

Bulldog Gutierrez signs with Pierce

Player had originally thought she wouldn't play college hoops

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Until recently, college basketball was out of the question for Jazmin Gutierrez.

The Hermiston senior had completed her senior basketball season with a knee brace and the understanding that the possibility of college basketball had run its course. Gutierrez had already decided to either try collegiate track and

field or forgo college athletics altogether until Hermiston girls basketball coach Steve Hoffert's phone rang.

It was Pierce College woman's basketball coach Brian Purugganan, and a month after that fateful call, Gutierrez signed her National Letter of Intent to play hoops at Pierce in Tacoma, Washington.

"Even though the book had already been closed, I was like, 'Maybe I should consider it,'" Gutierrez said. "Because my senior year, it was fast because I didn't play a lot. So I thought maybe this could be another shot, maybe this could be something."

Pierce, under sixth-year coach Purugganan, competes in the West Region

of the Northwest Athletic Conference and finished seventh in the West this past season with a record of 6-22 (5-11).

At one time, the chance of playing college basketball seemed a lifetime away for Gutierrez. Last June, she tore her anterior cruciate ligament during a camp at Hermiston High School. Schools' interest in the soon-to-be-senior disappeared quickly when she had her surgery.

During the course of her senior basketball season, Gutierrez only saw limited action, and she decided that perhaps college athletics wasn't meant to be, so she began to look into other ar-



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston senior Jazmin Gutierrez smiles after signing her national Letter of Intent to play basketball at Pierce College in Tacoma, Washington, as her mother, Angel, and father, Victor, look on.

SEE SIGNING/A8

Echo, Stanfield teams earn all-league honors

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

The state-bound Echo Cougars earned six All-League softball bids after the most successful season in program history.

Outfielder Jaime Christopher led the group as the only first-team player. Mackenzie Gonzales earned a second-team pitcher nod, Hannah McCarty was named a second-team infielder and Monique Montoya garnered a second-team designated player nod.

Infielder Bailey Srofe and first baseman Kenzie Blankenship were honorable mention selections.

The league-champion Stanfield Tigers were also honored with numerous selections to the 3A Eastern Oregon League All-League team this week.

Head baseball coach Bryan Johnson was named Coach of the Year, sophomore left-

hander Klay Jenson was named a unanimous first-team pitcher, and Tony Flores was a unanimous first-team infielder.

Sophomore Dylan Grogan earned a nod as a first-team catcher, and sophomore Ryan Bailey garnered a first-team first baseman nod. Sophomore Thyler Monkus was tagged as a first-team outfielder, and senior Steven Allan was named a first-team utility player.

Infielder Hunter Barnes and Jenson, nominated as an outfielder, were second-team Tigers, and outfielder Jason Fitzpatrick was an honorable mention selection, as was Flores, nominated as a pitcher.

For Umatilla, junior infielder Josh Dever was named to the second team, and freshman catcher Brylee Dufloth received an honorable mention from Eastern Oregon League coaches.

Tigers aiming for redemption in today's state playoff game

Stanfield plays Pleasant Hill at 5 p.m. at home

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

The end of the 2014 baseball season has no impact on the 2015 version of the Stanfield Tigers.

That group did everything this year's squad did: It won league and district championships and hosted a state home game but lost, which started the Tigers' summer earlier than hoped and expected.

Though the players aren't thinking about it, No. 8 Stanfield (19-7, 9-1 league) gets a shot at redemption at 5 p.m. today against No. 9 Pleasant Hill (16-10, 10-5) of the Mountain Valley Conference.

"We just gotta stay sharp, stay healthy, keep the arms fresh and everything else," head coach Bryan Johnson said after a district-winning 3-1 decision over Vale last week. "I like where we're at, though — good pitching, good defense. We've treated every game like a state game, so there shouldn't be a huge chance with the stakes and all that. We just gotta come out, be aggressive and play baseball."

The Pleasant Hill Billies finished second in the MVC behind league-champ and fourth-ranked Glide. They have won three of their last four and have a four-game winning streak in May on their resumé. Their roster features mostly juniors and seniors, with a couple of freshmen, whereas Stanfield's team is comprised predominately of sophomores. These teams have



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Stanfield teammates greet Dylan Grogan (center) after the sophomore hit a walk-off single to beat the McLoughlin Pioneers 6-5 this file photo Stanfield.

no common opponents.

