



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

The new gymnasium at Hermiston Christian School cost about \$1 million and took about two years to build. It will host HCS basketball and volleyball games as well as local community events, HCS Principal and Athletic Director Rod Hardin said.

Building a legacy

Last week, when I came into the office, fellow Herald reporter Maegan Murray told me Hermiston Christian School was opening a new gym and the first series of basketball games was to be played there that day.

I thought that was a good story and headed out. After all, I had just written a column not too long ago about the area gyms and decided it would be a good thing if I went and checked it out.

When I walked in, I was surprised. It wasn't what I expected.

It's a big building, with high, vaulted ceilings and, as the famous movie quote goes, lots of room to do activities. The floor isn't wood. It's polished concrete, and it shone like the ocean on a brilliant sunny day.

I was there for a few minutes when a man walked up to me. He was Rob Hardin, the principal and athletic director of Hermiston Christian School. We talked about the project as the home Eagles took on Country Christian from Pasco, Washington, and I was impressed by the community effort it took to build the new facility.

It reminded me of another facility that was built recently in Hermiston to accommodate athletics and other events: Kennison Stadium. They aren't necessarily eerily similar, but they share a lot of the same points regarding construction; much of the labor and materials were donated or sold at a huge discount, and local companies took a community-centric approach and wanted to help out.

As I was speaking with Hardin, an alumnus named Tyler Dyer, who graduated in 2012, walked up and shook Hardin's hand. He looked around the new building like a cat in a new environment and said simply, "Man, I wish we had something like this when I was here." That was the overwhelming sentiment from many as they took their first steps in the building.

SEE LEGACY/A11



SAM BARBEE
FROM THE SIDELINES
Sports reporter

Hermiston Christian School's athletics, unfortunately, fly under the radar around town and the area. The Eagles aren't full members of OSAA; they're associate members. That means if a student wants to play a sport that Hermiston Christian School doesn't offer, say, football, then, because the school is an associate member, those students can go to the nearest school and participate in that sport. The most obvious example of this in recent memory is Carson Morter, who was a two-way all-state football athlete for the state champion Hermiston Bulldogs while attending school down the road.

Up until this year, HCS had to schedule practice times at area gyms. It was difficult, and having no homes games is even more difficult. The new gym, still to be christened with a name, provides both a place to play and practice, as well as a space to host concerts, feeds or other gatherings that require significant space.

When asked about the process, Hardin just smiled. He was certainly happy to be standing under that roof and not planning on how the roof would be built.

Flashback to two years ago when the gym was just a hope and a plan. The church had recently gotten an interim pastor, Vernon "Cat" Marks, who, as Hardin put it, got the process moving. He pushed the governing body of the school and church to launch the project. He was the catalyst.

But the only project wasn't just to build the gym. The entrance to the school had to be relocated to accommodate the massive building. Land had to be flattened and soil removed. It was a big project that kept opening new doors as others closed.

The steel used to build the shell of the building was acquired almost a year

Sloppy fourth quarter almost dooms Bulldogs

Chase Knutz has 15 points in the win

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

In its last two league games, the Hermiston boys basketball team has had big leads in the second half and has struggled to finish off its opponents. On Tuesday, against rival Pendleton, that resulted in a loss, and last week against Hood River the Bulldogs hung on to win.

Friday, against The Dalles Riverhawks, the script was the same: The Bulldogs had a 20-point lead in the third quarter, but a difficult fourth quarter put the game's result in doubt.

Hermiston never led by fewer than seven in the final period but held on for a 58-49 win in the Dawghouse. With the win, Hermiston (6-12, 3-1 CRC) moves into first place after Pendleton's win over Hood River Valley, while The Dalles (2-17, 1-3) falls two games back.

Chase Knutz led the Bulldogs with 15 points, and Keegan Crafton wasn't far behind with 14.

Hermiston jumped out to a quick first-half lead behind a strong physical presence of Crafton down low. Bulldog head coach Jake McElligott said he's been talking to Crafton about his "attack angles" and was happy with the senior's aggressive play early, something that has to happen against an aggressive, physical defense like The Dalles employs.

