

## Mariners look to past to improve their future



SAM BARBEE  
FROM THE SIDELINES  
Sports reporter

Safeco Field is known as “The House that Griffey Built,” and that’s true, to a degree. But perhaps the most beloved figure in Seattle Mariners history is Edgar Martinez.

He utilized one of the all-time best right-handed swings to create a Hall of Fame career: .312/.418/.515/.933 slash line; 514 doubles; 309 home runs; more walks — 1283 — than strikeouts — 1202.

And now he’s back in the Mariners’ dugout as hitting coach.

I still can’t believe it. The television cameras are attracted to him, and it’s such an amazing thing. I’m waiting for a hot day so Edgar won’t wear a pullover but has his jersey exposed with his iconic No. 11 on his back. The past and present have joined.

But the over-arching question about Martinez’s arrival as hitting coach is can the Mariners actually hit?

I’m optimistic. I don’t see Martinez turning around the offense right away. Since his hiring last Saturday, the M’s are 2-3 and have scored 18 runs. They’ve scored three or more twice, both wins, and two or fewer in the three losses. That doesn’t scream improvement, but I can point to a couple things that suggest improvement.

The first is Mike Zunino. To say that the 23-year-old catcher has been frustrating is an understatement. As good as the Florida product is behind the plate, he’s just as bad at the plate. After raking in spring training, he fell off a cliff. He’s batting .165 as of Thursday and has struck out in 83 of 200 at-bats. But he has hits in two straight games, including a big RBI single in Tuesday’s 7-0 win over Kansas City.

The first thing Martinez did with Zunino, according to a Seattle Times report, was to set a tee in places Zunino thought he couldn’t reach, and then he hit line drives from those spots. That might not sound like a lot. It doesn’t help with pitch recognition and hitting breaking balls, Zunino’s biggest weaknesses. But it does help with confidence and inherently knowing that you can take this stick made of wood and make contact with a little ball going 90 miles per hour. As anyone who played the game knows, baseball is more mental than physical. Martinez is going to have to build Zunino’s self-confidence to where it was when he was a junior at Florida and hit .322 with 19 jacks.

Overall, though, I think there will be two major differences in Seattle’s offense moving forward: consistency and adjustments.

In the bottom of the 11th inning of Game 5 of the 1995 Divisional Series, Martinez saved baseball in Seattle with The Double Heard “Round the Sound. He took a Jack McDowell forkball down the left-field line to plate Joey Cora and Ken Griffey Jr. to beat the New York Yankees 7-6 and pencil “Mariners” into the American League Championship series against Cleveland.

What people forget is that McDowell fanned Martinez with a forkball the last time they had met, earlier that game. Martinez knew it was coming, sat on it and drove it into the left-field corner. He made the adjustment in game and made millions of adjustments over the course of his 14-year career.

The things the M’s struggle at most is making adjustments and staying consistent. Martinez, as demonstrated by The Double, and his ability to hit .320 or higher seven times, can help them in those areas.

Don’t expect the Mariners to turn into the Kansas City Royals and hit .280 as a team. But expect the offense to become a more recognizable Major League offense, and look for the M’s to start winning. Hopefully.

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

# Sexton powers Hermiston to split

## Rising senior tosses five quality innings, goes yard

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

Tyler Sexton, consistently the loudest member of Hermiston’s baseball team, with his recognizable voice often coming from the dugout or his usual spot at first base, had a lot to cheer about Thursday.

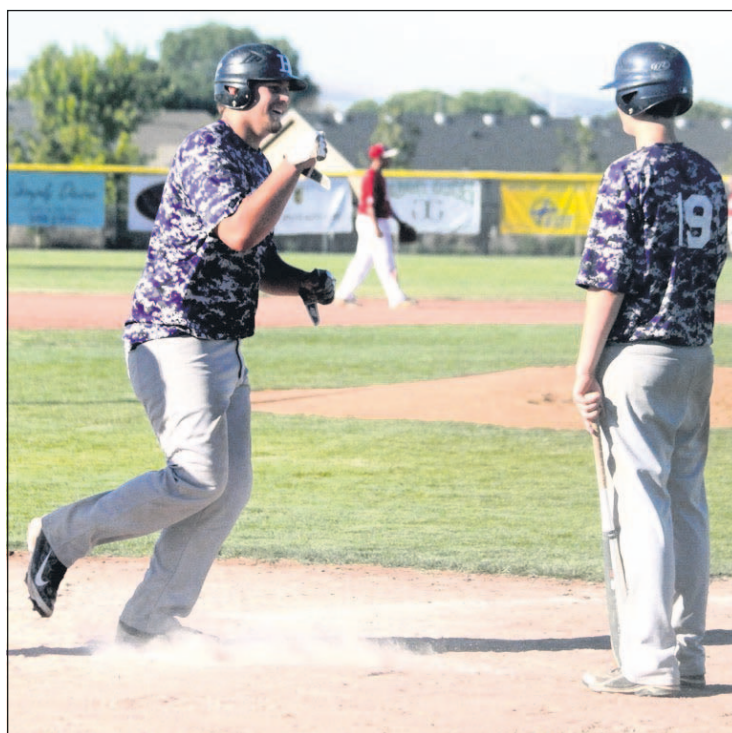
Sexton tossed five innings of two-run ball and hit a two-run home run, and Hayden Edmiston hit a single in the bottom of the sixth to plate Kody Moss for a 12-2 Hermiston win in the second game of an AAU double-header over Mt. Spokane from Washington. In an earlier game, Mt. Spokane scored four times in the third and went on to win 5-4.

