

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

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PENDLETON AT FULL STRENGTH GOING UP AGAINST THE DALLES

Two-way lineman Griffin returns to anchor lines

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It's hard to say one player can make a difference, but Pendleton coach Erik Davis is happy to have two-way lineman Jacob Griffin back on the field this week when The Dalles rolls into town Thursday, Sept. 30, for a Special District 1 game.

"I think we will be back to full tilt," Davis said. "We will get Jacob back. He's one of our best interior linemen. That will be a great addition to our offensive and defensive lines. Kyle (Liscom) and Payton (Lambert) got banged up last week, but they will be ready by Thursday."

Pendleton (3-1 overall) is back at the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds after playing its first two home games at the high school.

"They have rolled it and done their best to get it ready," Davis said of the facility that hosted the Pendleton Round-Up two weeks ago. "I'm going to go down to make sure it's safe. Their maintenance crew does a good job of getting it ready. We will probably practice there Wednesday and let our special teams players kick off the surface and let the receivers run some routes."

The Bucks are 2-0 in league after a big 35-21 come-from-behind win over Hood River last week.

"That was a big win for us," Davis said. "In our four games, we have had two character building wins. The win at Southridge, stopping the 2-point conversion to win the game, and the comeback last week. I have coached here for 10 years, they don't give up. That's a huge point of interest. This last win was a good launching pad for the push



Pendleton's Collin Primus throws out a pass for the Bucks during a 47-6 win Sept. 16, 2021, over the Putnam Kingsmen at Pendleton High School.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

to the end of the season. I am trying to build a winning culture where we are never out of a game."

This week, the Bucks will face a Riverhawks team that absorbed two big losses before beating La Salle Prep 76-44 last week.

"They have a new coach and a pretty good roster," Davis said. "We always focus on getting better each week.

We have to go out and execute to win. Our kids are working hard. Our goal is still intact to win a conference title."

The Dalles has a speedy player in Jaxon Pullen, who sees time at quarterback, receiver and on defense.

"He is a good track athlete and one of the fastest kids in the state," Davis said. "We always have to know where he is. They always seem to have

big linemen too."

The Bucks have prided themselves on having a solid run game this season, mixed in with timely pass plays. The results have been positive.

"Our kids have taken the challenge to get 200-300 yards a game," Davis said. "You add Jacob back in the mix and that helps. We are a contender and a respected team in the state. That's all I can ask for."



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Weston-McEwen's Levie Phillips (18) attempts to break free from a pack of Stanfield defenders Friday, Sept. 24, 2021, in Stanfield during the TigerScots' 12-7 win over the Tigers. Undefeated Weston-McEwen next hosts the undefeated Heppner Mustangs on Oct. 1.

Heppner heads to W-M for BMC showdown

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

ATHENA — Athena will be the place to be Friday, Oct. 1.

Not too sure that phrase is thrown around very often, but it's not every day that undefeated Weston-McEwen hosts undefeated Heppner in a Blue Mountain Conference football game.

"They looked like they would be in this position," Heppner coach Greg Grant said. "I'm impressed with what they do. They have good seniors, some who have started since their freshman year. I'm surprised we are undefeated. It will be a good night of high school football."

TigerScots coach Kenzie Hansell agrees.

"We are excited," he said.

"What an exciting atmosphere it will be in Athena with two undefeated teams. The support we have at home and on the road is outstanding. Heppner is very well coached and they are very disciplined in what they do."

Both teams are undefeated going into the game

The Mustangs (4-0) are coming off a come-from-behind 34-28 win over then top-ranked Kennedy. The Mustangs now have taken over the No. 1 spot in the Oregon School Activities Association rankings.

"I think they realized if they dug down and tried hard that good things can happen," Grant said of the Kennedy game. "To their credit, their effort and the spirit they played with clear to the end is what you want to see."

The Mustangs come into Friday's game without two-way lineman Cody Fletcher (knee), but they get back lineman Jake Lentz, who did not play last week.

Offensively, the Mustangs were on fire last week. Sophomore quarterback Landon Mitchell threw for 225 yards and four touchdowns, while the run game chewed up 118 yards.

"Our offense adapts to the other teams' defense," Grant said. "Landon did a really nice job. That's good to see, we need balance. Offensively, we were a little more consistent than we have been."

Hansell knows his team has a tough test come Friday, but you don't get to be 3-0 without putting in the work.