Hermiston was hot from the floor, too, and made seven of its first nine



SAM BARBEE PHOTOS

Hermiston's Landon Gammell (23) looks to get a pass through traffic as The Dalles' Tanner Byers (5), among others, clog the lane during a Columbia River Conference boys basketball game Friday night at the Dawghouse.

shots en route to a 20-10 lead after the first quarter. Hermiston extended its lead in the second quarter behind more solid shooting and good ball security. Hermiston coughed it up just five times in the first half, with three coming in the second period.

After Chance Flores' 3-pointer with 3:39 on the clock, Hermiston led by 20, its biggest lead of the game.

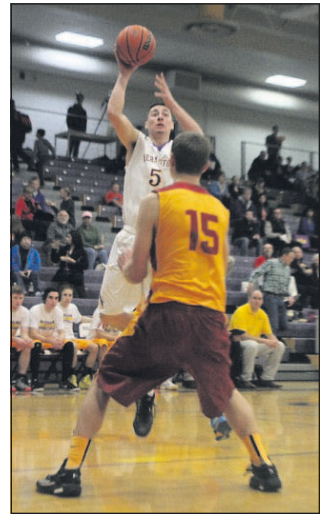
The Dalles, though, kept pressing on and created what McElligott called the ugliest half of basketball he's seen all year.

The Riverhawks went on a 16-7 run throughout the entirety of the third quarter and cut Hermis-

ton's lead to single digits for the first time since the first quarter after a Devin Wilson layup barely a minute into the final period. Hermiston then started turning the ball over, wasting four critical fourth-quarter possessions as The Dalles mounted its comeback.

The Riverhawks cut the lead to as few as six points after Wilson hit a 3 with 1:07 left, but Hermiston didn't miss a free throw in the final period and held on to come away with the win.

Hermiston's next game is Tuesday against the Hood River Valley Eagles. Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m.



Hermiston's Keegan Crafton (5) rises for a layup over The Dalles' Cody Conlee during the first half of a Columbia River Conference boys basketball game Friday night at the Dawghouse.



Hermiston's Chance Flores (1) drives around Gordy Harris of The Dalles towards the basket during the first half of a Columbia River Conference boys basketball game Friday night in the Dawghouse.

Hermiston grapplers defeat Pendleton

Bulldogs unsatisfied with latest win

BY MATT ENTRUP
EO MEDIA GROUP

Well before the Hermiston wrestlers lifted a triumphant Jesse Rodelo onto their shoulders, the scoreboard on The Dawghouse wall had determined a lopsided Bulldog win in the War on 84 Thursday.

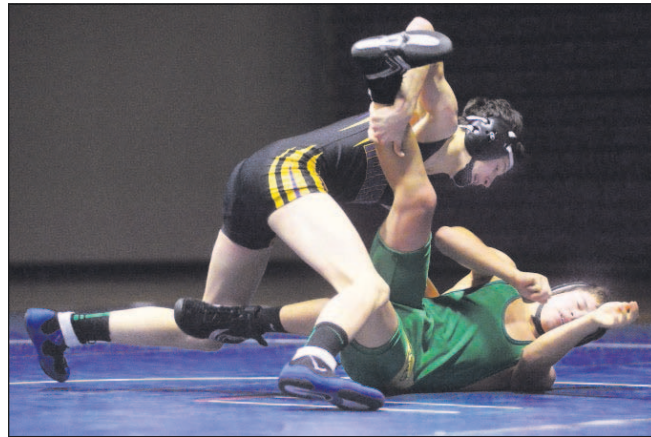
Rodelo had just pinned Pendleton 220-pounder Jeff Priester in the night's last bout, and the Buckaroos' fourth forfeit followed to bring the final score to 67-12.

But for those watching closely, Hermiston coach Shaun Williams said, it was a much tighter dual than the scoreboard indicated.

"It's easy to get carried away with what's on the scoreboard, but you've got to pay attention to what's actually going on on the mat, and so I think we've got some work to do," Williams said.

With Pendleton spotting the Bulldogs 32 points via four forfeits, a Hermiston win was the expected outcome. But Williams said an injury-riddled Bucks roster gave his team more trouble than he'd anticipated, even without three-time state champion Sam Colbray (illness) in the lineup.

