

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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A8

Hermiston's Ramirez taking his game to California

Star three-sport athlete will play baseball at Santa Barbara City College

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

Jordan Ramirez was a standout football, basketball and baseball player at Hermiston High School, but the recent graduate put his focus on baseball his junior year

in hopes of getting a chance to play at the college level.

That day has come.

Ramirez signed to play at Santa Barbara City College three weeks ago after making a visit to the California school.

"I went for a visit and it was nice," Ramirez said. "The coach (Jeff Walker) was really cool. I



Ramirez

had interest from Blue Mountain, and no offense, but this is a better experience."

Led by pitcher Ian Churchill, the Vaqueros finished 24-15 last year, including a 13-7 record in the Western State Conference North. They have reached the playoffs nine consecutive years.

Ramirez is coming off his senior year, where he was a first-team all-Mid-Columbia Conference outfielder. He hit .396 and

struck out just four times in 48 at-bats.

"Jordan deserves to go play (at the college level)," Hermiston coach Kevin Moore said. "It also lets people in the Hermiston community know that a kid can go play college baseball. It makes our program look good."

The 5-foot-11, 170-pound Ramirez, who was a receiver in football and a guard on the basketball team, said it will be good for

him to focus on just one sport.

"I can't wait to get down there and show my skills," he said. "Since my junior year, I chose baseball to be my main priority. I had a good season and I'm looking forward to it."

The Bulldogs struggled in their first year in the MCC, but Ramirez said the quality of pitching he faced will help him at the

See California, Page A9

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL



AP Photo/Chris O'Meara

Seattle Mariners pitcher Tommy Milone delivers to the Tampa Bay Rays during the second inning of a baseball game Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2019, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Murphy homers again in Mariners' 7-4 win over Rays

By DICK SCANLON
Associated Press

Tom Murphy is on a power surge unprecedented for a Seattle catcher, and it is coming at a bad time for the Tampa Bay Rays.

Murphy hit a tiebreaking homer, his sixth in the last four games, in the sixth inning Tuesday night to lift the Mariners to a 7-4 win over the Rays.

Murphy's 16th homer of the season came off Jalen Beeks (5-3) after a walk to Kyle Seager. Murphy became the first Mariners catcher to homer in four straight games. He said it is a matter of "staying within the strike zone," like he did for two months in Triple-A back in 2016.

"I can see it like it was yesterday," Murphy said. "It was the best I've ever hit in my life, that's for sure. ... I don't have the numbers off the top of my head, but it feels like everything I hit was hard hit."

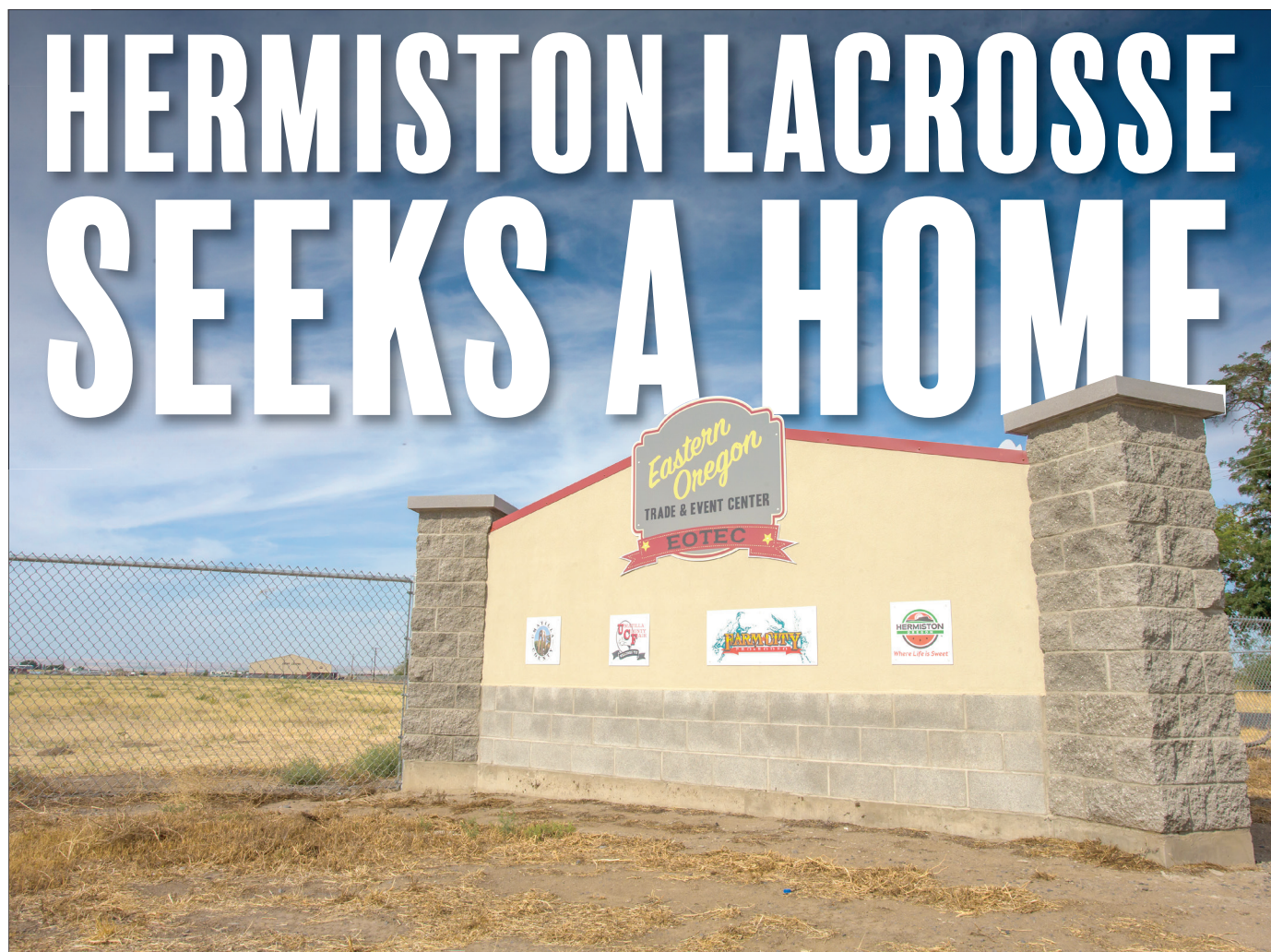
That's the same way it looks now to Seattle manager Scott Servais while watching Murphy and Seager, who also homered.

