

## Hermiston comes back to beat Bucks

By **SAM BARBEE**  
Staff Writer

In the opening game of Hermiston's Columbia River Conference volleyball match against Pendleton Tuesday night, a sweep looked inevitable.

The Bucks scored 12 of the set's final 15 points to win the set going away and quieting the Dawg-house on Dig Pink night. But something happened. The Bulldogs awoke from their mid-week slumber to win three of the next four sets, including the fifth in dramatic fashion, to best the Pendleton Bucks, 3-2 (11-25, 25-18, 16-25, 25-17, 15-8) for their first league win of the season.

"I think, when we first get out there, we get nervous and stuff, and we don't communicate as much," junior libero Alex Barton said. "But once we get into the rhythm (of the match), we start to communicate and really start to work together. The teamwork starts to fill in and we get it going."

In that first set, Hermiston (4-8, 1-5) wasn't communicating or working together. Balls that should be set or dug dropped between two or three Bulldogs or two Hermiston players both went for Pendleton (4-8, 1-5) shots and essentially knocked each other off it. Head coach Dorothy Smith said Hermiston was without Hayden Meyers and Mikayla Kopacz that first game, who weren't with the team over the weekend. As a penalty, they sat out the first set.

"They wanted to play," Smith said. "You could tell they wanted to play when they went in."

And Hermiston became a different team with Meyers and Kopacz on the floor. Suddenly the energy jumped and Bulldogs began sprawling across the hardwood, skin squeaking across the lacquered wood.

The Bulldogs were down 9-4 in Game 2 before embarking on a 12-5 run to pull even at 16. From there, the Bulldogs scored eight

straight points to pull ahead 24-17 before taking the set 25-18. Game 3 saw Pendleton turn a 12-9 lead into a 21-11 lead when Haley Greb, Maureen Davis and Shelby Greb took control, but Hermiston came right back to hammer out a big nine-point lead at one point in the fourth set.

But it almost got away. Up 15-6 and cruising, Hermiston's lead started to slip away. The Bucks would come closest at 21-15, but Smith never called timeout and trusted her players. They rewarded her faith by winning four of the next six points to send the match into the deciding fifth set.

"We talk about pushing and not allowing the other team to come forward," Smith said. "That's kind of what we were working on just yesterday. 'Just push it more. Don't allow them to follow us.' I just thought they did a really good job of it."

In that fifth set, Hermiston made it a microcosm of the match. Pendleton slipped ahead 2-0 and

led by two four other times. But the Bucks never could put Hermiston away and grab momentum, but Hermiston could. Down 8-6, Hermiston won the next nine points to win the match, including a super long rally Hermiston used to tie the set at eight, then a kill from Maddy Juul gave the Bulldogs the lead. Two points later, Juul all put ripped the sails from Pendleton's ship when she redirected a tip perfectly into a vacated spot on Pendleton's side of the net. Hermiston won the next two points without much trouble.

"I have not given up on them," Smith said. "And that's one thing I want them to see: 'Our coach hasn't given up on us. She's still trying to do those plays. She's still trying to tweak it and see if we can have somebody else in there.' With my not giving on them, they need to not give up on themselves."

Hermiston's next match is this Saturday at the Glencoe Tournament in Hillsboro.

## October power rankings

It's a new month and that means it's time for Volume 2 of the local power rankings. A lot has changed in a month, so let's see where we stand.

1. Stanfield Football (5-0) OSAA #5 Last month: Not ranked

I have an exercise for you. Don't worry. It's not complicated, and you can do it from home.



**Sam Barbee**  
FROM THE SIDELINES

Print out Stanfield's football schedule. Done? OK. Now take a highlighter and just cover the thing. Make it boldly yellow, or pink, or orange, or purple, or blue. Pick any color. Now, you ask, why am I covering my Stanfield football schedule in so much highlighter ink that I'm beginning to feel funny?

Good question. That's because you are going to want to see all of Stanfield's upcoming football games. You are telling yourself, "I am doing nothing for the next four Fridays," because Stanfield is going to have one of the most exciting season finishes in the state this year. And three other Columbia Basin Conference teams will do the same thing! It's amazing!

