## FOOTBALL from page 1B

note with a 13-second moment of silence to honor the members of the U.S. Armed Forces who were killed during the U.S.-led evacuation mission at the Kabul airport in Afghanistan. Thirteen seats in the front row of the south bleachers were left empty as a memorial to the sacrifice made by these men and women.

Siuslaw sophomore Jane Lacouture performed the National Anthem, accompanied by the stars and stripes encircling Hans Peterson Memorial Field to memorialize the 20 years since the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Kiwanis Club of Florence worked with the football team to install the flags for the first home game of the year.

The game began with visitors from North Valley, a 4A school in Grants Pass, traveling with a small, but boisterous, group of loyal fans who spread out in the visitor's bleachers on the north side of the field.

Their enthusiasm was quickly dampened when senior Beau Erickson hit Braydon Thornton with a 10-yard touchdown pass to open the scoring, just 1:32 into the game. After a missed extra point, the Vikings led 6-0.

Following the score, Siuslaw attempted the first of many onside kicks. Though unsuccessful, it

set the tone for the relentless style of Coach Sam Johnson's game plan.

The Knights began to show life on offense and were moving, but Thornton showed he's a force on both sides of the ball and intercepted a pass from North Valley's Jaydon Twedell. This was soon followed by another Erickson touchdown pass, this one to senior Isaac Garza. Lacouture ran in from the 2-yard line for the conversion and the Vikings ended the first quarter with a

North Valley and Siuslaw traded possessions until the Vikings forced a turnover on downs and took over on their own 9-yard line.

On the very next play, Erickson again hit Thornton with a pass and Siuslaw's first ever Les Schwab Bowl All-Star sprinted most of the 91 yards for his second touchdown of the game. That 91-yard score is the third longest in Siuslaw history, bested only by Jared Kreil, who had a 93-yard reception in 2004 and Joe Hill who scored from 97 yards in 1978. This score, along with a third Erickson to Thornton touchdown con-

Just under the four-minute mark in the half, Erickson scored on a quarterback keeper putting the home team up 34-0. As the teams separated, some

nection made it 28-0 Viks.

words were exchanged by both sides and referees were forced to step into the scrum and stand between the players. Personal foul penalties were assessed, two on the Vikings, one on the Knights and the officials warned both teams about the escalating amount of chippy play.

Following this, Camp Lacouture kicked through the extra point and the Vikings ended the half with a 35-0 lead.

The domination continued in the third quarter.

Coach Johnson's defense gave the offense excellent field position when the trio of juniors Noah Dotson, Victor Ayalo and Kevin Holloway combined to block a North Valley punt to put the Siuslaw offense at the Knights 3-yard line.

took the handoff in for a touchdown and also kicked the extra point to put the blue and gold up Coach Johnson gave everyone who had not yet

Soon after, Lacouture

played a chance to play in the fourth quarter. Freshman Aiden Webb, Joel Sissel, Andrew Jensen Norman, Deegan Smith and Max Reynolds all saw their first varsity action. North Valley's Twedell

found tight end Brady Huff for a pair of touchdown passes in the fourth.

In between those two scores, junior running back Hunter Petterson ran 27 yards for the Vikings seventh touchdown of the Erickson finished 13 of

18 passing for 330 yards. That single game yardage total ranks only behind the player who Erickson backed up last year, Elijah Blankenship, who had games of 339 and 337. Erickson also threw for four touchdowns and ran for another.

For a player starting for the first time, Erickson impressed the Viking coach.

"Offensively, Beau exceeded every expectation I could have ever put on him," Johnson said. "We thought we were going to bounce back and forth between a veer and a spread offense. He kind of solidified that this team is definitely more of a spread team because he can throw the ball in places that most people can't."

Thornton racked up 210 yards receiving, a total that will inevitably add to the growing number of college coaches already hoping he'll consider taking his talents to their school. "To me, he just solidi-

fied that he's the best receiver in the state in any division," said Johnson. "It's no wonder that I'm getting emails every day from different colleges and universities wanting to reach out to him or ask what kind of kid he is. It's an easy answer with him. He's a really good kid who does the right things. He's dialed into what we're doing as a team. He's a good friend and a better person. He's been awesome. It was nice to be able to see him get the ball a bunch in game one."

Lacouture rushed for 95 yards and a touchdown along with 42 yards receiving. He also kicked four extra points and ran in a 2-point conversion, yet Johnson that doesn't tell the whole story of his contribution to the team. "99% of what Camp

does for our football team can't be summed up in stats, because he'll get his touches on offense, he'll get his rushing and receiving yards, he'll get picks and tackles ... all the stuff you can put on paper," said Johnson. "But he's the cog that makes us go. He's the captain on defense. He makes sure everyone on offense knows what they're doing. He is an incredible athlete and a really special

Johnson also highlighted two of his coaches on the defensive side of the ball and the work they did having the players prepared for the first game of the season.

