

Bulldogs Grind Out The Yards

■ This year's team has a big front line and the league's top-passing quarterback.



Senior Tailback Bryan Fendall

By Ron Karten

For Bulldog Head Football Coach Bruce Grambo, winning isn't everything.

"I want people to be excellent at their job, but I also want them to have fun," he said midway through the season. "I coach it as a game. That's the strength of my philosophy."

Still, the Amity game last week loomed pretty large for him and the rest of the Willamina Bulldogs. Having dropped the team's first league match to Santiam Christian, which is still undefeated, and with only undefeated Dayton and third place holder, Amity, still to play to win a playoff berth, Grambo was busy psyching the kids up for the game.

"I'm having the kids playing just as well as they can, and if they do, we'll be in the playoffs," he said.

And he has a lot of talent to work with this year.

Junior Quarterback Zack Burdon has the best passing stats in the league.

The front four linemen also are pretty big additions to the team: Senior Darren Risseeuw weighs in at 345 pounds; Senior Travis Schloeder started the season at 255 pounds but he had slipped down to 240 by mid-season; Junior Justin Boone can hold back anything up to and probably including a Florida hurricane at 360 pounds; and Tribal member and senior Jeremy Trammell tips the scale at 265 pounds; or as Grambo said: "They're all good-sized kids."

The team has been averaging 40 points a game, "mainly due to senior running back Bryan Fendall," said the coach. "If we give him a little crack at the line, he's gone. He's a true game-breaker. A great student as well."

Fendall ran for 322 yards in the team's first game against Heppner, for 156 yards against Santiam Christian and 265 yards against



Photos by Brent Merrill

Sweet Catch — Willamina Senior Tailback Bryan Fendall makes a sweet catch of a Zack Burdon pass down the sideline for the Bulldogs as they defeated the Gaston Greyhounds 49-14 in Willamina. Fendall is having another great season, but suffered a knee injury the following week against Amity.

Gaston.

Senior running back Leo Ayala has averaged more than 100 yards a game, thanks in part to a Fendall injury that put Ayala in the runner's seat for awhile.



Touchdown Toss — Junior Quarterback Zack Burdon tosses a touchdown pass to Senior Wide Receiver Stephen Price during the Gaston Game. The Bulldogs are 3-2 overall and 1-2 in League as we go to press. Willamina plays traditional rival Sheridan on Friday, October 15th in Sheridan.

Ayala went for 206 yards his first night out in the September game against Harrisburg when Fendall was injured, then for 98 against Heppner and 112 yards against Gaston.

Grambo points to senior middle linebacker and offensive lineman Denny Duram, a four-year starter. "He's a solid rock. He

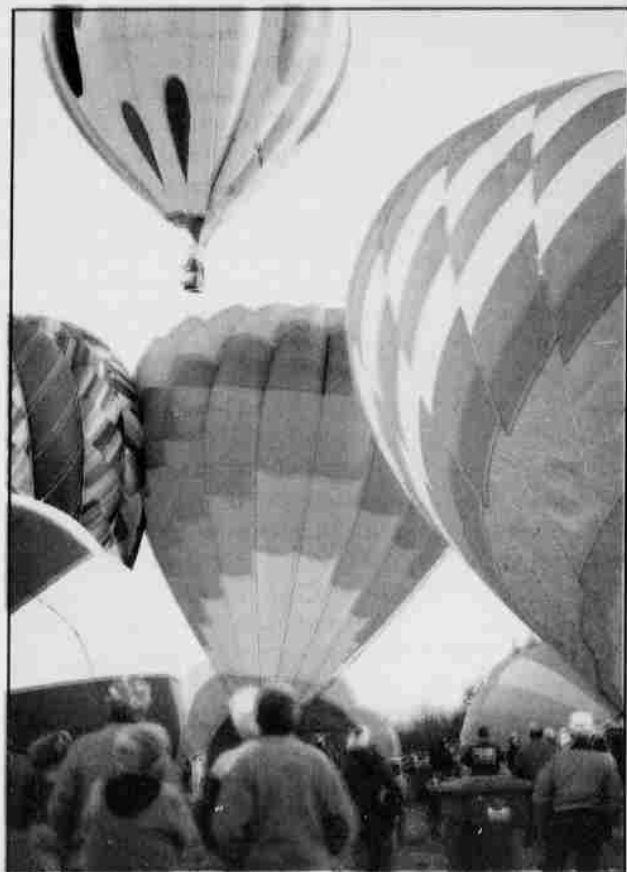
does things real well."