"It's similar to the lineup that we had at the Oregon Classic, and I thought that lineup was good enough to actually win the Classic," Williams said. "We've got a



EO MEDIA GROUP PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston's C.J. Hendon trips up Pendleton's Brendon Bedolla in the Bulldogs' 67-12 win against the Bucks on Thursday in Hermiston.

lot of illness going around ... but you've always got to put your best lineup on the mat no matter what, and that's what we did tonight."

Several bouts could have gone either way, starting with the first of the night at 126 pounds.

Hermiston junior Andy Wagner took a 3-2 lead into the third period and made it hold up to beat Pendleton senior Tristan Holcomb. Holcomb scored first with a takedown as the first period wound to a close, but Wagner tied it up at 2-2 with a reversal just before the buzzer.

Wagner elected to start in the bottom position in Round 2 and after 39 seconds of maneuvering was able to escape for the last points of the bout.

"Last year, we met at the Reser's Tournament, and it was a real close match, too," Wagner said. "It was like 7-8 or 6-8. We're always pretty close. I just stayed in good position and kept him under control and got the es-

capades and reversals when I needed them."

"Andy is actually sick, but there's a couple of times we should have scored that we didn't score — it doesn't matter if you're sick or not," Williams said. "It's encouraging to see him winning matches like that because if you can win matches when you feel like that, now we're on the right track. But at the same time, for us to win a state title as a team, we need those bonus points."

While Wagner and Holcomb could be destined for different weight classes at districts, another of the night's closest matches is likely to play out again at the Special District 4 tournament in Hood River next weekend.

Hermiston's Bob Coleman seemed to put his football skills to good use in a 7-5 overtime win over the Bucks' Terrell Platt in the 170-pound bout.

With 21 seconds left in the sudden-death period, both wrestlers crouched

and lunged forward in aggressive shots. Their shoulders met like a pair of linebackers in a hitting drill, and Coleman was able to knock Platt off balance before scrambling behind for the final takedown.

"I've wrestled him before, so we both know what we're going to do," said Coleman, who, like Platt, was an all-league linebacker in football. "Whichever one would have won, we'll definitely meet again."

Coleman spent nearly all of the second period trying to escape Platt's control, and neither wrestler seemed to have much energy left when their last-ditch shots in the third period were easily rebuffed.

"I was definitely tired in that match, but I haven't lost a home dual yet in my career, and I don't want to start now," Coleman said. "So there was motivation to keep wrestling tired when it went to overtime."

Also going to points in both teams' final Columbia River Conference dual of the season were Mitchell Lincoln's 11-3 win over Sam Bliss at 182 pounds and John-Henry Line's 8-5 win over Marcus Taylor at 195 — both matches Hermiston led from the early stages.

Pendleton's wins were back-to-back pins at the 145 and 152 weights.

At 145, Morgan Holcomb ended the shutout with a second-round pin of Robert Crane. Holcomb led 7-4 after the first peri-

SEE WRESTLING/A11

GO SEE IT

Saturday, February 7

Wrestling
Hermiston @ Oregon Episcopal Tournament, 9 a.m.
Boys Basketball
Umatilla @ Nyssa, 5:30 p.m.
Echo @ Powder Valley, 5:30 p.m.
Girls Basketball
Umatilla @ Nyssa, 4 p.m.
Echo @ Powder Valley, 4 p.m.

Sunday, February 8

No events scheduled

Monday, February 9

No events scheduled

Tuesday, February 10

Girls Basketball
Hermiston vs. Hood River Valley, 7 p.m.
Boys Basketball
Hermiston @ Hood River Valley, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, February 11

No events scheduled

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Hermiston Booster Club Steak Feed coming up

The Hermiston Booster Club's 36th annual steak feed is sched-

uled for 5:30 p.m. March 7 at the Hermiston Conference Center. Tickets cost \$40, and the proceeds benefit Hermiston athletic programs. On average, the steak

feeds generate about \$80,000 dollars per night and \$100,000 in a year. Call Joe Thompson at 541-571-4478 for more information.