"We have Nick Johnson as defensive coordinator. For him to have the guys that dialed in for week one, well, I think it says a lot about him. I think it also says a lot about our kids and the culture that

our coaching staff has brought to the program," he said.

The team also added Coach John Rose, who "has paid dividends too because he has the linemen buying in," said Johnson. "They've been working in the weight room, since even before the summer, and getting faster, stronger and bigger. We just bullied a 4A powerhouse team that runs the ball down everybody's throat, and they (the Viking defense) had no problem containing them. That was awesome for me defensively."

Siuslaw will travel to Sisters (0-1) for another non-league match-up at 7 p.m. on Friday. The Outlaws lost 16-7 at Madras on Sept. 10 to open their season. First-year coach Clayton Hall is implementing an offense that will include multiple formations and misdirection and should be a good test for the Viking defense. Before coming to Sisters, Hall coached at schools in Utah and Oregon.

In other action of interest from around the state, the Viking's future opponents had a bad night and went a combined 1-3 with only Gladstone winning, 21-20 over Astoria. 2A #2 Kennedy crushed 3A #2 Santiam Christian 31-0. South Umpqua picked up another big win, 48-0 over Pleasant Hill. Also, La Pine lost to Vale 20-14.

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both boys and girls were there, along with a who's who of the best cross country programs in the state. Though the Vikings didn't finish at the top, Siuslaw could take pride in the fact that for the boys, their 11th place finish was tops for 4A schools and the girls' 18th place only put them behind Marist and Phoenix for teams from their division.

Siuslaw Coach Chris Johnson understood what his team was getting into.

"It's just really tough and we don't ever really run that well there for some reason," Johnson said. "There are some of the best teams in the country. There are nationally ranked teams. We're going against huge schools."

According to Johnson, for some of the of the Vikings top runners, a race like this is great.

"For Jack Hughes, Sam Ulrich and Rylee Colton,

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because they're standouts, they're ready to rock no matter how big the schools are or what the competition is," said Johnson. "For some of our younger athletes, it's like going into a tornado, but it's something they have to experience to grow. Sometimes you're going to have to go into the tornado."

Hughes, a junior, was the top runner for the Viking boys. He finished in 16:29.60 for the 5000-meter race. He was followed close behind by Ulrich with a time of 16:33.60.

"Sam is a junior and he's tough, always competes. He had a great race. He ran really smart, and he almost caught Jack. Those guys give us a great one-two punch," Johnson said.

Next for Siuslaw was juniors Kyle Hughes and Jacob Blankenship, who ran 17:05.60 and 18:20.60 respectively. Rounding out the Viking boys runners were a trio of sophomores, Dylan Jensen, Talen Ross

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and Brayden Linton.

For the Viking girls, the top runner was senior Rylee Colton who finished 5000 meters in 20:56.40

Said Johnson, "Rylee, who was fifth place at state last year ... was great. Her first mile was not where she needed to be, but she moved up great after that. After the race, we talked, and both agreed that she can be more aggressive."

The rest of the Siuslaw girls team runners were all underclassmen. Freshman Addison McNeill, running her first high school race, finished next for the Viks at 22:48.40 followed by sophomore Jane Lacouture at 22:56.40. Freshman Mya

Wells and Macy McNeill were next with Corduroy Holbrook rounding it out the Siuslaw runners.

Johnson was impressed by these first time compet-

"For three of them, this was their very first high school cross country race. They ran well. They moved up throughout the race. I think we set ourselves up to continue to get better and better and more and more experienced," said

The coach is not worried about the results of this early competition.

"All these races we have are just chances to run, to train, to get faster, to get experience and to prepare ourselves for when we 'butter our bread, which is the district meet. Then hopefully after that, state. Football, volleyball, baseball or basketball, they must win games in the regular season to advance the postseason. We're going to the post season regardless of what we do," said Johnson.

Siuslaw will get another chance at preparation on Saturday at the Northwest Cross Country Classic at Lane Community College in Eugene, the same course where the district and state meets are held.

"The way I write training, we're not really ready to race fast. Mid to late

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October is about when we start hitting full stride, so to speak. Having a chance to go to the Northwest Classic and compete against just our own classification and smaller is good, and we get a chance to go to the location of the district and state meet without the grinder of district and state meet competition," said Johnson. "There's no pressure really. It's also a great course for spectators because you can see everything. It's wide open on the

For results for last weeknd and future races, go to www.athletic.net/Cross-Country/School.aspx?-SchoolID=183.

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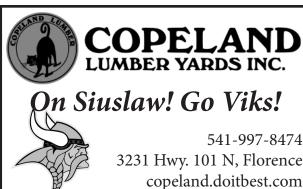
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