

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Hodgen Distributing untouchable in day one of Baker City tourney

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

BAKER — Hodgen Distributing's first day at the Elkhorn Classic in Baker City was a resounding success.

The Pendleton 17U American Legion baseball team opened play with a 6-2 win over Owyhee Rivercats before ending things with a 12-1 blowout against Hermiston.

"The kids stayed positive and had a good time," coach Travis Zander said. "We didn't hit particularly well, but when we did, it

mattered. Our defense was solid, and our pitchers threw great games."

Tucker Zander started the game on the hill and got eight strikeouts over six innings, only allowing two runs on three hits and two walks along the way. Curtis Simons finished the game and notched one more strikeout to keep the Rivercats down.

The Rivercats held a 1-0 lead for two innings before Simons evened it out again. After Simons drew a walk, Colton Henderson singled to left field, allowing Simons to score and put Pendleton on the board.

The Rivercats put up another run in the top of the fourth to pull ahead once more, but Pendleton's three-run fifth inning ensured that wouldn't happen again.

Kobe Fell initiated the comeback by scoring on a wild pitch, and Tyler Browning did the same one at-bat later. With two outs on the board, Jordan DeGeer was driven home on Ty Beers' single to left field.

"Owyhee was tough," Zander said. "They kept us tight, but we finally got on the board and scored a few runs."

Simons led Pendleton, going 1-for-1 at

the plate with two runs scored.

The following game against Hermiston was just as close for four innings before Pendleton broke it open for good.

The two teams stayed tied at 0-0 until the top of the fourth, when Pendleton drove in four runs.

"It was close for four innings," coach Zander said, "but we were able to pull away. (Hermiston) just kind of ran out of pitching."

Hermiston responded with a run in the

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WIAA, MCC A PERFECT FIT FOR HERMISTON

Bulldogs show promise after first year in Mid-Columbia Conference

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Two years ago it was a dream.

One month ago, Hermiston High School finished its first year in the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association and the Mid-Columbia Conference, with much success.

"Honestly, I think it went better than most people expected," Hermiston athletic director Larry Usher said. "I figured we would run into all kinds of problems and headaches, and that didn't happen. The other ADs had us prepared."

Hermiston first approached the WIAA in January 2017 about a possible move to join the organization.

The school was facing the possibility of being placed in the 6A Mt. Hood Conference for the start of the 2018-19 school year had it remained part of the OSAA. That would have meant an estimated 404-mile round trip to any sporting contest.

For a three-sport athlete, that would have equated to 40 missed days of school because of travel — about five classes per game day.

The OSAA wrote a letter of support for Hermiston to explore the opportunity.

"There were seven criteria that had to be met for this to even be considered," Usher said. "One was having the support from your current organization. This absolutely would not have happened without that."

Hermiston became the first out-of-state school to join the WIAA as a full member on June 5, 2017. Usher still remembers getting the call.

"We traveled to a (WIAA) board meeting for a presentation," Usher recalled. "They had a very long discussion after we left. They voted on it, and we got a call later that evening that they voted to allow us in."

Mike Colbrese, executive director of the WIAA, said the partnership has gone well.

"We have a very good relationship with them," Colbrese said. "It has worked out really well. They always called the office if there was a question or they needed a clarification. Larry won't guess, he will call."

Southridge AD Tim Wood said his initial reaction of the request was that Hermiston should join the MCC.

"It's what's best for the students," Wood said. "Teachers and students were missing classes, and the transportation costs were high. We had their backs."

A penny saved

The move to the WIAA and MCC



Staff photo by E.J. Harris, File

Hermiston's Ryne Andreason shoots the ball guarded by Kennewick's Tyler Pearson in the Bulldogs' 86-75 loss to the Lions on February 15, 2019, in Hermiston.

saved the Hermiston School District tens of thousands of dollars just in one year.

Usher said the final numbers have not yet been tallied, but the extra money was put to good use.

