

## A sport worth checking out

If you have never been to a lacrosse game, you need to go. I'm serious. Go to at least one. You won't be disappointed.

I certainly wasn't. I knew a little about it. I knew the game was invented by the Iroquois Confederacy in the northeastern United States, which is why it's entirely more popular at East Coast universities and high schools than on the West Coast. The word itself comes from the French for "hooked stick," and the full name, which is no longer used, reads "le jeu de la crosse," or "the game of the hooked stick."

I knew that it was creeping west across the states and that programs were popping up all over the place. I didn't even know until I got to college that they play high school lacrosse in Washington.

So when I learned Hermiston had a lacrosse team, I jumped at the chance to check it out in person.

I wasn't disappointed. Far from it.

At first glance, it's such a hard sport to learn. Handling a stick with a basket just barely big enough to fit a ball inside is a unique skill. It's related to hockey and baseball but has its own techniques, its own challenges, its own creativity. Players had to "cradle" the stick as they're running to keep the ball inside, and officials check a random stick from each team between quarters to ensure their legality. I saw a guy from Canby cradle behind his back against Hermiston in the first game I attended. My first thought was, "You know, that doesn't look too terribly difficult." Then I thought about it a little more and came to the conclusion that I was very wrong. People say that to themselves all the time when watching sports. "I could have done that," they think. "This guy's a bum because he can't do what I can do."

What those people fail to realize is the athletes they're watching on TV are the best in the world. And just because they made one mistake, no matter how egregious or highlighted it was, doesn't mean that any old Average Joe can suit up and do better. There was actually a TV show about that, called Average Joe, and it usually entailed normal guys getting waxed by retired professional athletes. See? They are better than you.

So, I realized quickly that I'd be no good at lacrosse because it's hard and I've never learned how to play.



SAM BARBEE  
FROM THE SIDELINES  
Sports reporter

That's OK. That's great, actually. I like sports that look hard. I like sports that I can watch and say, "Never in a million years could I do that," because it makes watching it that much more entertaining. I can marvel at the techniques and the skills knowing that the people I'm watching are very good at something that's very difficult.

That was my first reaction watching lacrosse. My second reaction was: look how many elements of other sports there are!

It's got up-and-down action like hockey. It's got strategy like soccer and hockey. It's got the physicality of football and hockey. It's got the hand-eye coordination of baseball and hockey. It's got the endurance demands of soccer ... and hockey.

But don't call it field hockey. That's a different game.

If you like hard-hitting action, lacrosse has it. If you like guys wearing striped shirts, black hats and who throw yellow flags for penalties, it's got that, too. If you like non-stop action that can flip the field in three seconds, it's got that. If you like strategy and screens and crisp passing, it's got that. If you like brave guys in shorts standing in front of a net as opponentws throw a baseball-like pill at them as hard as they can, it's got that, as well.

So, as I walked away from Hermiston's 14-12 loss Sunday, I couldn't stop thinking about this game I had seen before but never truly watched, if that makes sense. It's like someone is talking to you and you hear them but you aren't listening. I'd seen it, I was aware of it, but I wasn't watching it correctly, or at all.

The great part is that lacrosse is growing on the West Coast, and in Hermiston especially. The high school program turned its 22 members at the end of last year into 42 this season, and the majority are freshmen and sophomores. The youth program is up to more than 70 members, too, with three different divisions.

Now's the time to get in on the ground floor of lacrosse. It's going to take off, soon, and it's going to be everywhere. Might as well drink the Kool-Aid, like I have.

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

# Stanfield cruises through Spring Break Tournament

### Tigers outscore opponents 29-2 in three games

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

After the Stanfield baseball team's first four games this week, head coach Bryan Johnson gave his sophomore-laden squad a C average.

After three wins late this week, capped by a 7-0 rout of Dufur Friday, Johnson bumped that grade up to a B, B-plus.

"I saw a lot of good things all around (Friday) — base running, hitting, pitching, defense," he said. "Mentally we're in the game."

