

SPORTS

Bulldogs shock Bombers in OT

Dawgs net five goals in fourth to come away with overtime victory

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston lacrosse team was the dead in the water.

The visiting Richland Bombers scored eight of the game's first 10 goals Wednesday and led 8-2 after three quarters. A switch flipped in the fourth quarter, however, when AJ Schoonover found the back of the net shortly into the final period, followed by goals by George Westfall, Noah Davis scored and Fidel Contreras. Just like that, Hermiston was down just 8-6 and Richland was back on its heels.

Then, with a little over a minute to play in regulation, with Hermiston down 8-7, goalie Chris Jones turned away Richland for the 14th time and found Schoonover at midfield, who charged toward the net and beat the Richland keeper for the equalizer.

"(I was thinking) I need to pull this off," Schoonover said after the game. "Pull it out for the team."

He did, and he scored again



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston's AJ Schoonover dives and shoots during the fourth quarter of Hermiston's 9-8 overtime win over Richland Wednesday. Schoonover scored the final two goals of the game: the equalizer at the end of regulation and the game-winner in the extra period.

with only a minute remaining in overtime to give Hermiston an improbable 9-8 overtime win Wednesday night at Sunset Elementary School.

The win marks the second straight game Hermiston (2-2) found itself down in the fourth quarter before rallying to tie, the other being the 14-12 loss to Canby Sunday. This time, though, the Bulldogs found a way to win, though head coach Scott Hammond wasn't jumping for joy.

"If we had played the whole game like we played the fourth quarter, then it would be a much different

game because, really, I feel like Richland dominated that game, and we didn't deserve to win it," he said.

"Our team never gives up," Schoonover added. "The fight we have is just so strong. We don't want to give up."

Tensions rose about midway through the fourth quarter when a minor scuffle broke out. Both Bradlee Giusti and a Richland player were ejected, which gave Hermiston the momentum it needed.

Hammond said he does not condone fighting, but he acknowledged it helped bring his

team together when splintering was a distinct possibility.

"In no way, shape or form is (fighting) OK, but on the other note, that did bring us together, and it did amp our adrenaline up and got the kids competing at a different level, a much different level, and that's part of us being young again, you know?" he said. "We should have that level to begin with. Not to advocate that, but it did help."

Hermiston also received help from Jones, who deflected a number of Richland shots.

In the first half, Richland



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston's Fidel Contreras shoots past Richland's keeper during the fourth quarter of the Bulldogs' 9-8 overtime win over the Bombers Wednesday. The goal was Contreras' only one of the day and brought the Bulldogs within two at 8-6.

was getting free runs to the net, and there wasn't much Jones could do. In the second half — and especially in the fourth quarter — the Hermiston defense gave Jones some help. They forced shooters to either left or right of the crease, giving Jones better angles. They stopped runs by forcing the ball to the ground and often scooped them up and created offensive opportunities for themselves. Of Jones' 14 saves, six came in the second half, but none were bigger than his save-outlet pass-goal sequence with Schoonover that tied things up at eight.

"He's one of our best athletes and one of our best players," Hammond said of Jones. "Really, we'd like him to play somewhere else, to be honest, but he's just so tough in goal that, at this point, that gives us the best chance to be successful. He's tough. When we play a little bit of defense in front of him and give him some support — I don't want to say (he's) unstoppable — but he's tough."

RHS	5	1	2
0	0	8	
HHS	2	0	0
6	1	9	
Goals: N. Davis 4, A. Schoonover 3, G. Westfall 1, F. Contreras 1.			

Echo softball ends week on high note

Cougars shut down Colton 9-4 Thursday

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Echo softball pitcher MacKenzie Gonzales didn't hang her head Thursday after the first three Colton Vikings reached base and two scored putting the Cougars down 2-0 early in the game.

Instead, she retired the Vikings the rest of the way in the Cougars 9-4 victory in Echo.

The win gave Echo (3-2) its second straight after it dropped two of its first three. Gonzales tossed all seven innings, allowing the four runs, with only two of them earned, on five hits, and she struck out nine and walked six. "I thought she did great," Cougars head coach Bryan Bailey said.

