



Hermiston Little League/Contributed Photo

The Hermiston 10-12 Little League softball team presents watermelons to the Idaho players before their first game July 23, 2022, at the Northwest Regional Tournament in San Bernardino, California.

Softball:

Continued from Page B1

Lillian Rood struck out all nine batters she faced in the opener against Idaho — a game that lasted just three innings.

Kylie Virgil hit a triple and drove in five runs, while Lexi Sinor went 2-for-2 with four RBIs. Lillian Rood threw a no-hitter, striking out nine and walking two.

Hermiston had seven hits on the day, and took advantage of 13 walks.

When Hermiston exchanged gifts with Idaho before their game, it wasn't just the standard team pin. The players also handed their opponents watermelons from Pollock Farms in Hermiston.

"We decided to do watermelons," Rood said. "It's the first time any team has

brought watermelons to regionals."

Against Alaska, Lillian Rood threw a no-hitter and Virgil drove in three runs as Hermiston invoked the 10-run rule in the fourth inning.

"Us coaches, we give them the tools to perform, they have to do it," Rood said. "We are there to help them succeed. They have to take it upon themselves to do the work. The girls have been very humble and have been hanging out with some of the other girls."

Hermiston won the Oregon state tournament July 10 to advance to regionals.

It's the first time the Hermiston 10-12 softball team has advanced to regionals since 1993, when it placed third.

The regional champion advances to the Little League World Series in Greenville, North Carolina.



C.B. Lovercheck/Contributed photo

Hermiston goalie Lindsey Pasena-Littlesky, left, and Pendleton's Reilly and Kelsey Lovercheck helped the Three Rivers Black girls soccer team to third place July 23, 2022, at the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championship in Orlando.

Soccer:

Continued from Page B1

The Tri-City based team won the Washington state and Far West Regional titles to advance to nationals.

"The biggest thing we had was heart and character," Quintero said. "A lot of these wins, we willed ourselves to get a result. Good teams find ways to win and heroes to get it done."

At nationals, Three Rivers outscored their Pool D opponents 10-2 in winning all three games.

"To go 3-0 in group play was surprising," Quintero said. "The first game was tough, but we found our

groove. It was great to see the girls flip the switch in the second half of the second game and go from 0-1 to winning 5-1."

Allowing just two goals was a combined effort of the defense of Violet Duran, Kaylie Pearson, Madi Joyner, Meredith Winiarski, Emma Haertling and Maya Wunschel, and goalkeepers Pasena-Littlesky and Danika Galbraith.

"We had about six different gals who played in our back four," Quintero said. "Violet Duran was the only girl who played every minute. She was a physical presence. Our goalkeepers were very good. In the semifinals, two of those goals, no one was going to

stop. They did really well."

In its first pool-play game Tuesday, July 19, Three Rivers beat South Mississippi 2-1, getting goals from Haertling and Kate Hollenberg. Pasena-Littlesky played the second half of the game in goal.

Three Rivers continued its winning ways Wednesday with a 5-1 win over Strikers of Fox Valley, Illinois.

Three Rivers scored five consecutive goals after Illinois got out to a 1-0 lead.

Claire Potter and Haertling scored two goals each for Three Rivers, while Ava Suarez scored the final goal off an assist by Reilly Lovercheck.

Pasena-Littlesky split time in goal with Galbraith.

To reach the semifinals, Three Rivers beat Total Futbol Academy of Ohio 3-0 on Thursday to win Pool D.

Three Rivers got first-half goals from Hollenberg and Kelsey Fulton. Kelsey Lovercheck added a goal in the second half.

Pasena-Littlesky and Galbraith shared time in goal, getting good help from their defense.

"The girls really savored it at the end," Quintero said of the tournament. "They were hugging, crying and taking photos. I think that's why they got there. They enjoyed each other's company. I've never had a team stay that long together after a loss."

Ruiz:

Continued from Page B1

A 2014 graduate of McLoughlin High School, Ruiz also played sports, notably volleyball, and now she will take the reins of the program that had been in the capable hands of Lucy Deal for several years.

"I was super excited when the opportunity came available," Ruiz said. "I love the sport and it would be nice to give back to the program."

Ruiz, 27, was a defensive specialist during her playing days with the Pioneers, and also was a right-side hitter.

"I played back row because I was on the shorter side," Ruiz said. "We never seem to have much height. I don't know if it is something in the area. I hope we get some tall girls coming up."

Ruiz has been holding open gym for the players during the summer, and junior varsity coach Megann Erni has been running a weight lifting session in the morning.

"We have had a fairly big group of younger girls," Ruiz said. "There are about 15 girls or more coming out. I think we will have more later on because some of them work. We have maybe four seniors. For open gyms, it's more of a young underclassman group. We had camps for grade school and middle school, and then high school."

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— Cassidy Ruiz, McLoughlin High School volleyball coach

The Pioneers will compete in the 3A Eastern Oregon League this fall, dropping down from the 4A Great Oregon League.

Competition will be stiff with Vale, Nyssa and Burns, but their travel will ease up with trips to Riverside and Umatilla.

"We will see some new schools, for sure," Ruiz said. "There will be some fun road trips. We'll see what we've got."

During the day, Ruiz works for the City of Milton-Freewater as an assistant planner.

"I wear many hats," she said. "For the planning department, we do land use zoning and I also assist the fire chief for the internal portion — aka paper work — and make sure things run smoothly."



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