

PENDLETON SOFTBALL

# Cowgirls no match for Garton

Bucks right-hander hurls 10 strikeouts to hold off Crook County

By BRETT KANE  
*East Oregonian*

There wasn't much the Crook County Cowgirls could do with Sauren Garton in the circle.

The Pendleton freshman gave up just one hit and struck out 10 to help Pendleton's softball team knock down a five-inning, 11-1 Intermountain Conference win on Tuesday.

"Sauren threw an excellent game today," said coach Tim Cary. "If you have a good pitcher on the mound, you can win any game."

The Bucks put three runs on the board in the first inning to get things started. Kirah McGlothan and Maria Lillienthal each hit doubles, and Kila Solomon a triple thanks to an error at first base.

The Cowgirls sent two pitchers to face down the Bucks, and neither could keep them under control. Kalyn Martinez allowed nine runs across 2⅔ innings, and Emma Lees gave up two more over 1⅓ innings of relief. Neither collected a single strikeout.

Meanwhile, Garton fanned three consecutive Cowgirl batters in the top of the second.

"I just went up there, got my pitching locked in, and did my thing," Garton said. "(Crook County's) pitching isn't super dominant. We hit the ball well, made adjustments where we needed to, and held them off."

Pendleton brought the bats in the bottom of the third to bury the Cowgirls for good. The Bucks drove in six runs during the inning, powered by two-RBI doubles from Aspen Garton and Sami Spriet, both of which came with two outs on the board.

McGlothan posted another RBI double in the bottom of the fourth, and Aspen Garton scored on Carissa Cooley's walk-off single in the fifth. Crook County's one and only run came from Lees at the top of the fifth, who scored on a single from Olivia Snoke.

It would be the only hit the Cowgirls would manage off of Garton.

"Sauren is growing stronger and finding her confidence," Cary said. "She's able to change



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
**Pendleton pitcher Sauren Garton snags a line drive and prepares to throw the ball home during Tuesday's game against Crook County.**



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
**Kila Solomon, of Pendleton, dives safely to third base as Crook County's Liz Barker attempts to tag during Tuesday's game at Steve Cary Field.**

speeds and still throw strikes, whether it's off her change-up or fastball."

McGlothan went 3-for-3 at bat with two runs and an RBI, and Spriet finished with a 2-for-4 performance, scoring a run and driving three in.

"You have to come out with your best game, no matter the team," Cary said. "In this league, everyone is beating up on each other. Anyone can beat anyone at any given game."

Crook County remains win-

less in league play and will stay the bottom-ranked team in the conference standings. Pendleton (12-6, 5-3 IMC) climbed to No. 3, and will travel to Hood River Valley for a doubleheader on Saturday.

## Baseball

Pendleton was already coming into Tuesday's doubleheader with a disadvantage.

Earlier this season, the Bucks hosted Crook County and were down 9-3 in the third inning before calling the game due to rain. The Cowboys held onto that momentum and finished the game on their turf, defeating the Bucks 12-5, but Pendleton turned around to end the day with a 9-7 victory over the Cowboys.

"You just have to take it one pitch at a time," said coach TJ Haguewood. "That's why baseball is such a challenging sport. We did a good job responding to some of our struggles today."

The Bucks managed just two runs in the remainder of their first game, but it wouldn't be enough to mount a comeback.

The Cowboys scored three runs in the first inning to start game two off with another

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# Bond between Jokic, Murray shows

By PAT GRAHAM  
*Associated Press*

DENVER — Nikola Jokic got right to the point on his flourishing chemistry with teammate Jamal Murray.

"We are playing really good together," the versatile Denver Nuggets big man said. "He's a great basketball player, a great competitive guy and I just love to have him as a teammate."

Jokic and Murray combined for 60 points in a 121-113 win over Portland on Monday in Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinals. That eclipsed the Blazers tandem of CJ McCollum and Damian Lillard, who had 55 points. Game 2 is Wednesday in Denver.

The Murray-to-Jokic, Jokic-to-Murray connection is gaining steam as their pick-and-roll game gave the Blazers fits. It's a contrasting style to the one the Blazers faced in a first-round series with Oklahoma City, when they had to slow Paul George and Russell Westbrook.

Paul Millsap said he's seen just about every defense employed to stop Jokic. He has yet to witness one that completely works.

"He sees how people are playing him and guarding him and he makes the right play every time," Millsap said.



AP Photo/David Zalubowski  
**Denver Nuggets head coach Michael Malone, right, confers with guard Jamal Murray during a break in the action against the Portland Trail Blazers in Game 1 on Monday in Denver. Game 2 is tonight.**

**WEDNESDAY'S GAME**  
**Blazers at Nuggets**  
Game 2, 6 p.m.  
**Need to know:** The Nuggets are 6-5 all-time against Portland in the playoffs. They lead the series 1-0.

At the top of the list for Portland — stop Jokic. He hit 11 of 18 shots and all 12 of his free throws on his way to 37 points.

"You've just got to make things difficult for (Jokic)," Lillard said.

"We've got to be physical. We've also got to make sure that when he's putting up shots, we're keeping him off the glass, because he's one of the best at shooting the ball, following his shot, then the second attempt is usually easier than the first one for him."

Another item on the list — containing Murray. Of the point guard's eight assists, seven were to Jokic. He also had 23 points.

"Just playing my game. If somebody is open, I pass it and if I'm open, I shoot," Murray said. "When everybody is making shots, it makes it a lot easier."

# Dawgs lose playoff positioning with two losses to Richland

Hermiston ends first Mid-Columbia Conference season with 10-6 record

By ANNIE FOWLER  
*East Oregonian*

The Hermiston Bulldogs lost their position in the Mid-Columbia Conference's seeding for the 3A playoffs Tuesday after dropping a pair of games to league-leading Richland at Columbia Playfield.

The Bombers rallied to win the first game 15-5, then took the nightcap 18-3 to remain undefeated on the season at 14-0. The Bombers have won 28 consecutive MCC games dating to last year.

"We needed both wins to get the No. 2 spot, now we have to wait and see what happens," Hermiston coach Kate Greenough said.

The Bulldogs (10-6) are finished with conference play, while Kennewick (9-5) hosts Pasco on Friday. Southridge swept Walla Walla on Tuesday to improve to 10-4, and will host Richland on Friday. Kamiakin is out of the

playoff discussion.

Hermiston overcame a 3-0 deficit in the first game, taking a 4-3 lead in the top of the third inning.

Sydney Stefani led off with a walk, and Sam Atilano reached on an error. A single by Bailee Noland sent Stefani across the plate, while Halle Pennington drew a bases-loaded walk to pull the Bulldogs within 3-2.

Brecella Nash's fielder's choice put another run on the board, and Grace Studer's RBI single gave Hermiston a 4-3 lead.

The Bombers got the run back in the bottom of the inning for a 4-4 game.

Hermiston kept the bats moving in the fourth inning with consecutive singles by Atilano, Ashley Cameron and Noland to load the bases.

A sacrifice fly by Jamelle Almaguer drove in Atilano for a 5-4 lead, but a groundout by Pennington left two runners stranded.

The Bombers broke out the bats in the bottom of the fourth, scoring seven runs on eight hits to take an 11-5 lead.

Richland invoked the 10-run

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