"She went a lot of pitches to a lot of hitters, but, all in all, her defense backed her up, and she was pitching well. She was throwing hard."

Offensively, six Cougars had two hits, with Beth Midlbrodt going 2-for-2, two runs scored and an RBI. Jamie Christopher went 2-for-3 with two RBIs and a run scored.

The week ended a spring break where Echo went 2-1. The Cougars committed six errors and allowed three unearned runs in a 3-1 loss to Knappa Wednesday.

Bailey called it a successful week.

"Overall, they competed in every game they played," he said. "You eliminate some of the errors against Knappa, and I think we go 3-0. I'm very pleased with the way we played this spring break."

Echo's nine runs Thursday were the most the team has scored since it put up 15 against Heppner in the season opener. Six Cougars crossed home plate, and three of them did it twice. All but one starter had a hit.

"We're seeing the ball well right now," Bailey said. "I thought we hit well against Clatskanie (in a 6-2 win) up at Heppner, and they brought it over to this game. Our top five, six hitters are seeing the ball well and hitting it hard."

With how well Gonzales pitched, however, Echo didn't need to score much.

The sophomore was lights out from the second to the sixth innings. The

first three Vikings to reach were all put on base by Gonzales. She beamed Janey Ethington and walked Catilyn Weinbarger and Becky Patterson. Cassandra Neff rocketed a single through the glove of Hannah McCarty at third, scoring Ethington, and Shelby Marshall drove in Weinbarger with a base on balls. Gonzales beamed down, however, and set up a slick 5-2-3 double play to both slip out of a jam and gain some confidence.

"That double play with the bases loaded was huge," Bailey said. "That was our first one of the season, and it looked like they've been doing it all season. Those are the kinds of plays we're gonna need to be successful."

"She has faith in her defense, too," senior Bailey Srofe added. "She knows it's not all on her. She knows that we're there to back her up."

Echo came right back in the bottom half of the first and got two runs of its own, all with two outs. McCarty doubled down the left-field line on her second pitch of the day. Erika Parks followed with a double, plating McCarty, and Srofe singled to drive in Parks.

The Cougars did most of their work in the third. After Christopher's single plated Milbrodt in the second inning, Parks walked to start the third, and Srofe reached base when she tried to sacrifice Parks to second but was called safe at first. Gonzales then helped herself, singling home Parks and moving Srofe to third. Srofe scored on a passed ball during the next at-bat, and Milbrodt added her second RBI with a single to right, scoring Gonzales to give Echo a 6-2 lead. Christopher and Kenzie Blankenship had back-to-back two-out singles to give Echo an 8-2 lead after three innings. Blankenship's single stood out because the junior fouled off six pitches with two strikes to single after a 12-pitch at-bat.

Echo's ninth and final run came in the fourth inning when Gonzales singled with two outs, stole second, and scored on a throwing error at third base as she tried to swipe it.

Colton got two more runs in the sixth and threatened more in the seventh. When Gonzales' energy started to lag, Bailey called time and went to talk to his sophomore hurler.

"I pretty much told her, 'I just want strikes. Use your defense. Pitch with a lead. You want to pitch for outs right now,'" Bailey said. "So she did."

The next two batters grounded out, and Gonzales ended the game how she started it, wiggling out of a jam.

"I think we played very, very well," Srofe said. "I was really proud of the girls how we pulled through. We didn't get content and we finished strong."

Echo's next contest is Friday, when the Cougars host Riverside/Arlington for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 1 p.m.

ECHO 9, COLTON 4			
CHS	200	020	0
4			
EHS	215	100	X
9			
WP: M. Gonzales LP: B. Patterson 2B: E. Parks, K. Blankenship, H. McCarty, B. Milbrodt.			



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Echo's Hannah McCarty (in blue) looks to round second after her first-inning double in a 9-4 win over the Colton Vikings Thursday in Echo. McCarty finished 2-for-4 at the dish.

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