



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Surrounded by her family, Hermiston's Brea Kestler signs her letter of intent to play volleyball in the fall at Southwestern Oregon Community College in Coos Bay.

Brea Kestler signs with Southwestern Oregon

Hermiston setter joins playoff-bound Lakers

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

The first time Brea Kestler visited Southwestern Oregon Community College in Coos Bay weeks ago, she knew immediately it was the place for her.

The Hermiston volleyball team setter then worked out with the team, and she called it “the most intense practice I ever had.”

Monday, Kestler signed her National Letter of Intent to join the Lakers volleyball program, coached by Steve George. The setter joins a program that finished fourth in the Northwest Athletic Conference south division last year, earning a playoff spot.

“(I’m most excited) for our season to start,” Kestler said. “I leave Aug. 6, I think, and we have a whole month and a half before school starts just to get conditioning in, and we have our first tournament in California, and we get to go to Six Flags. That’s gonna be exciting.”

Kestler’s journey to Coos Bay began during volleyball season in November. Head coach Becky Wadekamper was compiling film clips of the senior setter and sending them to schools and receiving interest in return. Kestler had been developing a relationship with Walla Walla University, until Coos Bay expressed interest.

She took a trip there a few months ago and felt comfortable right away. She said George is one of the most competitive people she’s been around, and the team, by proxy, is very competitive, too. Wadekamper believes

that Kestler, who is also competitive and “feisty” on the court, will fit in wonderfully.

“She has a real passion for the game,” Wadekamper said of Kestler. “Not everybody that plays the game has that. That gives her a lot of drive.”

“Once you go to that next level, (competitive-ness is) the key thing you have to have,” Wadekamper added. “In high school, not everybody’s on that. Players are here for different reasons, not just to compete at volleyball, but once you get to the college level, it’s all about that.”

Kestler was drawn to George as a coach because of his experience, she said. The 2015 season will be his first in Coos Bay after spending 30 years coaching at various levels. His two daughters are both continuing their volleyball careers into college, and Kestler felt his enthusiasm and knowledge of the game were right for her.

“He’s super competitive, and I’m really excited to work with him,” Kestler said. “After going through a couple schools, he was definitely the most competitive and the most thriving to win.”

Kestler plans on studying education, inspired by her favorite teacher Randy Smith, and SWOCC offers a four-year education program, although she plans on transferring after just two years. Smith’s mother also lives in Coos Bay, giving Kestler a friendly face from the start.

Though Kestler will be moving far from home, about 400 miles, Tiffany Maddox, Kestler’s mother, will make every game, she said. Plus Coos Bay is close to the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, which makes her father happy, she said.

“It’s gonna work out,” Kestler said.

Butte Challenge marks 16th year

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Area runners will raise money for the Hermiston High School Cross Country team when they compete in the 16th annual Butte Challenge this weekend at the Hermiston Butte.