Sexton finished the nightcap 2-for-4 with a double, home run and four RBIs. He also pitched five innings, allowing two earned runs on five hits while striking out three and walking none. RJ Robles was 3-for-4 with two steals, four runs scored and a triple.

Hermiston was in full control in the nightcap.

Started by solid pitching from Sexton, Mt. Spokane didn’t get a base runner until the third, when Sexton plunked a batter with one out. Meanwhile, Hermiston got on the board early and often.

Robles walked on four pitches to lead off, stole second and then



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston’s Tyler Sexton smiles as he greets teammate at home plate after launching a two-run home run Thursday afternoon against Mt. Spokane in an AAU baseball game. Hermiston won 12-2.

moved to second on a ground out. He then scored on a wild pitch for a 1-0 lead. Then Garron Anderson singled and Sexton doubled, giving Hermiston two runners in scoring position with just one away. Anderson scored on a passed ball with Lukas Tolan at the dish, and Tolan plated Sexton two pitches later on a single for a 3-0 lead. An error and out later, Caden Schwirse singled home Tolan for a 4-0 lead.

It was all Hermiston would need, but it didn’t stop there.

Robles led off the second with a screaming stand-up triple

to right field, and Edmiston was plunked, giving Hermiston runners at the corners with no outs. Anderson flew out to left, plating Robles and putting Hermiston up 5-0. Then Sexton mashed his second dinger of the summer over the left field fence, clearing it by a good four feet. It drove in Edmiston and gave Hermiston a commanding 7-0 lead.

Hermiston tacked on another in the third when Robles walked and scored on an Anderson single. Mt. Spokane, though, showed some life in the visitor’s fourth by loading the bases with

one out and scoring a couple RBI singles to cut Hermiston’s lead to 8-2.

The boys in purple wouldn’t let Mt. Spokane get closer.

Robles, who never failed to reach base, led off the fifth with a single and was followed by an Edmiston walk. Anderson was then tagged in the helmet, sending Sexton to the plate with the bags packed. He grounded out, but Robles scored on the play for a 9-2 lead. With Tolan at the plate, Anderson came home on a wild pitch for an 11-2 lead. Tolan walked, but a 6-4-3 double play ended the inning before Hermiston could end the game.

The players didn’t have to wait much longer, however.

Schwirse singled with one out, and Robles reached on an error with two away. This brought up Edmiston with a chance to put Hermiston up 10 runs and send Mt. Spokane packing. He did just that, lining a single into right field, allowing Schwirse to trot home and end the ballgame.

## HERMISTON 12, MT. SPOKANE 2

MTSP 000 200 — 2 6 2  
HERM 431 031 — 12 12 0

Davis and Johnson; T. Sexton, S. Gritz and H. Edmiston.

2B: T. Sexton (HERM), 3B: R. Robles (HERM), HR: T. Sexton (HERM).

## MT. SPOKANE 5, HERMISTON 4

MTSP 004 010 0 — 5 2 0  
HERM 000 003 1 — 4 5 4

Cain and Johnson; R. Robles and J. Poznanski.

2B: Johnson (MTSP).

# Cougars’ Christopher makes all-state list

EO MEDIA GROUP

Junior center fielder Jennifer Christopher was Echo’s lone representative on the Class 3A All-State softball teams, which were voted on by coaches and released on Tuesday.

Christopher batted for a .325 average for the Cougars and led the team with 27 hits and 30 runs scored.

She was named to the all-state second team, her first time earning the distinction.

Santiam Christian senior infielder Kalyee Buhrkühl was voted Player of the Year, Rainier junior Sarah Probasco was Pitcher of the Year, and Dayton Pirates skipper Rob Umbenhov as named Coach of the Year.

