior Ryan Stahl led off the second inning with a double and was driven in by junior Tanner Sweek's single two at-bats later. Senior Austin Fell would drive Sweek home before the inning was up.

"That was good. It helped us get into that mode," Stahl said of his double. "It helped set the tone for the rest of the game."

Stahl would single to drive Duso home in the third inning. Two more Bucks runs ensued.

The Tigers got their first run of the evening in the top of the fourth as junior Brody Kincaide made it home on a series of wild pitches after walking to first. Senior Bucks pitcher Matt Demianew would walk two more batters and hit another to load the bases, but quickly recouped, catching a shallow fly ball to end the inning and strand the three runners.

"La Grande left a lot of runners on base tonight," Stahl said. "That's what killed them."

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Bucks softball take down Suns in five innings

By **BRETT KANE**
East Oregonian

It didn't take long for the Bucks to bounce back.

The softball team managed just one run in their loss to La Grande earlier this week, but on Thursday evening Pendleton wrapped up a 12-2 victory over their Southridge visitors in five innings.

"This was a much better outing than the last time," said coach Tim Cary. "We were more comfortable with seeing those pitches, and making pitchers throw to us. It was a better approach at the plate."

The Bucks knocked away four runs in the first inning and never looked back. Junior Carissa Cooley hit a two-run double to drive in seniors Kila Soloman and Aspen Garton, and senior Elli Nirschl and freshman Ellie Samford posted an RBI each to round out the inning.

The Suns would go without a run until the fourth inning, where they recorded their only two. The Bucks responded with three runs in both the fourth and fifth innings to enact the 10-run rule and put the game away early.

"We saw a lot of positive things today," Cary said. "Our defense played much better. It's a product of getting outside more and practicing."

Junior Sami Spriet went 2 for 3, posted a two-run home run in the fourth inning, and hit a single.

Soloman was 3 for 4 with two singles, one double, and an RBI. Garton was 2 for 3 with one single, two doubles, and one RBI. Nirschl was 2 for 2 with two singles and a runner driven home.

Meanwhile, the Suns posted just one hit for the day.

The Bucks (2-2) will compete in the Rex Putnam Tournament in Portland starting on Monday. They'll face Central Catholic at 1 p.m.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hermiston senior Madison Wilson, center, leads her heat in the 100-meter hurdles on Thursday at the Bulldog Invite in Hermiston.

Hermiston's sprint relays shine at Bulldog Invite

By **ANNIE FOWLER**
East Oregonian

Hermiston's Garrett Walchli knew he would have to turn on the jets when he got the baton for the anchor leg of the boys 4x100 relay.

Walchli, a junior, took the baton from Ben Wicks and started chasing down Walla Walla's Colby Turner. Walchli caught him with about 40 meters to go, and then crossed the finish line a step ahead of Turner for the win on Thursday at the Bulldog Invite at Kennison Field.

"I was wondering where our boys were at," Walchli said. "I was like third or fourth when I got the baton. I was like, 'We are not going down without a fight.'"

The Bulldogs won in a time of 45.72 seconds, while Walla Walla was second in 45.85. The team knows they still have work to do.

"Now, we just have to brush it up," said DJ Wilson, who ran the second leg.

Walchli also was second in the 100 meters (11.42), just a step behind Walla Walla's Jared McAlvey (11.23).

The Invite, which featured schools from Walla Walla to Heppner, did not see a lot of record times or distances, but for most schools it was just nice to get outdoors after a long winter and waiting for several inches of snow to melt.

There was no drama in the girls



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hermiston runners Thomas Reagan, left, and Garrett Walchli, center, along with Prosser's Paul Hudak race in the 100-meter dash on Thursday at the Bulldog Invite in Hermiston.

4x100 relay, where Hermiston won with a time of 50.13 — more than 4 seconds in front of Umatilla.

While the win was nice, leadoff runner Elsa Torres did not like their time, saying their best time is a few seconds faster.

The Bulldogs did lead from start to finish, with Torres handing off to Madi Wilson, who in turn gave the baton to McKaylee Young, and Young passed it off to Scout Reagan, who crossed the finish line with the next team a country mile behind.

Even with a couple of stumbling handoffs, the Bulldogs were in synch. "We have good chemistry," Wilson said.

Wilson also won the 100 hurdles in a time of 15.44.

"I was the last one out the blocks," said Wilson, who said she slipped a little. "I just ran. The first race is always a little bumpy, but I felt good overall. My goal is that no one will beat me on my track."

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No. 1 Zags roll past Fairleigh Dickinson in NCAAs

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
AP National Writer

SALT LAKE CITY — When it comes to a 16 seed beating a 1, it's still true — anything really can happen in the NCAA Tournament.

Just not on Thursday night. And not against Gonzaga.

One year after dreamers and underdog lovers rejoiced at top-seeded Virginia's first-of-its-kind, first-round loss, the Gonzaga Bulldogs crushed any thought of a repeat with a wire-to-wire 87-49 thumping of Fairleigh Dickinson in the West Region.

"I don't know who in America could've played Gonzaga and beat them tonight," Fairleigh Dickinson coach Greg Herenda said.

Rui Hachimura led the Zags (31-3) with 21 points and eight rebounds, and this game looked every bit as lopsided as most of the 1-vs.-16 contests since 1985, when the bracket was expanded to 64 teams.

Gonzaga led by 10 after the first 4:12, by 20 after 10:25 and by the score of 53-17 at halftime.

By the time Gonzaga turned it over when



AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

Gonzaga forward Rui Hachimura (21) celebrates after Gonzaga's victory against Fairleigh Dickinson during the first half of a first-round game in the NCAA men's college basketball tournament on Thursday in Salt Lake City.

Josh Perkins tried flipping a no-look pass backward to Killian Tillie, coach Mark Few looked barely awake — sitting in his chair, cheek cupped in his hand. The Bulldogs led 70-34.

The game's key questions were

answered early:

— Could the Knights (21-14) muster a repeat of their amazing shooting two nights earlier in a come-from-behind win over Prairie View A&M in the First Four? No. Fairleigh Dickinson shot 30 percent and went 6 for 21 from 3-point range. Its star from the win, Darnell Edge, had trouble getting any looks, let alone good ones. He went 2 for 11 for seven points.

— Would the Bulldogs feel any lingering aftershocks from their unexpectedly ugly loss to Saint Mary's last week in the West Coast Conference final? No. The nation's highest-scoring offense this season could've picked its number in this one. Few started emptying the bench at the 8:30 mark.

"I loved our intensity from the jump," he said.

Gonzaga is the only team to beat Duke and Zion Williamson at full strength this season, helping explain why the Bulldogs are the second favorite, at 5-1 behind the Blue Devils, to win it all. They put to rest any questions about whether they belonged on the 1 line over, say, Michigan State — a debate that picked up a bit of steam after the Saint Mary's loss.