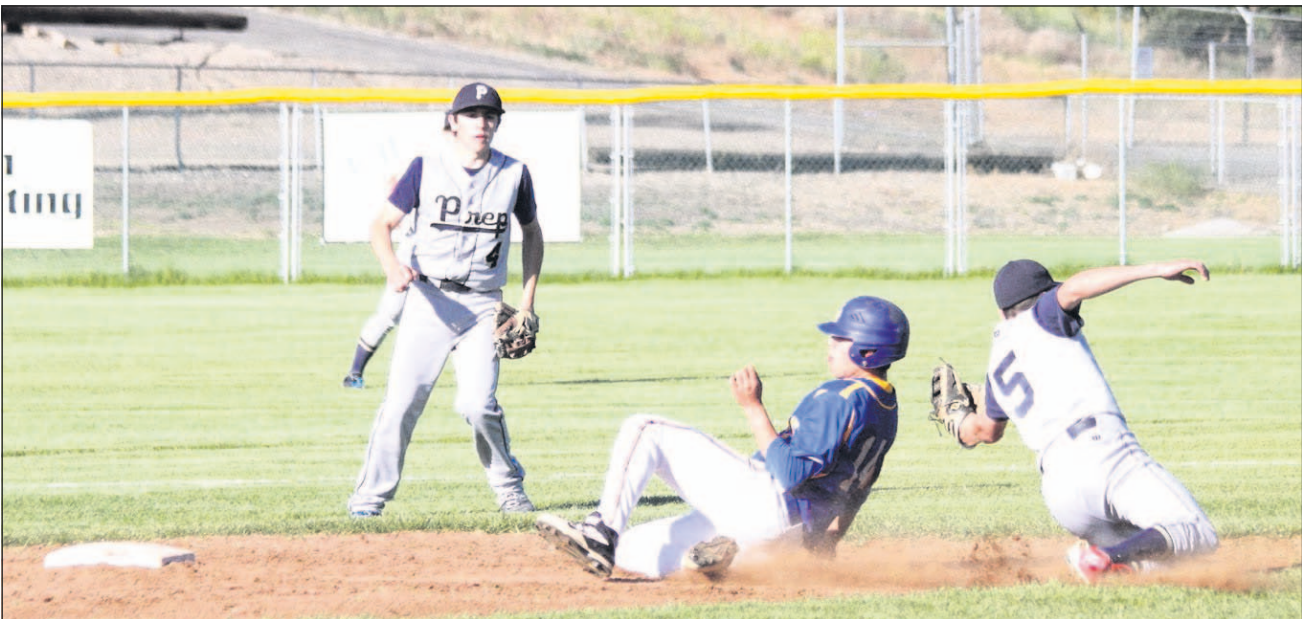
First-year cross coun-

try coach Troy Blackburn, who ran in the Butte Challenge in its infancy, said he is impressed to see how the event has grown from its first fundraiser race more than a decade ago into the top fundraising event for Hermiston cross country team currently.

SEE CHALLENGE/A8

IF YOU GO

WHAT: The Butte Challenge
WHEN: 8:30 a.m. registration, 9 a.m. event, Saturday, May 9
WHERE: Northwest Seventh Street, Hermiston
WHY: Hermiston cross country fundraiser
HOW: Register at ButteChallenge.com or at the event. Cost is \$10 for the Butte Scoot, and \$20 for the adult events. An extra \$2.75 fee is added for walk-up registration.



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Stanfield's Tony Flores slides safely into second base, past the outstretched glove of Tri-Cities Prep shortstop Isaac Nelson during the fourth inning of a 9-5 Tiger win Tuesday in Stanfield.

Tigers dominate over Jaguars

Grogan homers, doubles; Flores tough on hill

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Up 2-1 in the bottom of the third inning with two outs, the Stanfield bats came to life.

The Tigers strung together six consecutive hits with two outs — including a two-run shot to left-center field into the wind from Dylan

Grogan — and the Tigers downed the Tri-Cities Prep Jaguars 9-5 Tuesday behind nine strikeouts from Tony Flores.

Stanfield (13-6, 7-1) maintains a one-game lead over Vale for first place in the 3A Eastern Oregon League. The Tigers have now won three straight.

“We’re happy with where we’re at,” head coach Bryan Johnson said. “If we can just stay healthy, we know we’ve at least clinched a state playoff birth. Now we want to finish it and host districts.”

Health has become a bit

of a concern for Stanfield. Flores started his first game on the bump after missing a couple of weeks because of a sore arm, and Keith Wampler is likely lost for the season with a broken hand. Starters Ryan Bailey and Jason Fitzpatrick weren’t present Tuesday, as they traveled with FFA for an event.

Stanfield got major contributions from some freshmen who were thrust into the starting lineup, however. Damien Curiel, a second baseman, and Justin Keeney and Makiah Blankenship, outfielders, each had hits out

of the bottom of the order in the six-run third inning. Curiel had a two-out RBI single; Keeney posted with his second hit of the day to score Steven Allan; and Blankenship laced a 3-1 pitch into right-center to plate Curiel and Keeney in the inning.

“That was really nice to see those guys step up,” Johnson said. “It’s what you gotta have as a team. You never know when your number’s gonna get called, and they haven’t had a lot of playing time. It was nice for

SEE TIGERS/A8

Buckaroos scrape by Bulldogs in extra innings

BY ERIK SKOPIL
EO MEDIA GROUP

Quinn Cockburn was dead to rights Tuesday.