Other representatives on the all-state rosters from Echo’s

Eastern Oregon League included: on the first team, Elgin/Imbler senior infielder Miah Slater, Vale senior outfielder Traci Tolman and Vale senior designated player Corlynn Perry; on the second team, Grant Union senior catcher Babe Nash, Vale sophomore infielder Amanda Trenkel, Elgin/Imbler senior outfielder Darcie Kanoho and Vale sophomore utility Lexi

Mulvaney; on honorable mention, Vale junior pitcher Kelsey Hawley, Elgin/Imbler junior pitcher Karigan Wilhelm, Vale sophomore infielder Hannah Mizuta, Enterprise/Joseph/Wallowa senior infielder Kristyn Young, Nyssa senior first baseman Kendra Cleaver, Vale sophomore first baseman Grace Reevee and Grant Union senior utility Sydney Stearns.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Stanfield alumni baseball game this weekend

Stanfield is hosting its fourth annual alumni baseball game Sunday at Madigan Field in Stanfield. It is open to all Stanfield and Echo alumni and costs \$25. Included in the cost is a T-shirt and food after the game.

First pitch is set for 3 p.m. Any gear needed will be pro-

vided and the field will be open at 2 p.m. for batting practice.

### Early bird three-on-three registration ends soon

The early bird registration period for the 10th Annual Takin’ it to the Streets three-on-three basketball tournament ends today.

The tournament, which runs on Main Street July 18-19, fea-

tures three divisions: youth, competitive 6 foot and under and Coors Light men’s open. It costs \$100 for a three-man youth team, \$120 for a 6 foot and under team and \$140 for the men’s open. After today, another \$20 is added to the existing prices. Participants may register until noon July 10.

Brackets are available for second-graders through high school seniors as well as for adult men and women. Men’s brackets

will be divided among skill levels, with the best players being placed in the open division. The Weekend Warriors is a recreational “fun in the sun” set-up.

Visit <http://www.hermiston3on3.org/registration.html> to fill out a registration form for a team. A PayPal account is required to pay the entrance fee. Pre-tournament packet pick-up is from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. July 17 at Grace & Mercy Lutheran Church, 164 E. Main St.

## GO SEE IT

### Saturday, June 27

#### Auto racing

Johnny Appleseed Super Late Model 125, 7 p.m.

#### 9/10-year-old softball districts

Hermiston vs. Milton-Freewater (Game 1) @ Irrigon, 8 a.m.

LaGrande vs. Pendleton (Game 2) @ Irrigon, 10:30 a.m.

#### 10/11-year-old softball districts

Hermiston vs. Columbia (Game 1) @ Irrigon, 1 p.m.

#### 11/12-year-old softball districts

Baker vs. Hermiston (Game 1) @ Irrigon, 3:30 p.m.

Pilot Rock vs. Pendleton (Game 2) @ Irrigon, 6 p.m.

### Sunday, June 28

#### 9/10-year-old softball districts

Winner Game 1 vs. Winner Game 2 (Game 3) @ Irrigon, 8 a.m.

Loser Game 1 vs. Loser Game 2 (Game 4) @ Irrigon, 10:30 a.m.

#### 10/11-year-old softball districts

Winner Game 1 vs. Loser Game 1 (Game

2) @ Irrigon, 1 p.m.

#### 11/12-year-old softball districts

Winner Game 1 vs. LaGrande (Game 3) @ Irrigon, 3:30 p.m.

Winner Game 2 vs. Pendleton (Game 4) @ Irrigon, 6 p.m.

### Monday, June 29

#### Competitive co-ed softball

TRCI/Java Junkies @ Riverside Sports Bar, North softball field, Theater Sports Park, 6 p.m.

Untouchables @ Purosho, South softball field, Theater Sports Park, 6 p.m.

Riverside Sports Bar @ TRCI/Java Junkies, North softball field, Theater Sports Park, 7:30 p.m.

Purosho @ Untouchables, South softball field, Theater Sports Park, 7:30 p.m.

#### 9/10-year-old softball districts

Winner Game 4 vs. Loser Game 3 (Game 5) @ Irrigon, 10:30 a.m.

#### 10/11-year-old softball districts

Game 3 (if necessary), TBA

#### 11/12-year-old softball districts

Loser Game 1 vs. Loser Game 4 (Game

5), 1 p.m.

Loser Game 2 vs. Loser Game 3 (Game 6), 3:30 p.m.

### Tuesday, June 30

#### Men’s softball

Preferred Realty @ Elite, North softball field, Theater Sports Park, 6 p.m.

Elite @ Preferred Realty, North softball field, Theater Sports Park, 6 p.m.

#### 9/10-year-old softball

Winner Game 3 vs. Winner Game 5 (Game 6) @ Irrigon, 10:30 a.m.

#### 11/12-year-old softball districts

Winner Game 3 vs. Winner Game 4 (Game 7) @ Irrigon, 1 p.m.

Winner Game 5 vs. Winner Game 6 (Game 8) @ Irrigon, 3:30 p.m.

### Wednesday, July 1

#### 9/10-year-old softball districts

Game 7 (if necessary) @ Irrigon, 10:30 a.m.

#### 11/12-year-old softball districts

Winner Game 8 vs. Loser Game 7 (Game 9) @ Irrigon, 6 p.m.

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