

SPORTS

Stanfield pulls away from Walla Walla late

Monkus doubles, triples, drives in two

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

It took all of a week, but Stanfield is back playing baseball. After a 9-6 defeat end-

ed the Tigers' high school season, the summer edition Stanfield Baseball Club was back in action in AAU ball with a 9-3 win over the Walla Walla Grizzlies Thursday. Thylor Monkus was 2-for-3 with a double, triple and two RBIs, Justin Keeney knocked in three, and Ryan Bailey tossed six innings of one-run ball in

the first summer game of the year.

Monkus tripled to lead off the home half of the first and was promptly driven in by Tony Flores. Walla Walla earned it back in the second on a sacrifice fly.

The game remained knotted at one apiece until the fourth, when Stanfield broke it open.

Flores reached on an error with one out and was followed by a Bailey single. Then, with runners at the corners, Dylan Grogan singled to plate Flores, moving Bailey to third. After a Jason Fitzpatrick walk to load the bases, Keeney cleared them with a double, putting Stanfield up 5-1.

Stanfield added another four in the fifth. Damien Curiel singled, Adrian Renner walked, and then Monkus plated both with a double for a 7-1 lead. After an out, Bailey reached on an error, allowing Monkus to trot home for an 8-1 lead. Bailey then stole home for Stanfield's ninth run and a 9-1 lead.

Walla Walla chipped away a bit in the seventh, managing to push across two, but Stanfield's Hunter Barnes was good in relief, and that's all the Grizzlies could muster.

Stanfield next plays Sunday at Richland. First pitch is set for 3 p.m. The Tigers then host Hermiston at 4 p.m. Monday.

COFFIN:

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"Me and my wife, we kind of prayed on it for awhile to figure out what to do," he said. "We kinda just realized God isn't going to open this big of a door unless it's something that's meant to be. We were evenly split, if not pushing towards staying in Stanfield. We just felt like we couldn't give up this kind of an opportunity ... It was just one of those things where it

felt like God was pushing us and telling us to go there.

"At first, I could really tell that my wife was really leaning towards staying and me, too. I didn't know how I was going to be able to break it to the kids that I was leaving, you know ... It was probably the toughest decision I've ever had to make in my life."

Coffin is leaving Stanfield bodily, but the things he learned there will stay with him forever, he said. He feels like he was put in the perfect position with the perfect sup-

port system for a first-year administrator, coach and teacher. Principal, and former Stanfield AD Bryan Johnson, was instrumental in Coffin's development. He was always available for questions or advice.

"Without Bryan, I wouldn't have been able to do it at all," he said. "It's nice he's a younger principal, he was at my position before. He really ... you could go ask him questions and with him, you can never ask too many questions. He's always willing to help. At any school, I don't

think I would've been able to survive my first year with all the responsibilities I had. He was a huge, huge part in the success I had this year."

It's been little more than a month since Coffin accepted the position in Leavenworth, and he said he's received nothing but well wishes and support. Initially, though, he was expecting some push back. He himself even thought he was bailing on Stanfield, that he was only there for a year and bolted for a seemingly better job.

Instead, people were understanding and congratulatory. It caught him off-guard.

"And that's what's crazy — the community was awesome," he said. "They're so supportive. All the other teachers, Bryan, the kids — that's what's crazy, too is when I did break the news to everyone, I expected people to be really mad. I mean, I came for a year and left. But the community support — they understand that I gotta do what's best for my family and I'm going home.

"That's what made it even harder. Once I saw how supportive people are ... I mean, I'm sure some people feel like Stanfield was used, but that was never my intention to be here for a year. I wanted to be here for a long time before I went (back home). But it was one of those one-in-a-million chances that I gotta take. It's awesome to have, though. The community supports me and wishes me the best of luck. That's been really nice and reassuring."

CALDWELL:

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years with Chase Knutz at quarterback, something for which he is proud.

"He's never gotten hurt, just like me," Caldwell said of Knutz. "He's played though every game and never sat out with an injury.

That's pretty cool for us ... Not a lot of people can say that."

Although Caldwell is undersized for a Division III offensive lineman — about 6 feet tall, 230 pounds — he isn't worried. A major advantage for him is he played in Hodges' program. Caldwell said when former Hermiston defen-

sive back Costa Rodriguez, who is currently at Western Oregon, came back last summer, he said college programs are run just like Hermiston's. Caldwell already knows how to lift weights properly, how to follow a nutrition plan and take care of his body.

"He said, 'You wouldn't believe the amount of guys

who come in and can't do it right,'" Caldwell said. "That's a great big advantage that I'm very excited that I've had the coaching staff for that and thankful we have the facilities to be able to do that."

Caldwell feels like he's representing not only himself and his family, but his school and his town as well,

by attending Linfield. He said there are too many stories of Hermiston athletes — especially football players — who go to a small school and fizzle out.

"I want to kind of put Hermiston on the map a little bit and show that these kids from the east can play," he said. "We're not just a bunch of city

kids and we go to junior colleges or small schools and not make it. I want to put a name to Hermiston and play throughout my four years and get a shot my junior year, hopefully my sophomore year, and do good things and show the other kids that anybody can do it, really. It's just hard work."

STAFF:

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ing a place that has become home for us and been amazing."

"We'll miss him," Stanfield principal Bryan Johnson added. "He did a great job, though he's only been here a year. As a coach, the kids were competitive. He came in really late, got a bit of a late start. He didn't get hired until

the end of June. They were competitive. The kids really enjoyed playing for him. He's very professional, high energy, very ethical and skilled, too, for being so young. We'll miss him as a coach. He was a great AD, too. He held that job very well, and as a teacher, as well."

Filling the vacant head football coach position is former assistant Davie Salas. Salas has been an assistant for the past three seasons.

After a couple seasons at the helm, Lacey Sharp is stepping down as the Stanfield volleyball coach. Filling her spot is Angie Connell.

Connell has been a volleyball coach at various levels in Stanfield from elementary school to middle school, and also runs the adult volleyball league in Hermiston.

"We're pretty excited to have both coaches on board," Johnson said. "We think they'll be good fits with our

kids and the systems that we have in place. (They are) coaches that are gonna want to stick around for some continuity."

The final point of movement is Daniel Sharp moving exclusively to the head coach of the girls basketball program. Sharp had been in the head coach of the Stanfield boys basketball program for the previous six years before pulling double duty this past winter to coach both the boys

and girls programs.

He led the girls program to its most successful season in years, qualifying for the district playoffs for the first time in nearly a decade. He has daughters who are about to enter Stanfield Secondary School, Johnson said, and wanted to "be on that side of things."

"He was a full-time teacher," Johnson said. "And to coach two sports, it's not realistic to continue that.

Daniel has a good record and produces high-character kids. We're excited about that side. And whoever gets the boys program has a talented group. We're kind of in the process of trying to fill that position here in a week or two."

Johnson said Stanfield Secondary School is still taking applications for its open athletic director and head boys basketball coach positions.

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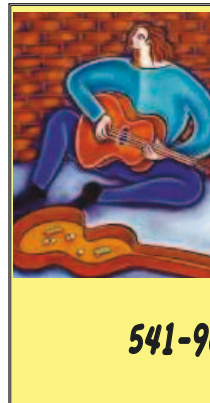
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