

SPORTS

Umatilla sends seniors off with win over Riverside

Paz sparks run with six in second

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Thursday was senior night for the Umatilla girls basketball team, but a couple of juniors stole the show.

Courtney Dohman had a double-double with 13 points and Mari Paz scored six-straight points in the second quarter to rally the eighth-ranked Lady Viks past the Riverside Pirates 47-26 at The Pit.

Down 12-11 late in the second quarter, Paz hit a pair of free throws and a pair of run-out layups to start an 11-0 run that bled into the third quarter to give her team control of the final matchup with the rival Pirates.

With the win, Umatilla (18-5, 6-2 Eastern Oregon League) is a game and a half back of the Vale Vikings, who play Nyssa on Friday and Umatilla on Saturday, for first place. Riverside (9-14, 0-8) falls further behind.

"We started running our sets finally," Umatilla head coach Scott Bow said. "We struggled in the first half trying to get our sets run, and I told my girls ... 'Let's start working on our stuff.' It still didn't happen."

Then, after Riverside head coach Kevin Gilberton called his second timeout of the quarter, Bow gave it to his team straight.

"I said, 'If we're not gonna run my sets, then I'm no help,'" the seventh-year coach said. "Until I can help you, we're not gonna



Umatilla senior Berenice Chavez chases and tries to save a loose ball during the second half of Umatilla's 47-26 win over Riverside on senior night Thursday in Umatilla.

work."

Umatilla did, in fact, start running its set plays, and the Vikings went from being down one to up eight by the end of the second quarter.

"At first, you want to be mad at yourself, but you have to remember it's only (the) first, second quarter," junior Sidney Webb said. "You gotta get through this. You gotta focus. It's too early in the game for you to do that. You just gotta play your game. You gotta let it go."

Umatilla cruised the remainder of the game. Aside from a three-pointer from Sadie Hasbell on Riverside's second third-quarter possession that put the count at 22-15, Umatilla didn't trail by fewer than double-digits the entire sec-

ond half.

Riverside was without key player in junior Jenna Shimer, and Ellie Sanchez went down in the third quarter with an unfortunate knee injury. That left the Pirates significantly short-handed and undersized at the block.

"When you're down to being 5-foot-6 against 5-foot-11 and 5-foot-8, 5-foot-9 athletic girls (it's tough)," Gilberton said. "I'm proud of 'em. (The Vikings are) eighth for a reason. They're big, they're poised and they want to win."

As far as the league standings are concerned, Umatilla needed to win Thursday night after consecutive losses to Vale.

"The kids didn't really see them as losses, and

I didn't really see them as losses, either," Bow said. "Vale is Vale. I challenge anyone else in the state to go after Vale and see what they get."

Both Bow and Webb said the win Thursday was important not because the team had to rebound from its last two games against Vale but because it was important to send the seniors off in style. Both said the Viking girls are very close, and Thursday night was emotional.

Bow suggested the girls' emotions might have contributed to their slow start, as the Vikings only scored seven first-quarter points. In the second quarter, the emotions turned to pride, and the Vikings weren't playing for a win — they were playing for



Umatilla's Aleesha Watson (40) attacks the hoop as Riverside's Abby Hernandez (50) and Sadie Hasbell (20) defend during the first half of Umatilla's 47-26 Thursday night over the Pirates.

the seniors: four-year varsity players Iri Campos and Cassandra Galbraith and reserves Berenice Chavez and Kelly Barajas.

"I think it meant more than anything tonight because we're a very close team this year," Webb said. "We just connected very well. We bonded more like a team, but as sisters in a way. This season's been great. We had fun enjoying each other and playing our game. I think it meant a lot."

Umatilla got off to a rough night shooting, cashing in on just 3-for-18 from the floor in the first quarter and 0-for-7 from deep in a quarter that ended at a 7-7 draw. The Lady Viks didn't shoot much better in the second, going just 5-for-14 from the floor, while Riverside posted 3-for-10 and 1-for-8 in the first half. Umatilla was 25 percent shooting, Riverside 22 per-

cent.