"We don't have our final bill for transportation, but it's fair to say it will be much less than in the past," Usher said. "We were able to redirect funds to add girls slow pitch softball, bowling, and wrestling. It's an opportunity to get more kids involved."

With the addition of Hermiston, the MCC swelled to nine schools, eliminating the need for the Bulldogs to have to fill 10 to 15 nonleague basketball, baseball or softball games.

"A lot of times, we had overnight tournaments or single games in the Portland or Eugene area," Usher said. "Now, we just have a couple of nonleague dates to fill."

Part of the extra money also has gone

to pay coaches who were volunteering their time, or getting a small stipend from the booster club.

"We have the opportunity to add funds to those programs," Usher said. "Some of the coaches were getting paid by the booster club, and now that frees up that money for other projects."

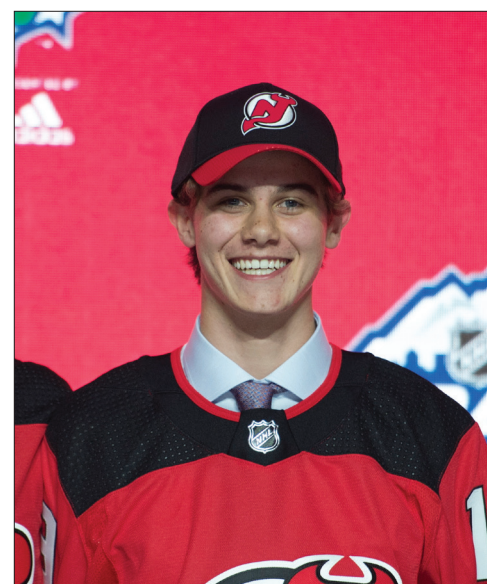
With most of the MCC teams less than an hour away, their fans travel well, which meant increased revenue at the box office.

"I haven't looked at all the data, but we definitely had more fans in the seats," Usher said. "A lot of people said we traveled well."

A whole new world

Hermiston knew a jump to the MCC would come at a cost. The Bulldogs were moving into a highly competitive

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AP Photo/Jonathan Hayward

Jack Hughes, center, poses for photos after being selected by the New Jersey Devils with the first pick in the NHL hockey draft on Friday in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Devils select U.S. center Hughes with 1st pick in NHL draft

By JOHN WAWROW
AP Hockey Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — American center Jack Hughes and Finland's Kaapo Kakko being selected with the first two picks in the NHL draft was hardly a surprise.

The New Jersey Devils opened the draft Friday by making Hughes the eighth American chosen with the No. 1 pick. And the New York Rangers, as expected, selected Kakko, the top-ranked European prospect.

It's the unpredictability that followed that provided the intrigue.

Steve Yzerman began placing his stamp on the Red Wings upon his return to Detroit as general manager. He selected German defenseman Moritz Seider with the sixth pick ahead of a number of players who were ranked much higher by NHL's Central Scouting Bureau.

Two Swedish defensemen were selected among the top 11 players with Philip Broberg chosen by Edmonton, and the Arizona Coyotes giving up a second-round pick to Philadelphia in trading up three spots to select Victor Soderstrom at 11.

And the Florida Panthers, at 13, bucked a recent trend by making American Spencer Knight just the third goalie chosen in the first round over the past seven years.

Hughes was the top-ranked North American skater and became the first American to go first since 2016, when the Toronto Maple Leafs chose Auston Matthews.

From Orlando, Florida, the 5-foot-10, 170-pound play-making center was the top-ranked North American prospect. He had 74 goals and 154 assists to set the USA Hockey National Team Development Program's two-year record with 228 points in 110 games.

"Obviously, Kaapo Kakko had a great year ... but I was pretty confident and pretty calm, cool collected through the whole process," said Hughes, who had a lengthy dinner with Devils GM Ray Shero during the pre-draft combine in Buffalo this month. "I've said this like eight times already, but I'm pumped to be a Devil and I'm so excited."

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