Seniors Koby Bryant and Stephen Price are the team's outstanding receivers, said Grambo. "They're picking up and doing better all the time."

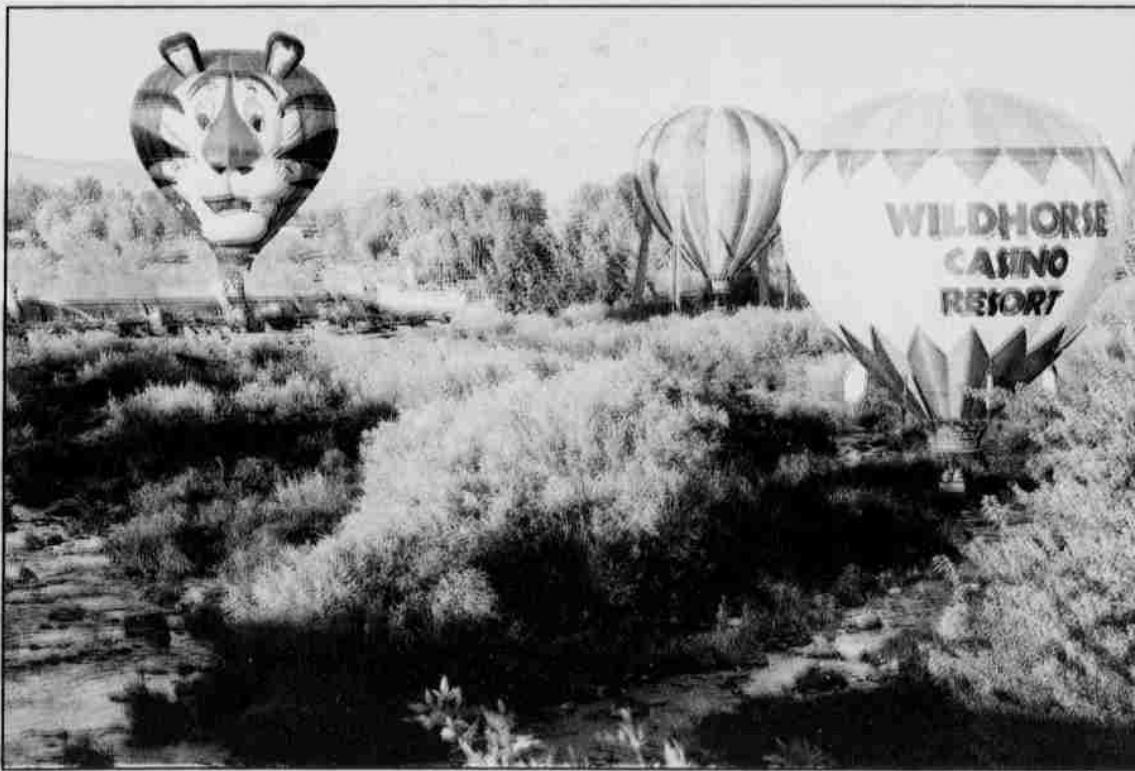
But it was not to be against Amity last week. A reinjured Bryan Fendall, a wet field and nine turnovers led the Bulldogs to a 48-6 defeat.

Grambo came to Willamina last year, capping a 48-year coaching career. "I just love working with young kids," he said. "Keeping up with young people is a tough job but I like bridging that gap."

He has coached and taught at high schools throughout the Northwest and for nine years he took on a range of coaching jobs, including Head Football Coach and Athletic Director at Whitworth College in Spokane. ■



Photos by Brent Merrill



Grrrrreat Balloon Rally — Among the balloons at the 15th Annual Great Prosser Balloon Rally in Prosser, Washington on Saturday, September 25 were the "Tony the Tiger" balloon and the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Reservation's "Wildhorse Casino" balloon.