Statistically, Stanfield has put itself in a very good position. Sophomores Dylan Grogan and Tony Flores are both hit-

ting close to .400, and three other Tigers are above .300. Three Tigers have on-base percentages over .500,

SEE TIGERS/A8

Cougars ready for inaugural state appearance

Team faces Rogue River Wednesday

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

At one time, the Echo Cougar softball team was an after-thought, when advancing into districts was an accomplishment by itself.

Now, with a young and hungry group, the Cougars (17-10, 10-4) head south to Rogue River (16-8, 7-2) to take on the eighth-ranked Chieftains of the Southern Cascade League in a state playoff game at 3 p.m. Wednesday.

The league-champ Chieftains enter Wednesday's first-round game winners of six of seven, a streak similar to Echo's. The Cougars, meanwhile, are winners of nine of 10, although they had their nine-game winning streak snapped in the district title game against Vale.

"I felt from the beginning of the season that if we could put together a pretty good run, that they had the ability to get to



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Echo's Hannah McCarty (in blue) looks to round second after a first-inning double in a 9-4 win over the Colton Vikings in Echo in this file photo from March. The Cougars will play their first state playoff game in program history today.

where they're at," coach Bryan Bailey said. "Going into their first state playoff game in program history, to me, they leave a legacy."

Their state-playoff run began May 1 against Nyssa. Following a 10-0 loss to Weston-McEwen, Echo began to hang

double-digit run totals on everybody. The Cougars scored 32 against Nyssa in two games, and then they dropped 31 on Enterprise in a double dip. They put 16 on Portland Christian in Mackenzie Gonzales' perfect game, hung 11 on Irrigon and then got 34 in a double-

header against Umatilla. After scoring more than 10 runs just three times in a month and a half prior to that, Echo did it eight straight games, all of which were wins.

"It was one of the things where it was an

SEE COUGARS/A8

NFHS targets post play with rules changes

EO MEDIA GROUP

A crackdown on defensive contact in high school basketball games is being extended to all ball-handlers next season.

The National Federation of State High School Associations revised Rule 10-6-12 prior to the 2014-15 season in an effort to eliminate exces-

sive contact on ball-handlers and dribblers outside the lane area. The latest revision extends those protections to post players as well.

The acts that constitute a foul when committed against a ball-handler are a.) placing two hands on the player, b.) placing an extended arm bar on the player, c.) placing and keeping a hand on the player

and d.) contacting the player more than once with the same hand or alternating hands.

"As long as we know the expectations, I don't have a problem," Hermiston head girls basketball coach Steve Hoffert said in January. "It's tough for kids to not know what to expect. The good kids and good teams adjust. It's part of the game. If you know

what to expect, not many adjustments need to be made."

The NFHS Basketball Rules Committee also released its points of emphasis for the coming season, chiefly cleaning up post play and rebounding.

A complete listing of the basketball rules changes is available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Hermiston girls basketball camp coming up

The Hermiston girls basketball program is hosting a skills camp June 8 through June 10 at Hermiston High School.

The camp is for girls in third through eighth grades. It will run from 9 a.m. to noon each day. The cost is \$65. Registration fliers can be found at each elementary and middle school in Hermiston, as well as at City Hall and Eastside Market. Participants who register before Monday ensure their T-shirt size. Those who register after Monday still receive a T-shirt but are not guaranteed the proper size.

The camp's focus will be to introduce girls to the sport and improve their individual skills and team play. Individual offensive and defensive fundamentals will be stressed through introductory skill, combination drills and position-specific basics. Additionally, staff will work with campers on team play through competition-like 3-on-3 and 5-on-5 games.

Possible questions may be fielded by Hermiston High School at (541) 667-6100.

The signed registration form and check can be mailed to:

Steve Hoffert, girls basketball
Hermiston High School
600 S. First St.
Hermiston, OR 97838

GO SEE IT

Wednesday, May 27

Baseball
Stanfield vs. Pleasant Hill, 5 p.m.
Softball
Echo @ Rogue River, 3 p.m.

Thursday, May 28

No events scheduled

Friday, May 29

No events scheduled

Saturday, May 30

No events scheduled