"We continue to get better every week, that is our program's goal," Hansell said. "We are going into our fifth week. We are excited about being healthy and coming off a big win at Stanfield. I don't know if there is another place I want to be than Weston-McEwen coaching the TigerScots against the Heppner Mustangs."

W-M gets a full day's work out of senior quarterback Blane Peal every week, and that has resulted in the TigerScots outscoring opponents 91-13.

"He is an all-round good athlete whether it's baseball, basketball or football," Hansell said. "He is so coachable. One thing about him is he and the other seniors know the system and what we do. There is some comfort in that. We can change things up on the fly. It's nice having that ability."

Also on Friday, Ione/Arlington is at Enterprise, Pilot Rock is at Lyle/Wishram, Irrigon is at Umatilla, Grant Union is at Riverside, and Mitchell/Spray/Wheeler is at Echo.

Dawgs look to pick up first win against Walla Walla

Hermiston is 0-4 to start the season

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Hermiston's 0-4 record is something the Bulldogs are not used to seeing.

They are looking to add a win to their record Friday, Oct. 1, when they travel to take on Walla Walla in a Mid-Columbia Conference game.

"Some of our younger guys are not used to losing or working that hard," Hermiston coach Davis Faaeteete said. "No one likes to lose, or work hard and not win. We had kids quit after the first two weeks. It's a character flaw in kids. At the end of the day, the core group of guys, which is about 70, is fun to be around, and they work hard. Kids can see adversity in two different ways



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File

Hermiston receiver Marcus Winebarger tries to evade a Richland defender on Friday, Sept. 24, 2021, at Kennison Field. The Bulldogs fell to the Bombers 48-0.

— fight through the obstacles or let it hold them back."

The Bulldogs (0-4 overall, 0-3 MCC) are coming off a 48-0 loss to Richland. They

were missing starting quarterback Chase Elliott (medical issue) last week, but he is back and ready to go.

"It's an opportunity for us

to go down the road and focus on the little things," Faaeteete said. "Walla Walla has a good staff who will get them ready for our game this week."

The Blue Devils (1-3, 1-3) are coming off a 35-0 loss to Kamiakin. Their lone win is a 55-0 shellacking of Hanford on Sept. 17.

"We are looking at working on timing and execution," Faaeteete said. "We are playing a lot of sophomores. We got to work on a few things today (Tuesday), special teams and such."

Elliott is one of the Bulldogs' best weapons out of the backfield. His return is key to Hermiston getting its offense churning.

"We try to establish the run game," Faaeteete said, "and once we get the offensive line going and running backs going, it opens up our play action pass game that we like to run."

ON THE SLATE

Thursday, Sept. 30

Prep football

The Dalles at Pendleton, 7 p.m.

Prep volleyball

Heppner at Stanfield, 5 p.m.

Pendleton at Ridgeview, 6:30 p.m.

Richland at Hermiston, 7 p.m.

Enterprise at Weston-McEwen, 5 p.m.

Pilot Rock at Union, 6 p.m.

McLoughlin at Baker, 6:30 p.m.

Prep girls soccer

Hermiston at Chiawana, 7 p.m.

Pendleton at Crook County, 4:30 p.m.

Four Rivers at Stanfield/Echo, 4 p.m.

Irrigon at Riverside, 4 p.m.

Prep boys soccer

Crook County at Pendleton, 4:30 p.m.

Irrigon at Riverside, 6 p.m.

Prep slowpitch softball

Chiawana at Hermiston (2), 4 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 1

Prep football

Hermiston at Walla Walla, 7 p.m.

Heppner at Weston-McEwen, 7 p.m.

Ione/Arlington at Enterprise, 7 p.m.

Pilot Rock at Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat, 7 p.m.

Irrigon at Umatilla, 7 p.m.

Grant Union at Riverside, 7 p.m.

Mitchell/Spray/Wheeler at Echo, 7 p.m.

Prep volleyball

Irrigon at Burns, 5 p.m.

Riverside at Burns, 1 p.m.

Umatilla at Vale, noon

Umatilla at Nyssa, 5 p.m.

Mitchell/Spray at Echo, 5 p.m.

Prep girls soccer

Nyssa at Umatilla, 2 p.m.

Prep boys soccer

Nyssa at Umatilla, 4 p.m.

Prep cross-country

McLoughlin at Baker Invite, 4 p.m.

College volleyball

Evergreen State at Eastern Oregon,

7 p.m.

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