Dylan Grogan got the start on the mound and was solid. He threw six innings of shut-out ball on one hit, striking out seven and walking five. Grogan didn't allow a runner to pass second base, and Dufur's first man to reach third came in the top of the seventh.

Grogan helped himself at the plate, too. The right-hander went 2-for-4 at the dish with two singles and an RBI. Thyler Monkus was 1-for-3 with a double and two runs scored, and Hunter Barnes chipped in with a double, as well.

Grogan said the Tigers' offense took a step forward in part because of an improved approach at the plate.

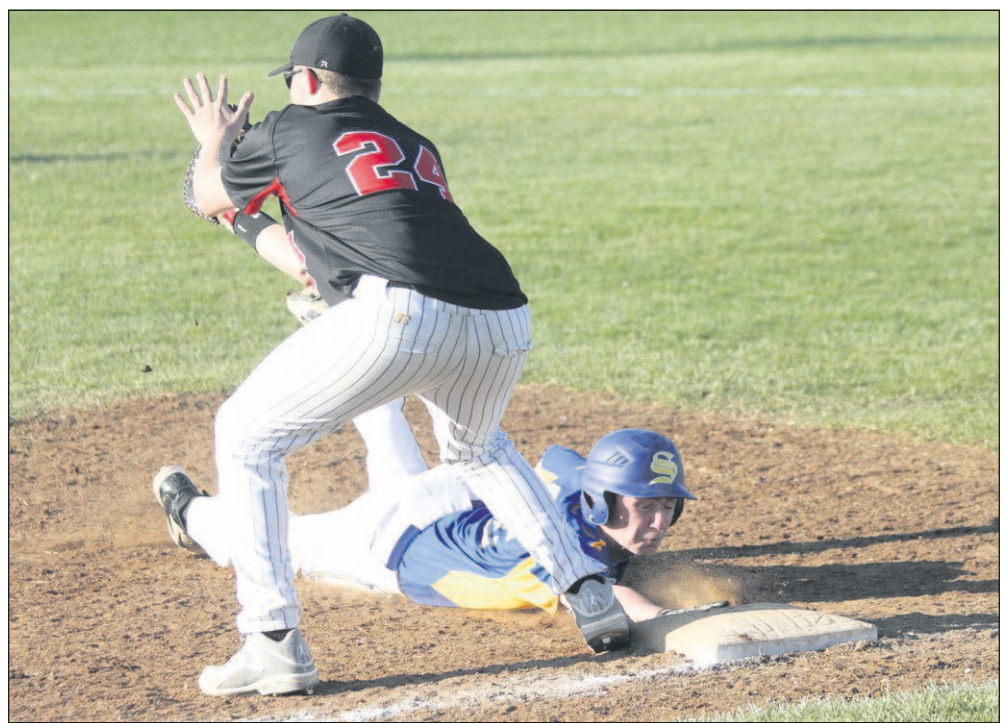
"The first few games, we were all trying to hit home runs," he said. "It's just getting back into baseball. These three games we just wanted to play some baseball and win some games."

Win, they did. After topping Union 10-0 on Thursday, Stanfield (3-3) routed Sheridan 12-2 Friday afternoon and sprinted past Dufur in the evening to end the doubleheader.

After dismal offensive performances in its first three outings — including being one-hit by Cashmere last week — Stanfield's offense has come to life.

The Tigers' first two runs of the second game Friday after they used bunts and steals to put the game in motion.

In the bottom of the third, Monkus walked to start the inning. An out later, Ryan Bailey reached on an error and both



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Stanfield's Klay Jenson dives back into first base after a Dufur pick-off attempt during the Tigers' 7-0 win Friday at Dick Horyna Sports Complex in Stanfield.

moved up a bag on a wild pitch with Grogan at the plate. Monkus scored on a wild pitch during Grogan's at-bat to put Stanfield on the board first. Grogan then singled, pushing Bailey to third and the sophomore lefty Bailey trotted home on a wild pitch.