The Pendleton junior had just scampered to third base when a pitch from Hermiston’s Chase Root found the dirt, eluding catcher Landon Gammell. Cockburn took a wide turn around the bag at third, however, opening a window for Gammell to find Lukas Tolan, but the throw careened off Cockburn’s helmet and into left field, giving the fleet-of-

foot junior all the time in the world to coast home for the deciding run in a 6-5 defeat in a wild extra-inning affair Tuesday in Pendleton.

“If we make that play at third, we say how great a play that was,” Hermiston head coach Lance Hawkins said. “That’s one of those things. We’re going to keep coaching and teaching. There are some things we want to put in for the next two weeks.”

The loss puts Hermiston (9-10, 2-7) farther into the hole it dug itself in the Co-

lumbia River Conference and a 2-1 deficit in the season series. Meanwhile, Pendleton moves into sole possession of second place.

Three first-inning Bulldog runs put the Buckaroos behind the eight ball, but they responded with three of their own in the bottom of the frame. Hermiston took the lead back in the fifth and seventh innings, but Pendleton found an answer each time.

Cockburn’s run on the passed ball and throwing error provided the Bucka-

roos with their only lead of the game.

Faulty base running cost the Buckaroos three times in the early innings. Two batters before Cockburn was caught at third, teammate Brandon Hergert did the same trying to leg out a triple that scored two runs. Two innings later Papol was thrown out by a handful of steps heading home by left fielder Michael Gossler.

Pendleton hit Root, a sophomore, hard all day.

SEE BULLDOGS/A8

Tavin Headings joins D-III’s elite

Hermiston sharpshooter inks with George Fox

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Heading into the 2014-15 basketball season, Tavin Headings wasn’t sure what the future held for her. She hadn’t played basketball in a year, choosing instead to swim in 2013-14.

She had received some interest from colleges as a basketball

player the year before but had to take a break from the hardwood. Her head just wasn’t in it anymore.

After a successful basketball season that saw her named to the first team All-Columbia River Conference squad, first team All-Area team and a second-place finish at the state tournament in March, however, Headings reconsidered playing at the next level and signed a letter of intent Monday to become the newest member of the George Fox Bruins women’s basketball program

in Newberg, Oregon.

“They were the whole package,” Headings said of George Fox. “I felt at home when I was there. The first time I went there, I was just watching their basketball game, and I met the coach and the team. I felt like I belonged. They were really nice and really welcoming. They didn’t treat me like I was just a recruit.”

The Bruins are members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association and sit in the Division

SEE HEADINGS/A8



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston's Tavin Headings, center, is flanked by her parents, left, and her coaches, right, as she signs a letter of intent Monday to become a member of the George Fox women's basketball program.

GO SEE IT

Wednesday, May 6

Boys Tennis
Hermiston vs. Hood River Valley, 4 p.m.
Girls Tennis
Hermiston @ Hood River Valley, 4 p.m.
Girls Golf
Hermiston @ Districts @ Redmond, 8 a.m.

Thursday, May 7

Girls Golf
Hermiston @ Districts @ Redmond, 8 a.m.
Track and Field
Umatilla @ Umatilla Finale, 3:30 p.m.
Stanfield @ Umatilla Finale, 3:30 p.m.

Friday, May 8

Girls Golf
Hermiston @ Districts @ Redmond, 8 a.m.
Track and Field
Hermiston @ Pendleton @ Pilot Rock (CRC Novice), 3 p.m.
Boys Tennis
Hermiston @ Pendleton, 4 p.m.
Baseball
Hermiston vs. The Dalles, 4:30 p.m.
Umatilla @ Elgin (DH), 1 p.m.
Softball
Hermiston vs. The Dalles, 4:30 p.m.
Umatilla @ Elgin, 1 p.m.
Echo vs. Enterprise, 1 p.m.

Saturday, May 9

Lacrosse
Hermiston @ Sisters @ Sali Tournament, TBD
Track and Field
Hermiston @ Pendleton @ Pilot Rock (CRC Novice Finale), 10 a.m.
Stanfield @ Weston-McEwen, 11 a.m.
Echo @ Arlington, 10 a.m.
Tennis
Umatilla @ Sud-districts @ Hermiston, 9 a.m.
Stanfield @ Sub-districts @ Hermiston, 9 a.m.
Baseball
Stanfield @ Portland Christian, 1 p.m.
Softball
Echo @ Portland Christian, 2 p.m.