Riverside managed to stay close because of its better 3-point shooting. The Pirates canned one in the first half and three in the second.

The Umatilla run led by Paz in the second, however, and Sanchez's injury in the third, plus significantly better shooting from Umatilla made a comeback bid too difficult for the Pirates.

Umatilla heads to Vale on Saturday for the final game of its regular schedule. Tip-off is set for 5 p.m. (MT).

UMATILLA 47, RIVERSIDE			
RHS	7	5	7
7	26		
UHS	7	13	17
10	47		

Riverside — L. Mashos 11, K. McCullough 0, B. Lomas 0, S. Hasbell 13, P. Pena 0, M. Camp 0, S. Wightman 0, E. Valasco 0, E. Sanchez 0, A. Hernandez 2.
Umatilla — B. Chavez 0, M. Paz 9, K. Barajas 0, I. Campos 8, B. Campos 0, S. Webb 3, K. Galbraith 10, C. Dohman 13, A. Watson 4.
3-point field goals — Riverside 4, Umatilla 2.
Free throws — Riverside 4-13, Umatilla 7-19.
Fouls — Riverside 14, Umatilla 13.

BONDS:

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There are obviously more fans like Ross and Harlan. They sprinkle the east stand of The Dawghouse, and they know the drill. They prompt the introductory music by standing and essentially start the

rhythmic clapping as the Hermiston starters are introduced. They live and die with the Bulldogs.

In a sports age where loyalty is hard to come by, these folks are a model of loyalty. They are people who have created allegiances to institutions that have become like family bonds. I have it with my

high school and for my university. Ross, Harlan and the rest of the east-standers have developed that bond with Hermiston High School, like others have done at other

schools, like I have done.

The bond with Hermiston High they've formed is a strong one, not likely to be discarded or destroyed. It's a bond that goes past athletics

and into family, past basketball and into parenthood.

They are fans, but they are more than that, too. And it comes back to knowing from where you

came.

— Sam Barbree is the sports reporter for the *Hermiston Herald*. He can be reached at sbarbee@hermistonherald.com

DROTMANN:

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her father attended, but, like her dad, she is considering optometry as a career choice, and she didn't want to spend eight years at one school.

Linfield caught her attention when Vaughn called and she heard about the program's success. She said what really sold her was the town of McMinnville itself.

McMinnville is a little town nestled in the hills of the Willamette Valley. Drotzmann said she felt at home four hours away.

"Before I went (on my visit), my parents and I went and (visited) downtown McMinnville, and it's not like (Hermiston's) downtown," she said. "It's more like a cute downtown. I just fell in love with it. Then I went to the campus, and it's old, and it's pretty, and it's green there. Everything is growing."

She said, despite the small-town feel of McMinnville, the campus is large, "like Oregon or Oregon State," which she liked.

Drotzmann, though, understands that there are fewer opportunities to continue playing softball after college, so it was important that she

find a school that corresponded with her academic plans. Her father made that point, too.

"I'm excited for her to continue her collegiate career playing softball," Dave Drotzmann said, wearing a red Linfield shirt. "For us, all along, it's been about the college education. There's not a large professional circuit for softball players beyond college, so it's more about the education. So to have the opportunity to play college softball for a successful program like Linfield and get the quality education like you get at Linfield, I couldn't be more proud."

Drotzmann said she isn't nervous about her next step after high school.

Drotzmann's best friend was recently accepted in Linfield, so "at least I have a roommate," she said.

"Abi's a mature kid," her father said. "She works hard. She studies hard. She's gonna be successful. So I'm not worried about her going away. I'm worried about trying to make all the games. So there's nothing on her part I'm worried about. It's the other side of the state, so (it's) just being able to get there and watch games and see her continue her career."



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SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston senior Abi Drotzmann signs her National Letter of Intent to play softball next year at Linfield College in McMinnville.