Johnson said it was important to be the first to push one across.

"I think that helps any time you can score early — or score first — so you're not playing from behind because it's tough to play from behind," he said.

Stanfield added its third run in the frame when Tony Flores flew out to center, plating Grogan — who moved to third on wild pitches. Stanfield led 3-0 after three innings but wasn't done.

In the next home half, Steven Allan singled with one out, and Monkus reached on an error an out later. Allan, who was running from second on the play, scored easily as the ball got behind the Dufur left fielder, giving the Tigers a 4-0 lead. Klay Jenson singled, scoring Monkus, and Bailey walked and Grogan singled with two outs to drive in Jenson.

Stanfield tacked on its seventh and final run in the home sixth, when Monkus was hit by a pitch, stole second, stole third and then coasted home on a deep sacrifice fly to left by Bailey.

Dufur created some in-

trigue in the seventh, though. The sophomore lefty Jenson came on to relieve Grogan, and proceeded to walk the first batter he faced. After two quick outs, he walked the next two batters to load the bases with two outs, but he got Dufur's No. 3 hitter Trever Tibbets to strike out on a 1-2 changeup, ending the threat and the game.

"The kids, even before our opening weekend, set goals," Johnson said. "They want to win that league title. I think we can compete for it. We do have a young team, so we'll have to improve. They're a motivated bunch, and getting the wins to back up all the hard work they've done will help that confidence I think as we go forward."

STANFIELD 7,  
DUFUR 0  
DHS 000 000  
0-0 21  
SHS 003 301  
X-7 10 0  
T. Tibbets, H. Pence and B. Keever, Dylan Grogan, Klay Jenson and Thyler Monkus. W—D. Grogan. L—T. Tibbets. 2B: T. Monkus (SHS), H. Barnes (SHS).

### STANFIELD 12, SHERIDAN 2 (5)

The Stanfield Tigers baseball team continued to swing the bats well Friday afternoon, posting a five-spot in the third on the way to a 12-2 drubbing of Sheridan.

Jenson, Grogan, Flores and Hunter Barnes each had

two RBIs, and Flores was 3-for-4 and Barnes 3-for-3. Grogan had a triple, Flores had two doubles and eight Tigers drove in runs. As a team, the Tigers pounded out 15 hits and allowed just four.

Thyler Monkus went the distance on the bump. In his five innings, the sophomore rightly allowed four hits, two unearned runs, struck out five and walked three.

STANFIELD 12, SHERIDAN 2 (5)  
SHS 000 02-2 4 1  
SHS 115 23-12 15 1  
L. Williams, D. Arthur and J. Stauffer, Thyler Monkus and Steven Allen. W—T. Monkus. L—L. Williams. 2B: T. Culp (SHER), R. Bailey (SHS), T. Flores 2 (SHS), K. Jenson, D. Grogan. 3B: D. Grogan.

### STANFIELD 10, UNION/COVE 0

It took awhile, but the Stanfield baseball team finally got things going.

The Tigers used six runs in the fifth inning and four in the sixth to rout the Union Bobcats 10-0 in six innings at the Stanfield Spring Break Tournament Thursday.

Grogan and Monkus led the way offensively, both going 2-for-4, and both of Grogan's knocks were doubles. Tony Flores nearly threw a no-hitter, allowing just an infield single and walked five and struck out 10. He took his no-no bid into the fifth, when a weak grounder to first allowed an infield single.

The win was Stanfield's first in four tries.

## Hermiston sweeps doubleheader

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston baseball team swept its doubleheader with Century on Friday, winning the initial matchup 9-2 and winning the nightcap 8-2. Hermiston (5-3) now has the most wins in the Columbia River Conference, with one more win than Hood River Valley (4-3).

In the opener, Hermiston scored in its final three offensive innings, pushing across two in the fourth, four in the fifth and two in the sixth.

