

Hermiston boys take down La Grande in season opener

By RONALD BOND
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — The Hermiston Bulldogs used balanced scoring and crisp passing — an emphasis of head coach Drew Preuninger — to pick up a win in their season opener. Jaime Ramirez led four players in scoring with 12 points, and the Bulldogs never trailed in defeating the La Grande Tigers on the road Wednesday, 60-44.

“That’s one thing we’ve been

really working on is trying to pass more,” Preuninger said. “I know in the past we usually dribble-drive. I’m trying to get more passing, cutting (and) screening away.”

Hermiston’s perimeter passing and kickouts led to four first-half 3-pointers as the Bulldogs built a 29-19 halftime lead, and seven 3s on the night. But in the second half it was interior passing that helped set up baskets in the paint and helped Hermiston eventually pull away, and it’s something the coach will

continue to emphasize.

“I would love to see them get it inside more, though,” Peuninger said. “That’s one thing at halftime I was saying (to the team). I know we don’t have height, but if we get it inside it opens up the outside. ... They did it a couple more times (in the second half), which I was happy about.”

Ramirez, Ivan Rangel and Trent Pitney were among those who got into the paint to score for the Bulldogs in the second half. Two layups

by Ramirez, a drive by Sergio Madrigal and two field goals by Pitney were all part of a 17-5 run that spanned the third and fourth quarters. The run pushed a seven-point Hermiston lead to 58-39 midway through the fourth quarter — the largest lead of the game.

Ramirez was joined in double figures by Rangel and AJ Ramos, both of whom scored 11 points, and by Jaiden Ruloph, who added 10, including a pair of third-quarter 3s to help stem a La Grand run.

As a team, Hermiston shot 20-for-54 and had 11 assists. The Bulldogs also had a 34-29 rebounding edge, with Rangel leading the way with 10 boards.

“You gotta give credit to Hermiston,” La Grande head coach Mark Carollo said. “They played extremely hard tonight. They came out and really wanted the victory, and I would say we were a little bit passive.”

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GOLDEN EAGLES FALL SHORT TO BULLDOGS

Nixyaawii drops season opener to 3A Nyssa Bulldogs in overtime

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

MISSION — The Nixyaawii Golden Eagles might be the defending 1A boys basketball state champions, but it took a couple of quarters to shake the offseason cobwebs.

The Golden Eagles dropped their lead in the first quarter on Wednesday as the visiting 3A Nyssa Bulldogs took control for nearly three quarters before freshman forward Shane Rivera grabbed a last-second offensive rebound to tie the game and send it into overtime. But the Bulldogs proved too quick to keep up with, and handed Nixyaawii a 53-51 non-league loss to open the season.

“We’re pretty rusty,” Nixyaawii head coach Shane Rivera said. “We had too many turnovers and missed free throws. All of those factor into a close loss.”

The Bulldogs made two 3-pointer attempts to open the game, but it was Nixyaawii who got on the board first. Tyasin Burns and Magi Moses combined for five early points before the Bulldogs briefly took over with a 6-5 lead. Nixyaawii senior forward Mick Schimmel assisted Moses in a basket that would reclaim the game for the Golden Eagles, but the Bulldogs fired back with six unanswered points for a 14-7 lead at the buzzer.

“Nyssa is a great team,” coach Rivera said. “We don’t look at them as a 3A school. They’re a good team. I like to think my guys’ chances are good against most teams, especially in Eastern Oregon. It’s the first game of the season. There’s always mistakes to be expected.”

Schimmel, Rivera, and junior wing Moses Moses strung together an eight-point



Shane Rivera, of Nixyaawii, battles for the ball with Nyssa’s Pedro Chavez during Wednesday’s non-conference game.

run midway through the following quarter for a 19-17 game, but Nyssa senior Pedro Chavez sunk a shot that gave the Bulldogs a little more breathing room. Moses Moses knocked down a bucket with just six seconds left in the half as the Golden Eagles took a 23-19 deficit into the locker room.

“Not gonna lie, I didn’t expect ‘em to come out and run like that,” Moses Moses said of

Nyssa. “They can run.”

Magi Moses, Burns, and Rivera put together a six-point run in quarter three that pulled Nixyaawii within two points of a tied game once again. A trey from Nyssa senior Kelvin Pascacio helped the Bulldogs to a 10-point advantage in the fourth, but Moses Moses netted five straight points, including a 3, that forced a Nyssa timeout.

