

SPORTS

Umatilla boys race past Riverside

Third quarter paces Umatilla blowout

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Leading by six at the half, the Umatilla boys arrived to the court 10 seconds before the start of the third quarter. Viking head coach Derrek Lete was already at his bench. His address was short and sweet and appeared to be effective.

The Vikings went on to outscore the Riverside Pirates 14-4 in the third quarter and win their second Eastern Oregon League game in as many tries, 56-38, Thursday night in The Pit.

Despite the 18-point win, Lete was not thrilled with his team's performance.

"We definitely didn't play up to our potential," he said. "We were flat the whole night. Our bench was flat. Our leadership was not there."

Sophomore Jesus Ramirez and freshman Kaden Webb drove the Vikings. Ramirez had 12 points, with eight of them

coming in the second half, and Webb hit two 3-pointers in the second quarter to provide a needed lift for the Vikings (8-8, 2-0).

"That was probably the excitement of the night, the energy of the night," Lete said of Webb's second-quarter spurt. "That's definitely what we needed to get things going. That's what he needed. That's what the team needed."

For Riverside, the story was much different. The Pirates (5-10, 0-2) committed 27 turnovers in the game and were forced into using a largely inexperienced back court after sophomore guard Noe Madrigal was tagged with some early fouls in the first half.

"The guards have to get stronger," Riverside head coach Clair Costello said. "They're young, inexperienced. They didn't have any varsity experience starting out the season. We got up and down. Our bigs didn't play very big."

Umatilla's lack of intensity was on full display in the first quarter. The Vikings were whistled for nine fouls in the frame and turned over the ball eight times. Just 13 shots in total

were taken in the first quarter, which ended in a 9-7 Pirate lead. Six of those nine points came from the free-throw line.

Umatilla came back in the second quarter but still struggled to maintain possession of the ball, and the same went for Riverside. Webb came into the game and hit a 3 with 5:12 on the clock, and two possessions later he hit another 3 to give the Vikings a 17-13 lead, which was their biggest lead of the game up to that point.

"Good thing we had some younger kids, some sophomores, some freshmen that really stepped up and decided to play," Lete said.

Umatilla went into the locker room with the 23-17 lead, and broke it open in the third behind more stifling defense and good-enough offense. Eric Garcia hit a 3 right out of the gate to give Umatilla 26-17 lead, and the Vikings never looked back.

"Overall, (I'm) really disappointed, though," Lete said. "I'm glad we got the win."

The Vikings' next contest is Saturday, when they host Vale at 7:30 p.m.



SAM BARBEE PHOTO
Riverside's Juan Villa (30) drives through Umatilla's Edgar Morales (32) and Dany Ayala during the first half of Umatilla's 56-38 win over the Pirates Thursday night in Umatilla.

Vikings reject Pirates on home court

BY ERIK SKOPIL
EO MEDIA GROUP

With Eastern Oregon League play hitting full stride, Umatilla coach Scott Bow has begun to recognize trends from his fourth-ranked Vikings.

For the second consecutive contest, the team's active defense wreaked havoc, pressing the youthful Riverside Pirate backcourt into giveaway after giveaway — 38 total for the game — in a 42-27 victory Thursday at Umatilla High School.

"Umatilla is fourth in state for a reason," Riverside coach Kevin Gilbertson said. "They play hard. Those girls hustle."

The hustle and clamp down mimicked the Vikings' first league win over Nyssa Saturday, when they held the Bulldogs to a measly 21 points.

The other developing habits don't have Bow quite as encouraged, however.

"We're struggling to put the ball in the hoop," Bow conceded. "I think we've had a lot more possessions and better looks than other teams, but we've just struggled to put the ball in the



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY
Kasandra Galbraith (24) and Aleesha Watson (40), of Umatilla, battle the Pirates' Cassidy McCullough for a loose ball Thursday in Umatilla.

hoop.

"I really thought we were just going to start running away in the beginning, and they were there to stop

us and challenge us and we weren't able to finish them."

In the opening half Umatilla (13-3, 2-0 EOL)

forced 22 Riverside (7-8, 0-2 EOL) turnovers, but the added looks resulted in just 22 total first-half points.

The Umatilla offense never found its rhythm, shooting just 17 of 50 on the night and 1 of 9 from three-point range.

The two EOL league wins provide two of the team's three lowest scoring outputs in wins this season. The 37-point average in those games marks a stark contrast from the squad that averaged 57 points per win in its run through non-league play.

"We had a lot of shots that kids normally hit that didn't go down for us," Bow said. "The last two games have been the same way — the same style — we played well defensively down in Nyssa, we played well defensively tonight, but we just couldn't convert."

