

Never-ending day provides unending lesson



SAM BARBEE
FROM THE SIDELINES
Sports reporter

I remember one summer day like it was yesterday.

I was 17 and coming off my junior year of high school. I had three sports happening simultaneously: baseball, football and basketball, in that order. I'd have football workouts in the morning, a baseball game (often a doubleheader) in the afternoon and summer league basketball in the evening.

This particular day was an especially long one. It was hot early, something rare in southwest Washington, and our workouts were outside. We had a new coach, a new attitude and a new workout program. We were trying to actually win some football games that fall. We were working hard, and I had to walk home. I had probably an hour or two or rest before I was expected to be at the ballpark for a doubleheader, and I played in both games.

By now, it was about 6 or 7 p.m. and I was exhausted. I knew I had a summer league basketball game that was starting almost immediately after my ball games ended. I got home, already halfway deciding that I wasn't going to go. "It's been a long day," I told myself. "No one will even notice I'm not there."

So when I got home and dumped my stuff in my bedroom, my dad found me and asked, "Don't you have a basketball game, too?" I said I did, but that I didn't want to go.

I don't want to say he was angry with my response, because he wasn't, but he firmly told me I was going. I didn't have a choice. I made a commitment and I had to fulfill it. I fought him a little, wanting to take a shower and watch the Mariners play. He wouldn't let me, and before I knew it I had my hoops uniform on and was heading out the door.

I wasn't happy about it. I felt like I had spread myself too thin, that I was going to get burnt out. It wasn't even July yet, and I was already tired of this stuff.

But I went over to Kelso, a town about the size of Hermiston across the Cowlitz River from Longview, and played in the game. I arrived during warm-ups and played pretty well, I guess. I hit a couple 3s, one of which was a four-point play, had 12 points (don't ask me how I remember that), led the team in scoring (which rarely happened) and we won.

But I learned something that sweltering June day. I learned about commitments and doing things because you said you'd do them. Part of it was my desire to prove my basketball coach wrong. He told me that spring that he didn't think I was committed enough. He pointed to me playing summer baseball, football workouts and a summer league basketball schedule and said that I didn't care enough about basketball. It's as ridiculous now as it was then, and I was proving him wrong by doing all three. If I had bailed on that game in Kelso, I would have been proving him right. I ended up being the only boy in my graduating class to play the same three sports for four years.

These are things I'm proud of. I can look back on those never-ending days and know I got more out of them than merely hits and points. If it wasn't for my dad being as stubborn as me, I wouldn't have held up my end of the bargain I made with the basketball coach. I wouldn't have shown the coach that, indeed, I will carry out the things I promised I would.

— Sam Barbée is a sports reporter for the Hermiston Herald and East Oregonian based in Hermiston. He can be reached by email at sbarbee@hermistonherald.com, by phone at 541-564-4542. Follow him on Twitter at @SamBarbee1 and follow Herald sports at @HHeraldSports.

Tigers too much for Sunnyside

HERMISTON HERALD

Sunnyside Christian spent too much time admiring the pitches of Stanfield's Klay Jensen on Thursday.

Jensen mowed down 19 batters in the 8-1 win, and Sunnyside struck out nine times looking in the Oregon AAU baseball game.

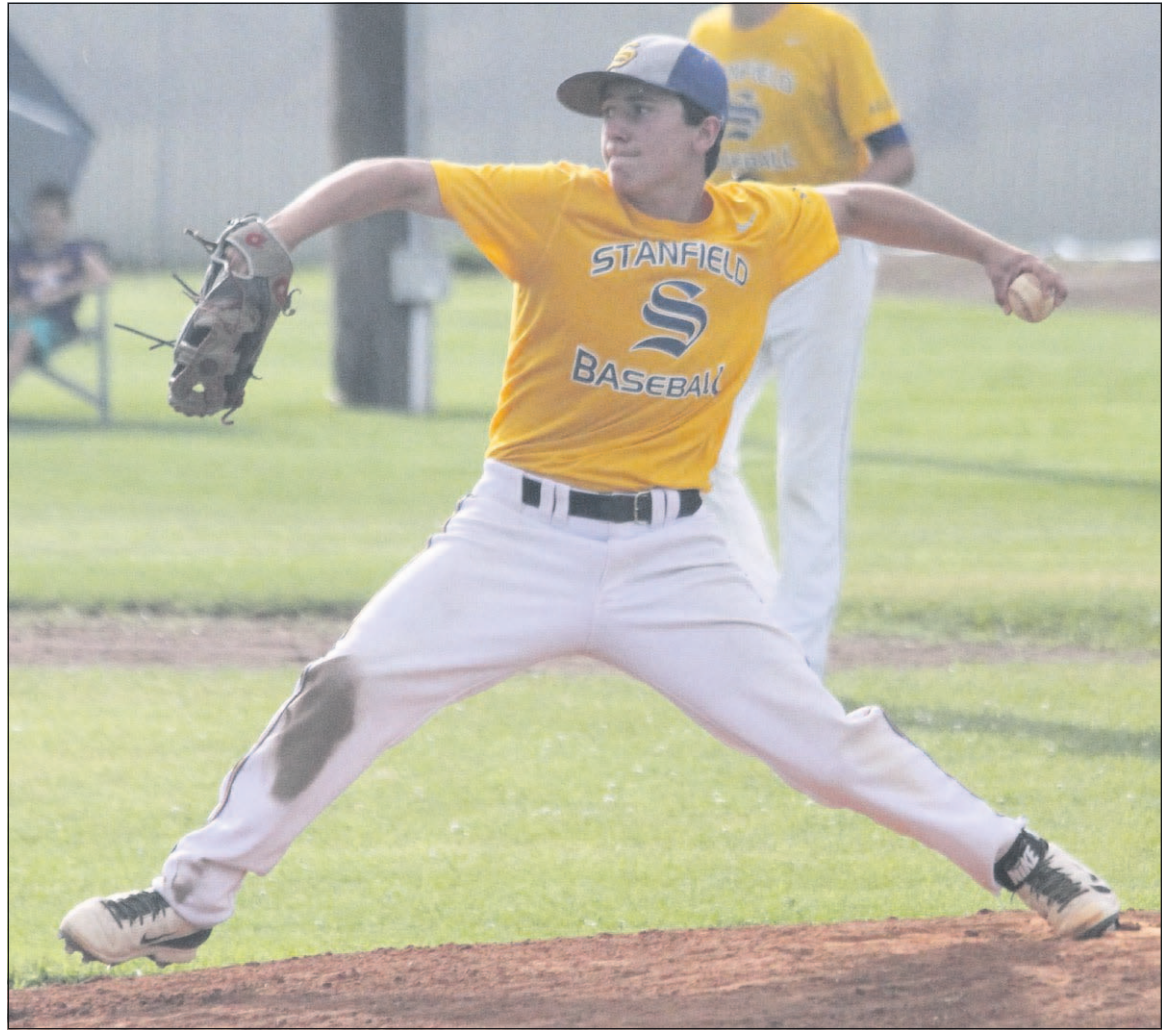
Jensen struck out at least two batters in every inning and fanned the side in the second and third.

