

Overcoming adversity

A local baseball team is basically starting from scratch this season. This group has had more adversity in the past year than most teams endure in four, and the attitude is still positive.

It's the Umatilla baseball team, and they deserve some attention. Second-year head coach Corleone "Booter" Lewis (I love that name) was the first to say his expectations in terms of winning and losing weren't that high. They have other, more important, things to worry about than mere baseball games.

You see, Umatilla had its season end last year because enough players had low grades so the team was ruled ineligible, and it had to forfeit the rest of the season. Personally, I had never heard of that before. I've heard of seasons ended due to illegal activities but never a large portion of ineligible players.

But that's something Umatilla is dealing with this year. I wrote in the spring sports tab that Lewis signed a contract with his players at the end of last season, stating he would be back for this season, and he held up that promise. But the players agreed to take care of business in the classroom, and, thus far, there's no indication they aren't.

I've had a chance to check out a couple practices and take a look at the morale. Skills and things are great, but they're nothing without a good attitude — and the Vikings have a good attitude. They have fun. They laugh. They smile. If you had no background knowledge, you would think that they've been a decent team the last few years. It's pretty refreshing to see, actually.

They've been struggling in games, though. They're 0-5, but their last game was a 4-3 defeat at the hands of Kennedy, a promising sign for a team that's just trying to solidify.

They're young, too. Man, they're young. They have one senior —



SAM BARBEE
FROM THE SIDELINES
Sports reporter

Gerardo Barrea — and four juniors. The rest are sophomores and freshmen, making for arguably the youngest roster in the area, probably in the league, maybe even in the state. When teams are that young, it takes time for them to adjust to the varsity level. The game's faster. The pitchers throw harder. The balls are hit harder. It's a step up in competition that some just aren't ready for. I wasn't.

They have some players. Lewis raves about junior Josh Dever, who does everything for the Vikings. Sophomore Diego Soto is an inning-eater and has gone the distance on the mound once already this year. Junior Tristen Sanguino can swing it a bit and hits fourth, buoying the Vikings' run production.

But Umatilla's season isn't dependent upon wins and losses. Lewis made that point early when he spoke a few weeks ago. He's concerned about getting his program on the right track, getting his players focused on the classroom as much — or more — than on the diamond.

I have a lot respect for Lewis. He's in a tough spot, and he's taken everything in stride. Sure, he was disappointed with how last year went. Most people would be. But players take their cues from their coach, and Lewis is giving great cues right now. He's always positive. Even after a loss, he focuses on what the players did well and praises good performances. He doesn't throw guys under the bus. He doesn't rant and rave about umpires and their calls. He's a good influence and someone to look up to in the Umatilla baseball program.

I don't know how good the Vikings will be this year. I don't think Lewis knows, either. I

SEE ADVERSITY/A8

LIONS CLAW BULLDOGS

West Linn shuts out Hermiston

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

On a windswept day at Armand Larive Middle School and with college baseball scouts in attendance, West Linn senior Karson Lindell didn't disappoint.

He two-hit the Hermiston Bulldogs in a 13-0 decision in five innings in a non-league baseball game Tuesday afternoon.

"When you look around and see the amount of scouts that are here, that's an indicator that the kid's pretty dang good," first-year Hermiston coach Lance Hawkins said of Lindell. "I just wish we battled a little bit more even though (we were) kinda out-matched. I'm not into lying to anybody or the kids. I said, 'We gotta compete really hard today.'"

The Bulldogs (5-3) certainly didn't help themselves. Bulldog pitchers walked nine batters, hit one and Hermiston committed four errors in the field, giving the Lions (5-2) four extra runs. They also had two runners picked off by Lindell — and first and at second — killing potential run-scoring opportunities before they got started.



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston head coach Lance Hawkins walks off the mound after an official visit to pitcher RJ Robles during the third inning of Hermiston's 13-0 loss to West Linn Tuesday at Armand Larive Middle School.

RJ Robles started but couldn't get out of the third inning, allowing seven runs that were all earned, and he walked five. Hayden Edmiston relieved him, eating two-plus innings and allowing four runs, three earned, on four hits, three walks

and a strikeout. Hawkins said he was impressed with how the sophomore battled through the tough assignment.

"He's a kid that can go through the lineup once, maybe twice," Hawkins said of Edmiston. "He's

done that twice for us now, where we go, 'Hayden, go get out on the bump and eat up some innings,' and he does it. If you've ever seen Hayden, he's not smoking the ball, and he's not re-

SEE BULLDOGS/A8

Hawkins finally at the helm

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

First-year Hermiston baseball coach Lance Hawkins describes himself as a different kind of leader.

His arms are covered in tattoos, even though he's a teacher. He loves Harley-Davidson motorcycles. He's been to Sturgess, and he's ridden around the

Grand Canyon and through California. He wears a Harley-Davidson ring on his right hand. He has a thin goatee on his chin and wears his cap pulled down low.

His tattoos tell stories. He said he doesn't get inked for no reason. One of his childhood friends died suddenly when Hawkins was 25, and one tattoo is a

tribute to him. He has two sons. He's got tributes to them. His mother kept needling Hawkins about putting her name on his arm, so he obliged. He's got a Harley-Davidson logo in there, too.

He puts his identity where all can see.