"We've got to do what we've got to do to win these games and hopefully at the end of the season we'll be peaking — back to the way we started the season."

Junior center Courtney Dohman's eight first quarter points appeared to have the Vikings headed in

the right direction, but she only scored twice more on the night. The remainder of the normally potent scorers never got going.

And still the Vikings built a 22-12 halftime lead. The margin never dipped below 10 in the second half.

"We lost, but it's a win," Gilbertson said. "It's a moral win. We're building. We just want to keep building."

The Pirates start two sophomores and two freshmen, and while the team never truly challenged the Vikings on the scoreboard, they "battled" throughout, Gilbertson said.

"Our ranking doesn't show the heart our girls have," he said of his

team's 27th positioning in Class 3A out of 39 teams. "Overall, I can't complain."

Dohman finished with a game-high 12 points and five rebounds, in "her best game all year", according to Bow.

"They have a 5-11 girl that's a beast," Gilbertson said of Dohman.

Sophomore forward Aleesha Watson added 11 points in the win for the Vikings.

Lacey Mashos led Riverside with eight points.

Both sides play again on Saturday. Umatilla hosts Vale, while Riverside will play Nyssa at home.

WATSON:

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It's a lifestyle," Zimmerly said Thursday. "It won't end when you get out of high school or college."

Zimmerly and McCann are two of The Eastern Oregon Family Taekwondo center's regular students that have attended since the dojo opened in 2009. They were among the first to join.

Zimmerly said she was familiar with Watson and his wife, Lorry, and wanted to give their dojo a try because they wanted to help out the Watsons.

Zimmerly and McCann like it for separate reasons.

Zimmerly sees the way Watson interacts with the children — he is fun and stern, but playful and serious — and she trusts his ability to teach them correctly.

"He's not like other (teachers)," Zimmerly said after their class Thursday. "They seem to be a little too aggressive (with children)."

McCann said she likes everything about the martial art. "I like doing all the stuff," McCann said. "I like moving up belts, doing forms. (Watson's) always funny. He teaches us a lot."

Watson said his playful attitude with the students stems from an experience he had when he was introducing martial arts to his oldest son, Tyler, who's now 26 and lives in The Dalles.

He started by taking Tyler to a karate dojo when he was 5 in Pendleton but quickly decided that wasn't the best place for his son. The instructor was too intense for a 5-year-old, Watson said, and he wasn't comfortable with putting his young son through that level of aggression.

So, when he opened EO Family in 2009, he made it child-focused with an emphasis on fun, respect and proper technique. "I enjoy the kids," he said. "I wish I had more adults, but that's alright. I think it's really all about the kids. I always try to make it fun. I try to be strict, and they know how far (they can go), and they know respect."

Wednesday's class had just a handful of students, and Watson's voice echoed through the dojo. Thursday, however, had a full dojo. Students from orange belts to blue belts were learning and practicing techniques. All but two were children.

Because Watson is so children-focused, he has them

bring in their report cards and progress reports from school. When they bring the cards for the first time, he gives them a patch to go over their heart, to show everyone that their focus should be on not just taekwondo, but on life outside the dojo as well. When the report cards are good, he rewards them a red star to go around their collars and sleeves.

By placing an emphasis on doing the right thing inside and outside of the dojo, Watson said he is trying to instill concepts that are larger than just learning how to punch, kick and block.

"Respect is my No. 1 rule, and you have to follow that," Watson said. "I'm hoping that I'm teaching that to these kids and it'll be in their mind, so when they grow up, they'll know what respect is."

One student who has benefited from Watson's message of respect is 10-year-old orange belt JP Phillips. According to Watson and Phillips' grandmother, Juanita, Phillips struggled with anger issues growing up. He lashed out at his grandparents and had trouble focusing at school.

Watson's approach to keep the mood light while being strict at the same time has really helped Phillips, they said.

He's doing better in school because of taekwondo. His behavior at home has improved. Even Phillips himself has seen an improvement.

"My grandma said it's affecting my focus," Phillips said after class Thursday. "My focus on my work at school and at home."

Watson's family-focused emphasis is also present in lessons. He ended Thursday's session with a couple rounds of "Mr. Watson Says," a variation of "Simon Says," to teach discipline and honesty. The dozen or so children loved it, and the winners were rewarded with candy of their choice.

Watson reinforces the life lessons he teaches students in other ways. Before a student can graduate from an orange belt to a green belt, he has him or her write an essay about a quality, such as respect or integrity. He said students can't truly know what those qualities are until they can describe it in their own words.

Phillips had to write an essay on respect.

"We always talk about respect all the time," Watson said.

For more information about the Eastern Oregon Family Taekwondo, call 541-667-9872.



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