

# Hermiston holds off Lakeridge

Betz throws complete game, Drotzmann triples

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

Before the season started, Hermiston softball coach Kylee Lete didn't know who would be the ace of the staff.

After Friday's 8-4 win over Lakeridge, a candidate is making a case for herself.

Taylor Betz, a junior, took the ball Friday and tossed a complete game, allowing the four runs — three earned — on nine hits, as she walked two and struck out two in her second straight win at the Dawgpound. Ashley Moser and Elory Jones were each 2-for-4 and scored two runs to pace the Bulldogs (6-6) offensively.

The win is Hermiston's third straight.

"I knew I need to (pitch well) for my team, and I knew we all wanted to win today," Betz said after the game. "I knew I had to pitch as best I could and help my teammates out."

Betz had a couple of trouble innings but cruised the rest of the way. The first two Lakeridge Pacers singled in the first inning, but Betz only allowed one of them to score. In the top of the seventh, after retir-



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston junior Taylor Betz comes home with a delivery during the Bulldogs' 8-4 win over Lakeridge on Friday. Betz threw a complete game and struck out two batters over the course of seven innings.

ing the first two batters on just two pitches, the Pacers reached on three straight singles and plated two runs, but Betz coaxed an easy ground out to shortstop to

end the threat and the game.

After wondering who she had for pitching this season, Lete is becoming more confident in Betz.

"She had a good mental-

ity out on the mound, and she kept the ball low, and that's what we need," Lete said. "She kept the ball on the ground and let her defense work, which is what

you want from your pitcher."

It was the second game in three tries that Hermiston found itself down after the top of the first inning, and it was the second in three games that the Bulldogs chipped away at the lead and eventually pulled ahead.

It took an inning, but Jones singled to start the home half of the second, advanced to second on an error, moved to third on a wild pitch and scored on a well-placed bunt from senior first baseman Makenzie Juul. Hermiston's first five runs were manufactured through aggressive base running and bat handling.

"The girls did a good job executing bunts and moving our runners around," Lete said. "That's what we ask of them all the time: execute, and push your runs across and get timely hits. Maybe it wasn't a timely hit, but they bunted the ball well and put pressure on their defense. Any time you can put constant pressure on a defense, eventually you're going to make the move."

Hermiston made that move in the fifth. Up 2-1 against Kailey Kruger and her tough riseball, the Bulldogs were largely stifled in the first four frames. In the fifth, however, the constant pressure Lete mentioned finally broke through. Jones again singled, but this time

with two outs, Juul walked, and then Breyanna Naylor drove home pinch runner Amanda Baron with a sharp single. Then, with Kaylene Wheeler at the plate, pinch runner Keirsten Miller scored on a wild pitch, and after Wheeler walked, Bobbi Hofbauer singled to drive in Naylor.

In the sixth, Hermiston got three runs more to add some insurance. Hofbauer led off with a walk, and Moser singled right after. Kruger got two quick outs, but senior left fielder Abi Drotzmann one-hopped the wall in right center for a triple, allowing Hofbauer and Moser to score easily. That put Hermiston up 7-2, and Drotzmann trotted home on a wild pitch with Jones at the dish.

"I honestly think this was our first actual win of the season," Betz said. "I know we had more real ones, but, as a team, I think we all felt this more. We felt we played well offensively and defensively. That's the real win."

Hermiston again takes the field Thursday for a date with Southridge (WA). First pitch is set for 4 p.m.

## HERMISTON 8, LAKERIDGE 4

LHS	100	001
3-4 9 2		
HHS	011	033
X-8 6 3		
K. Kruger and K. Ericson. T. Betz and K. Wheeler.		
3B: A. Drotzmann (HHS).		

# JUST ONE OF THE GUYS

Although Bulldog manager, Hunt a valuable member of baseball team

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

One member of the Hermiston baseball team doesn't get hits. He doesn't pitch, and he doesn't play the field, either.

He watches games attentively. He helps set up and break down practices. He keeps the atmosphere light in the dugout and at practice. He doesn't have a jersey, but he's part of the team.

His name is Alex Hunt, and he's the Bulldogs' manager. And though he doesn't contribute on the field, his off-the-field contributions are just as important.

Hunt wasn't selected to

one of the baseball teams straight out of tryouts. He's got a good swing, coach Lance Hawkins said, but he's much smaller than his peers. He comes up to the shoulders of most Hermiston players. Cuts are Hawkins' least favorite part of coaching are, and he could see the unhappy and disappointed look on Hunt's face when he was informed he didn't make the team. He was oddly happy, too, however.

"I didn't have to deal with missing school and stuff because I wanted to stay with that," Hunt said from practice Thursday. "But I was sad, too, because I didn't get to play baseball. Then when (Hawkins) asked me if I wanted to be the manager, I was pretty happy and excited because I get to go to the games still and get to go to practice with them and everything."