"Those guys are really locked in right now, and it's fun to watch," Servais said.

Tommy Milone (3-7) got the win after giving up four runs in five innings of relief, helping Seattle to its sixth victory in eight games. Matt Magill pitched the ninth for his second save in two tries.

The Rays, who have dropped to 33-31 at home by losing three of five games to last-place teams on their current home-stand, began the day one game ahead of Oakland for the AL's second wild card.

See Baseball, Page A9



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Hermiston Lacrosse Association is eyeing a 20-acre section of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center property for a new lacrosse field.

Hermiston Lacrosse Association eyeing EOTEC grounds for new field

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Most sports in Hermiston have their place. Soccer has Butte Park. Baseball has the Field of Dreams. But the lacrosse program has long been in search of a permanent home.

Hermiston's lacrosse club, which consists of age groups from kindergarten through high school, has grown from 40 members to over 150 in just four years. They practice at Sandstone Middle School, and play home games and tournaments at elementary and middle schools all across town. As the program continues to grow, so does the need for its own field.

"It goes back to a problem that all of our youth sports are having," former Hermiston Lacrosse Association President Scott Purswell said. "No one has enough grass. We're all fighting for it. It just doesn't work. We're beggars. We get the scraps. We talked about buying grounds, and someone asked, 'Why not EOTEC?'"

The lacrosse team plays most of its away games in the Tri-Cities, Spokane, and Yakima, but its home field is always changing.

Purswell said EOTEC has the kind of

clean, buildable grounds that a lacrosse field would need. The program has been serious about its search for a location for the past two years, and the EOTEC board took an interest.

"EOTEC is a possible long-term solution," Hermiston Parks and Recreation Director Larry Fetter said. "(The lacrosse program) has had some very noticeable growth over the years, and it looks like its popularity will only grow. They need a home."

Hermiston's AYSO soccer teams went through the same dilemma over 30 years ago, before Butte Park became its home for local matches.

"Lacrosse doesn't have that benefit right now," Fetter said. "They have to hunt for any scrap turf they can. They're going to be around for a long time."

Of the 100 acres on the EOTEC property, the lacrosse program is eyeing 20 of it to construct their proposed field, which would include fresh turf, lights, and a sprinkler system. Once built, they hope to host all local practices, games, and tournaments at the location.

The program has been working with the city of Hermiston, EOTEC, and EOTEC's private management company VenuWorks to set things in motion, but it's a process that has

taken longer than intended.

"We had hoped to start last year after the (Umatilla County Fair) ended. That's when we wanted to start the earth work," Purswell said. "It takes four months to get the grounds cleaned and sprinklers set up."

The lacrosse team's fall season is played up in the Tri-Cities, but its spring schedule, which kicks off at the end of February, is played locally. Purswell said the goal is to make even more progress before then.

"I hope it would be soon," he said of construction. "Our season is in the spring — we need to get the grass established."

The team is funded entirely by donations. Purswell noted that it is only able to cover expenses for pipes and sprinklers alone. Their dream, he said, is to install their own lighting system, as well.

"We're looking for help to build this project," he said. "(Lacrosse) has elements of soccer, hockey and football. There are kids who were meant for baseball. They'll play it no matter what. But there's a lot of kids just sitting inside. We're seeing growth year after year. They love lacrosse. We're running out of room for them. We want to get the kids active."

SPORTS SHORTS

Nike signs merchandising agreement with NYC

NEW YORK (AP) — Sneaker giant Nike will sell New York City-branded merchandise under a two-year licensing agreement.

The deal reached last week will allow Beaverton-based Nike to sell apparel with the logos of the NYPD or other iconic city institutions.

A Nike spokeswoman said the deal is the company's first agreement for a merchandise license with a city in North America.

The agreement gives 5% of Nike's revenue on the branded merchandise to NYC & Company, New York City's tourism bureau.

Nike has come under criti-

cism for its labor practices in the past. But Jane Meyer, a spokeswoman for Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio, said Nike has agreed to the ethical standards typical in the city's licensing contracts.

The branding deal was first reported on the news site *The City*.



AP Photo, File

Nike expansion could bode well for U.S. manufacturing.