Sunnyside didn't get on the scoreboard until the top of the seventh inning, and Stanfield (3-2) took the lead when Tony Flores drove in Thyler Monkus on a one-out single in the bottom of the fourth.

Flores later scored on a Dylan Grogan groundout, and the Tigers added five more runs in the fifth to go up 7-0.

Ryan Bailey hit an RBI triple during the rally, and finished 2-for-3 at the plate. Flores also batted 2-for-3 and scored twice.

Jensen also scored twice for Stanfield, which plays its next games on Sunday when it hosts the Tri Cities Badgers for a doubleheader starting at 3 p.m.



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Stanfield's Klay Jensen delivers a pitch late in an 8-1 win over the Sunnyside Christian Knights Thursday in Stanfield. The lefty struck out 19 batters in a complete game effort.

SEE TIGERS/A11

Richland downs Hermiston with big seventh



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston left-hander RJ Robles comes home with a pitch Wednesday against Richland. Robles struck out 10 batters in an 8-5 loss.

Dawgs can't come back in ninth

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Throughout its high school season, the Hermiston Bulldogs made things tough on themselves by extending innings.

Wednesday against Richland, they did it again, committing two errors in the top of the seventh, leading to seven Richland runs. Hermiston got two in the ninth to try and come back, but couldn't and lost, 8-5.

"You can't do that," Hermiston coach Lance Hawkins said of extending innings. "But you know what? We don't have a lot of practice time. These are our practices. I told the kids that our effort was there, but our execution wasn't there."

"I wasn't upset. That's why we're playing 35 games this summer, to do that, get our feet wet a little bit. I wish we would've hit the ball a little earlier in the game. I think we watched too many fastballs."

Early June is a tough time for high school athletes. Though the scholastic seasons are complete, these players have a lot on their plates. Many Hermiston (1-1) players are also members of the football team, and must practice in the mornings then play a nine-inning baseball game in the

SEE BULLDOGS/A11

Cards complete perfect slate

Little League team led majors division in home runs

BY SAM BARBEE
HERMISTON HERALD

Home runs and Little League generally aren't synonymous, but tell that to the Hermiston Little League's Cardinals squad.

Playing in the majors division, comprised of 11- and 12-year-olds, the Cardinals bopped 27 home runs en route to a perfect 14-0 record and league championship this season.

Ethin Randolph led the red-birds with 10 jacks, twice as many as Sam Schwirse, who was second with five. Also

lofting dingers were Carter Tolan — 4, Gavin Hunter — 3, Spencer Juul with two and Tyne Findley, Derek Devin and Darius Peterson with one apiece.

Manager Jeff Schwirse said his team, made up mostly of 12-year-olds, has been together for the last three seasons and "finally put it all together."

"They did well," he said. "To me, the whole season was fun. I had good parents, good guys that I worked with. The kids were loose. They had fun."

All-star affidavit nights are next week. Softball's takes place at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Hermiston Conference Center, and baseball's is at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Hermiston Conference Center.



PHOTO COURTESY 60 MINUTE PHOTO

Members of the Hermiston Little League Cardinals team. Pictured are, front row: Carter Tolan, Spencer Juul, Tyne Findley, Ethin Randolph, Darius Peterson and Fabian Rosales; middle row: Sam Schwirse, Derek Devin, Jayden Ramirez, Chase Elliott and Gavin Hunter; back: coaches Tyler Schwirse, Chris Elliott, Casey Tolan, Rich Devin and Jeff Schwirse.

GO SEE IT

Saturday, June 13

Golf
Umatilla Police Officer's Association Charity Tournament, Big River GC, 8 a.m.

Sunday, June 14

Baseball
Stanfield vs. Tri-Cities Badgers, 3 p.m.

Monday, June 15

Softball
Hermiston LL All-Stars Affidavit Night, Conference Center, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 16

Baseball
Hermiston LL All-Stars Affidavit Night, Conference Center, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 17

No events scheduled