Initially, Hunt understood why Hawkins made



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston freshman Alex Hunt, Bulldog baseball manager, helps any way he can. On Thursday at practice, that meant shagging wiffle balls and carrying around a water bottle.

the decision he did, realizing that he's not quite physically ready for high school baseball.

"He understood the letting-go piece," Hawkins said. "I think he's willing

to look around and go, 'I'm not as big as the other guys. I can't throw as far. I'm not able to do those things right now.' He was upset, and it makes it more understandable. That's when I told (the other coaches), 'We need to do this.' I'm not a big person on managers. I've never had one before. I saw that it hurt when I said 'You didn't make the team.'"

After try-outs, when the first-year coach offered the job to Hunt, he said teen's face lit up "like no other," and he accepted without hesitation. For him, it was an opportunity he couldn't pass up, and an opportunity he's taken advantage of.

"Life is full of those (opportunities)," Hawkins said. "You got to take those and run with them."

Hunt has missed only two practices this season



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston freshman Alex Hunt is the manager of the Bulldogs varsity baseball team, but, according to players and coaches, he is a full member of the team.

— both excused — but he offered to make up the absences in any way, he could. While Hawkins never took him up on the offers, Hunt's work ethic impressed him.

"I never worried about (Hunt making up missed practices)," Hawkins said. "He's here every day. He keeps his grades up. He's on time to class, just like everybody else. I'm just really glad to have a kid around like that."

Hunt doesn't take his role lightly. Part of it is the opportunity to advance. Last year, a player didn't make the team out of tryouts but was kept as a manager at the junior varsity level. After other players

were injured or encountered academic problems, that player was given a jersey and helped on the field, not just off.

That possibility isn't lost on the optimistic Hunt.

"It's just really fun doing this and being the manager and being able to be with the team and being able to watch and help me with my game," he said.

Hunt said he has learned from watching. He said he watched sophomore outfielder Mitch Brown make a diving attempt for a sinking line drive that got under his glove. He threw the runner out at second, and be-

SEE HUNT/A10

## Bulldogs take two from Parkrose

EO MEDIA GROUP

Junior Tyler Sexton played the walk-off hero role in the first of two wins over visiting Parkrose Friday.

Sexton hit his first varsity home run with two outs in the bottom of the seventh inning to lift Hermiston to a 3-2 win over the Broncos. The solo shot was the also the first Bulldog homer of the season.

The Bulldogs (7-4) fell

behind 2-0, but a Cole Smith sac fly and a Mitch Brown squeeze bunt evened the score before Sexton hit the colossal shot to left-center field.

Sexton did not start the game. He entered in the fifth to relieve starting pitcher RJ Robles.

Hermiston defeated Parkrose 4-2 in the game two of the double dip. Junior pitcher Chase Root rang up nine Bronco batters in six innings of

three-hit ball.

The Bulldogs scored three runs in the second inning of the nightcap. Kaden Caldwell drove in two on a double with a hard liner to right field that made its way to the fence.

Hermiston has completed its non-league slate with the pair of victories and now moves on to Columbia River Conference play. They'll travel to The Dalles on April 18 for a doubleheader.

### GO SEE IT

#### Saturday, April 11

**Track**  
Hermiston @ Willamette Falls Invitational @ Oregon City, 10 a.m.  
Stanfield @ Dick Horyna Invitational, 11 a.m.  
Echo @ Dick Horyna Invitational, 11 a.m.  
**Softball**  
Echo @ Imbler, 1 p.m.  
**Baseball**  
Stanfield @ Elgin (DH), 1 p.m.

#### Sunday, April 12

No events scheduled

#### Monday, April 13

**Boys Golf**  
Hermiston @ Bend Invite @ Bend CC, 9 a.m.  
**Girls Golf**  
Hermiston @ Summit @ Broken Top GC, 12 p.m.  
**Tennis**  
Umatilla vs. McLoughlin, 4 p.m.

#### Tuesday, April 14

**Boys Tennis**  
Hermiston vs. Pendleton, 4 p.m.  
Umatilla @ Condon, 3:30 p.m.  
Stanfield @ McLoughlin, 3:30 p.m.  
**Girls Tennis**  
Hermiston @ Pendleton, 4 p.m.  
Umatilla @ Condon, 3:30 p.m.  
Stanfield @ McLoughlin, 3:30 p.m.  
**Lacrosse**  
Hermiston @ Central Valley, 6 p.m.  
**Track**

Hermiston vs. Hood River Valley, 4 p.m.

**Baseball**  
Umatilla vs. Sherman County, 2 p.m.  
Stanfield vs. Weston-McEwen, 5 p.m.  
**Softball**  
Umatilla vs. Heppner, 4 p.m.  
Echo @ Baker, 4 p.m.

#### Wednesday, April 15

No events scheduled