

## SPORTS • CLASSIFIEDS

## RANKINGS:

continued from Page A9

the talent and make-up to do that this year.

## 4. Hermiston boys soccer

This is a team that closed last season the fourth-ranked 5A team in the state, and probably would have been higher had it not been for an undefeated and state champ Hood River Valley in the same league. Junior and last year's leading scorer Fred-

dy Rodriguez didn't play in Hermiston's 4-2 debut win over Umatilla on Saturday, and that's potentially a cause for concern if his absence is extended or permanent. But sophomore Antonio Campos is still in net, and senior Edwin Rosales is making a case to be Hermiston's main offensive option, as a hat trick Saturday indicated.

Hood River, though, returns 5A state Player of the Year in Gio Magana, so they will be a force again.

Under head coach Rich Harshberger, Hermiston has

become a tough out in the playoffs. Expect that to continue.

## 5. Umatilla boys soccer

These guys lost a lot. They lost their leading scorer — Dany Ayala — who scored a disproportionate amount of goals for the Vikings last season. Also gone are Gerardo Mejia, Ferando Saldana, Alejandro Madrigal, Felipe Resendis, Kevin Gomez, Ramiro Rubio and Edmundo Bedolla. That leaves just five returns from

a roster that beat Riverside for the first time in years and won the 3A/2A/1A Special District 4 crown before dropping their playoff game to the Delphi School.

Back, though, is junior midfielder Diego Saldana, who head coach Pedro Ortiz calls a cerebral player and has no worries about the decisions he makes. Ortiz knows he has a lot to replace, but isn't worried. He has a good system, and he knows if he can get the new players up to speed, they'll be fine. And they will be.

## Honorable mention: Umatilla cross country

I could probably just name this "Fabian Cardenas." The kid can really run. He burst onto the long distance scene last year with a state title in cross country and followed that with another state title in the 1,500 meters. Umatilla head coach Josh Ego said Cardenas is in better shape coming into this season than we had last year, when he set school records in both the three-mile (15 minutes, 15.63

seconds) and the 5,000 meters (15:49.9).

Ego said he again expects Cardenas to contend for another title, but running can be fickle, as Cardenas' sudden emergence proves.

— Sam Barbee 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 @SamBarbee and follow Herald Sports @HHeraldSports.

## SPORTS CALENDAR

## Friday, September 4

## FOOTBALL

Hermiston vs. Hanford, 7 p.m.

Umatilla @ Union/Cove, 7 p.m.

Stanfield @ Enterprise, 7 p.m.

Echo vs. South Wasco County, 7 p.m.

## VOLLEYBALL

Hermiston vs. TBD @ Mountain View Tourney, TBD

Stanfield @ Echo, 10 a.m.

Stanfield vs. South Wasco County, 1 p.m.

Echo vs. South Wasco County, 5 p.m.

## Saturday, September 5

## CROSS COUNTRY

Hermiston @ Runner Soul XC Fest, 12:20 p.m.

Umatilla @ Runner Soul XC Fest, 12:20 p.m.

Stanfield @ Runner Soul XC Fest, 12:20 p.m.

## VOLLEYBALL

Hermiston vs. TBD @ Mountain View Tourney, TBD

Echo vs. TBD @ Riverside Tourney, 10 a.m.

## BOYS SOCCER

Hermiston vs. La Grande, 11 a.m.

Umatilla vs. Riverside, 1 p.m.

## Tuesday, September 8

## BOYS SOCCER

Hermiston @ David Douglas, 4 p.m.

Umatilla vs. Pendleton, 4:30 p.m.

## VOLLEYBALL

Umatilla @ Griswold, 5 p.m.

## GIRLS SOCCER

Hermiston vs. Century @ Hillsboro Stadium, 5 p.m.

## Echo aims to end home losing streak

By SAM BARBEE  
Staff Writer

Echo head football coach Rick Thew is trying to change the culture of Echo football.

Recently the program has struggled, going 2-16 in the past two seasons. But with a number of returning starters and athletic success in other Echo sports, Thew hopes that the Cougars can rise from the depths of Special District 1.

"We've been working on our kind of a culture change, about creating unity through commitment and communication," he said. "The kids are really starting to buy into that. I think they're on the right track."

An important first step to change culture is to have success, and the earlier the better. Echo's lone win from the 2014 season came against the South Wasco County Redsidies, the same team Echo kicks off its season against this Friday at 7 p.m. in Echo. The game has

a couple layers of importance for Thew. First is the hope to start the season fast to buoy the culture change. The other, is to secure a home win for the first time since 2012.

"It think it's really important," Thew said of winning the first game of the year. "It's the only one we had last year and we can have this one. It's a home game, and we haven't won at home in a quite while, two years. It's about time to start off that way and get us rolling."

Thew said South Wasco County is big up front but not fast, which would dictate Echo to use the speed it has to beat the Redsidies on the perimeter.

That said, Thew isn't overlooking anyone, despite past success.

"That's usually the message especially when you play a team two years in a row and they have a lot of the same guys," he said. "They'll always be better. You can't overlook anyone because that's when you get surprised."

## Stanfield hopes to stay healthy in 2015

The 2014 Stanfield football season was riddled with injuries, none more catastrophic than the loss of quarterback Dylan Grogan to a broken collarbone in the first game of the year.

That forced Thylor Monkus, usually a running back by trade, to take over quarterbacking duties until Grogan returned from injury for the last game of the season.

Now, with a healthy roster, Stanfield hopes to start its season strong with a road opener at Enterprise this Friday at 7 p.m.

"He's ready to go, ready to be behind center leading this team," first-year head coach Davy Salas said. "He looks really good, looking healthy, looking strong."

Stanfield will need Grogan to be healthy if it expects to compete in the tough 2A Columbia Basin Conference. But first, the Tigers have a date with the Enterprise Outlaws. Last

season, despite the loss of Grogan to the collarbone injury, Stanfield beat the Outlaws, 35-28, last year in their debut at Kennison Stadium.

## Vikings' Moshier: 'This is our time'

The story to Umatilla's 2014 football season was "Almost there." In a handful of games, the Vikings were close to breaking through — either in striking distance in the fourth quarter or leading — but couldn't secure a win.

With the 2015 season on the doorstep, Moshier believes his not-so-young-anymore squad has taken the step to finish those games they couldn't last season. The Vikings start with Union/Cove, a team they started with last year, too, and a team that boarded it's bus after a 50-6 win. Umatilla heads to Union/Cove for its non-league football opener this Friday at 7 p.m.

"The team's more prepared. They're veterans. They've put in the work,"

Moshier said. "It should be a different result Friday."

"We're pretty much onto the next," Moshier said. "We watched last year's game (Monday). We were in the game and things kinda spiraled out of control from there. We saw little things that became big things. We watched it today. It was a reminder to everyone how close — even though the score was bad — how close it actually was for the first three quarters. And after that, we put it to rest. Put it back, put the tape in the can and we won't watch that one again."

Back is quarterback Jesus Ramirez, who was a bright spot last year. Now a junior who's starting his third year in Moshier's system, Ramirez has been given new responsibilities at the line of scrimmage. He now can check to a better play if his reads dictate that, and it will be imperative that he make the right calls against a big, aggressive 4-4 "smash-mouth-type" of defense to give the Vikings some breathing room up front.

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