Tyler Sexton started on the bump and allowed two early runs, but otherwise threw well. The righty struck out nine and allowed seven hits in five innings of work.

Landon Gammell led the way for

the Bulldogs at the plate, going 2-for-3, with two runs scored out of the seventh slot. Dylan Caldwell also scored two runs and had a base hit. Hermiston scored its nine runs all without a single extra base hit.

HERMISTON 9, CENTURY 2  
CHS 011 000 0-2 7 1  
HHS 001 242 X-9 6 1  
T. Metzner and B. Cole, T. Sexton, M. Jones and Landon Gammell. W—T. Sexton. L—T. Metzner. 2B: K. Somers (CHS).

### HERMISTON 8, CENTURY 2

In the nightcap, play was delayed for more than 40 minutes because of the glare coming off a shed behind home plate. Hermiston led 3-0 at that point.

Chase Root threw five solid innings to earn the win on the bump.

Cole Smith had a single, a triple, two RBIs and scored two runs to pace the Bulldogs offensively.

The Bulldogs got three in the first, capped by Smith's RBI single, and plated four more in the second, again capped by Smith, this time on a run-scoring triple. Hermiston added an insurance run in the third when Slade Gritz walked, stole second and third and then came around on a Kyler Mikami single.

Root allowed just the one earned run on one hit, and he struck out eight and walked six.

HERMISTON 8, CENTURY 2  
CHS 001 001 0-2 3 2  
HHS 341 000 X-8 6 0  
K. Somers and K. Lennen, Chase Root, Lukus Tolian and Landon Gammell. W—C. Root. L—K. Somers. 2B: C. Root (HHS), 3B: C. Smith (HHS).

## Hermiston Booster steak feed nets \$85,000

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston Sports Booster Steak Feed March 7 was even more successful than last year's, netting the club about \$85,000.

The 36th annual steak feed actually generated almost \$98,000 of gross income, treasurer Paul Barnett said, with the only expenses coming from renting the building space and paying for the food. Most of the items auctioned were donated, and the highlight was four Mariners tickets

good for any home game except those against the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees.

"That just shows so much about what we do," Barnett said about the booster club's profits. "Our expenses have been donated. Some of our title sponsors not only donate a check but donate goods."

The live auction generated the most money with \$52,700. Dinner tickets raised \$15,000; the silent auction brought in \$7,600; \$13,000 worth of donations came in; and \$1,700 was

raised for the endowment fund.

This year's feed raised more than \$25,000 than last year, something Barnett said isn't surprising considering how the planning board approaches each year's feed.

"I think a lot of it is we have a good board that tries to think outside of the box every year," Barnett said. "We're not fixed about, 'Well, we do this for 20 years.' They bring in different aspects of the Hermiston community. They have ties, and we have a lot of

unique items and a lot of unique bidders that come in, and this is their night to spend money.

"The businesses in Hermiston just always come together," he added. "This is a pretty easy sell. As a board, we don't use any money. We don't get any benefit out of it. Out of every dollar, 99 cents go back (to the booster club)."

With the money raised, the booster club helps fund team road trips, pay assistant coach wages and pays for athletic equipment and costs for students in need.

### GO SEE IT

#### Saturday, March 28

No events scheduled

#### Sunday, March 29

No events scheduled

#### Monday, March 30

No events scheduled

#### Tuesday, March 31

##### Baseball

Hermiston vs. West Linn, 4 p.m.  
Umatilla @ Pilot Rock JV, 4 p.m.

##### Softball

Hermiston @ Summit, 4 p.m.  
Umatilla @ Pilot Rock (DH), 4 p.m.

##### Tennis

Stanfield 3-way vs. Helix, Weston-McEwen, 4:30 p.m.

#### Wednesday, April 1

##### Lacrosse

Hermiston @ Hood River Valley, 7 p.m.

##### Softball

Umatilla vs. Weston-McEwen, 4 p.m.