"I'm a history teacher. I like history," he said. "I have history (on me). These

are all history. And it's weird. People see them and they say, 'Gosh, you teach. How can you (have those) and you teach?' I've never been approached negatively. Most of the last 10 years, kids come up to me and say, 'Oh, my mom's got one of those. My grandma's got one.'"

SEE HAWKINS/A8

Colbray a national champion, Hermiston wrestlers show well



EO MEDIA GROUP FILE PHOTO

Hermiston's Samuel Colbray gets ready to flip Alberto Meza, of Central, onto his back and pin him at the Oregon OSAA Wrestling State Championships. The victory gave Colbray the state 5A title in the 195-pound weight class. He recently claimed another championship title at a national tournament last week.

Four of seven Bulldogs won matches at NHSCA nationals

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

At the National High School Coaches Association high school wrestling nationals in Virginia Beach, Virginia, Thursday and Friday, Sam Colbray accomplished something no other Hermiston wrestler ever did. He won a high school national championship.

Colbray topped Blake Rypel of Indiana 11-4 in the juniors bracket. The Hermiston product had Rypel pinned in the second period, Hermiston head coach Shaun Williams said, but the official stopped the match because of injury concerns for Rypel. Once the match resumed, Colbray dominated the rest of the way.

"He wrestled pretty well," Williams said of Colbray. "He had some tough matches, and I thought he did a good job of managing the matches — just being smart about it. He got the

SEE COLBRAY/A8

Summit downs Hermiston in extras

The Hermiston softball team got a good pitching performance from freshman Julissa Almaguer, but came up short 10-9 in an extra inning affair at Summit on Tuesday.

Hermiston took an early 2-0 lead and upped it to 5-0 after four and a half innings of play, but Summit rallied for six in the fifth, two in the sixth, one in the seventh and one in the eighth to earn the walk-off victory.

Summit scored the 10 runs without an extra base hit but was helped by three Hermiston errors.

The loss is Hermiston's (3-4) second straight and fourth in five games. Summit (4-2) has now won three straight after losing two of its first three.

Almaguer went four-plus innings and struck out four in the no-decision. Mikayla Kopacz went 3-for-5 with two doubles for the Bulldogs, and Ellery Jones chipped in with two hits, as well.

Hermiston's two in the first came when Jaime Hinkley walked and stole second and third during the next two at-bats. Kopacz doubled with two outs to drive in the speedy senior for the first run of the day. After moving to third, Kopacz then trotted home on a wild pitch to up the Bulldogs' lead to 2-0.

The score would stay there until the fifth when Hinkley and Ashley Moser both reached on errors to lead off the inning, and then Abi Drotzmann was beated to pack the pillows. Kopacz reached on a fielder's choice that plated Hinkley, Jones flied out to right to plate Moser and then Almaguer helped herself with an RBI single.

Summit got its six in the bottom of the fifth to take a 6-5 lead, and Hermiston answered with two of its own in the sixth.

Bobby Hofbauer reached on a hit-by-pitch, Hinkley singled and Drotzmann was hit by a pitch an out later to load the bases. Kopacz mashed her

second RBI double, plating Hofbauer and Drotzmann to take a 7-6 lead. Breyanna Naylor, in for Almaguer, then led off with a walk. An out later, she scored on a single. Two batters later, with the bases loaded, Moser was beated to plate Hermiston's ninth and final run.

"We competed well," Hermiston head coach Kylee Lete said. "We made some mistakes on the bases, but the girls did a good job of battling and keep coming back when (Summit) would score runs. We have some things to work on, but every team does so (we need to) hit the drawing board tomorrow and correct those mistakes."

SUMMIT 10, HERMISTON 9 (8)

HHS	200	032	20-993
SHS	000	062	11-1013

H. Nelson and A. Clemans. J. Almaguer, B. Naylor and J. Hinkley.
2B: M. Kopacz 2 (HHS).

GO SEE IT

Wednesday, April 1

Lacrosse

Hermiston @ Hood River Valley, 7 p.m.
Umatilla vs. Weston-McEwen, 4 p.m.

Thursday, April 2

Tennis

Stanfield vs. Ione, 4:30 p.m.

Friday, April 3

Golf

Hermiston boys @ Ridgeview, 9 a.m.
Hermiston girls @ Redmond, 1:30 p.m.
Echo @ Pendleton Tournament, 9 a.m.

Lacrosse

Hermiston @ Redmond, 3 p.m.

Softball

Hermiston vs. Reynolds (DH), 3 p.m.
Umatilla vs. Vale, 1 p.m.
Echo vs. Riverside @ Echo Tournmanet, 1 p.m.

Track

Hermiston @ East County Classic (Gresham), 4 p.m.
Stanfield @ McLoughlin, 11 a.m.
Echo @ Sherman County, 11 a.m.

Baseball

Hermiston @ David Douglas, 4:30 p.m.
Umatilla vs. Vale (DH), 1 p.m.
Stanfield Riverside (DH), 1 p.m.

Tennis

Umatilla vs. Riverside, 4 p.m.
Stanfield @ Condon, 3 p.m.

Saturday, April 4

Golf

Hermiston girls @ Redmond Tournament, 8 a.m.

Lacrosse

Hermiston @ Sisters, 12 p.m.

Track

Echo @ Sherman County, 11 a.m.