With just 31 seconds left in

regular play, Schimmel scored a basket that brought Nixyaawii within one point at 45-44. Nyssa junior Leonardo Barba’s free throw kept the Bulldogs out front — but only for a few seconds longer.

With just three seconds before the buzzer, Moses Moses caught the offensive rebound and scored the shot that would

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Burns garners MVP honors in SD3

Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii running back rolled up 2,382 yards and 17 touchdowns

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PILOT ROCK — Pilot Rock raked in the offensive honors from the Special District 3 West coaches, sweeping the top quarterback, running back and receiver spots.

The Rockets’ Tyasin Burns was named Player of the Year. He was a first team running back and linebacker, a second-team punter and honorable mention kicker.

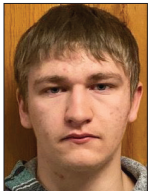
Pilot Rock won the Special District 3 West title with a 5-0 league record, including its first-ever win over Dufur, 50-30. The Rockets finished the season 6-3 as injuries hit the team down the stretch.

Burns, a junior, ran for 2,382 yards and 17 touchdowns. He also had 821 receiving yards with six touchdowns, threw for four touchdowns, and had two more on returns. Defensively, he had 59 solo tackles, 37 assists, three interceptions and four quarterback sacks.

Junior Tanner Corwin earned



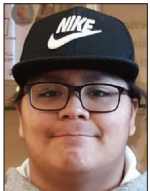
Burns



Corwin



Goad



Sigo



Thornton



Weinke

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Kispert leads No. 9 Gonzaga over Texas Southern

By NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Joel Ayayi found out Wednesday morning he would be in No. 9 Gonzaga’s starting lineup, replacing Admon Gilder. After two years of coming off the bench, he wanted to make an impression.

“I’ve got to be aggressive,” the sophomore from France said. “It’s been two years. Obviously, it’s been hard.”

Ayayi had 16 points, nine rebounds and five assists to help Gonzaga beat Texas Southern 101-62.

Seven Zags scored in double

figures, led by Corey Kispert’s 17 points, as Gonzaga (9-1) rebounded from a loss to Michigan in the Battle 4 Atlantis title game.

The Zags have 28 consecutive home wins, second-longest streak in the nation after Tennessee’s 31.

Filip Petrusev, who had 12 points and six rebounds, said Gonzaga wanted to come out strong after losing to Michigan.

“We wanted to come back from the loss,” Petrusev said. “That was our first loss since last year.”

Petrusev said Ayayi is “getting better and better. He’s doing things the team needs him to do.”

Tyrik Armstrong scored 15 points for Texas Southern (2-6),

which is playing a difficult non-conference schedule. Yahuza Ross added nine.

Gonzaga made 12 of its first 15 shots to jump to a 25-15 lead.

Texas Southern scored three straight baskets to get to 25-21.

But Gonzaga replied with a 28-9 run to push its lead to 53-30 at halftime.

Gonzaga shot 61% in the first half, while the Tigers shot just 37.8% and made just one of 11 from 3-point range.

Gonzaga scored the first nine points of the second half for a 62-30 lead.

Kispert’s 3-pointer gave Gonzaga an 82-46 lead with just under

eight minutes left in the game.

Now Gonzaga turns its attention to a difficult three-game run that begins Saturday at No. 22 Washington.

“It’s going to be a tough one,” Petrusev said. “They play a lot of zone.”

Petrusev said he also loved the atmosphere at Washington. “It gets me fired up,” he said.

While the Zags are nursing numerous minor injuries, the relatively easy victory over Texas Southern will help the team as it plays Washington, No. 12 Arizona and No. 7 North Carolina in the next two weeks, Petrusev said. He noted the Zags were drained by an over-

time victory over Oregon the day before they played Michigan

Ayayi also said the easy win will help the Zags as they prepare for the tough stretch.

“It’s important because we do not play a lot of guys,” he said.

Texas Southern coach Johnny Jones said playing the Zags will help his team going forward.

“We got beat tonight, but we’ll bounce back and learn from it,” Jones said. “Games like this make us better.”

“We have to do a better job of defending in the paint and rebounding the basketball,” Jones said, after his team was outrebounded 51-32 and outscored 68-32 in the paint.