The Tigers, along with Irrigon and Heppner, are 5-0 and playing well, and these three teams will all play in the next two weeks. After Stanfield hosts the Mustangs on Oct. 16, we will have separated the cream from the milk, so to speak, in the CBC. Make sure your schedules are highlighted. Mine sure are.

2. Hermiston boys soccer (7-1-1, 1-0) OSAA #3 Last month: 4

It's always tough to gauge a good team that has a state champion in its league because it sets expectations so high inherently. That's the situation of the Bulldogs right now with Hood River Valley all but coasting through its schedule. After the Bulldogs beat The Dalles last week, head coach Rich Harshberger had trouble celebrating the win, still constantly thinking about Hood River. And I suppose he has good reason to be concerned. Last year the Eagles scored 13 goals against Hermiston. Hermiston scored zero goals against Hood River. And the Bulldogs finished the year ranked fourth.

But take nothing away from this year's Bulldogs. They are skilled players with talent at every position. It just seems like second in the CRC and a high ranking can be deceiving sometimes — both positively and negatively — for a multitude of reasons.

3. Umatilla football (4-1) OSAA #8 Last month: Not ranked

I love being surprised, especially when it's a pleasant one. I know what it's like to lose a lot in a single season, and I know how it feels to turn it around and have success. And that's why I'm not-so-secretly-anymore rooting for the Vikings. I like to see them do well. I saw them play three times last year, and twice they should've won. That gets difficult to deal with as the season progresses and you feel like the Greek mythological figure Tantalus, who is punished with everlasting hunger and thirst, only he's standing in a pool of water he can't drink from and standing under a tree he can't eat from. It feels eternal, but it's not. Umatilla is proving that. One more non-league game against King's Way Christian from Vancouver, Washington (my neck of the woods), until two league road affairs at Nyssa and Riverside before powerhouse and defending 3A champ Vale comes calling. Can Umatilla keep it up? Will they compete in the Eastern Oregon League? Stay tuned to find out. Shameless tease!

4. Echo volleyball (11-5, 4-2), OSAA #17 Last month: Not ranked

I'm seeing a trend here. I seem to be wrong about a lot of the teams I didn't put in this space last month. Oh well, a lot can change in four weeks, and a lot has. But one that hasn't is the play of the Echo volleyball team. This time last year, the Cougars were mired in a downward spiral that ruined a good start to the season. After a sweep of Pine Eagle on Sept. 12, head coach Janice Scott talked about that slide with me and why this year is different. She said it's the group

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## Bulldogs host winless Sandy

Could be best chance for a Hermiston win

By **SAM BARBEE**  
Staff Writer

As the weeks tick away, the Hermiston Bulldogs are running out of time to win a football game. Five weeks — more than half the regular season — have come and gone without the Bulldogs (0-5) emerging victorious, just one season after going 12-1 and winning its first state championship.

But as Hermiston's murderer's row schedule has completed and league play starts next week, the Bulldogs might have their best shot at a win when the 0-5 Sandy Pioneers come calling this Friday at 7 p.m. in Kennison Stadium.

After a promising 2014 campaign that ended in a tightly-contested 17-0 quarterfinal loss in Hermiston, the Pioneers find themselves in roughly the same position as Hermiston. They have a new quarterback, a young team and are trying to find their way in a tough 5A Northwest Oregon League.

Sandy, though, has an identity. Under head coach Joe Polamalu, brother of former NFL safety Troy, the Pios are a power running team with a beefy front.

"That's their identity," Hermiston coach David Faeteete said. "They're true and true to their identity. It hasn't changed. I remember they had a bunch of young guys last year. They match up with us, and we match up with them. They're a little bigger on the scale end, but then again what team isn't bigger than us, right?"

Hermiston will also likely be without sophomore starting quarterback Dayshawn Neal, who suffered a high ankle sprain in the second quarter of Hermiston's 43-10 loss Friday night to Coeur d'Alene. After suffering the injury, he sat on the bench, and he was evaluated, then carted to the locker room at halftime and returned in street clothes on crutches in the second half. He is being re-evaluated daily and was doing some light workouts on Monday.

In his stead, Nathan Hunsaker moved back to quarterback after a brief foray as a wide receiver — that included catching a touchdown pass at Lewiston two weeks ago — and went 1-for-4 for 60 yards and a touchdown. His only completion was the 60-yard touchdown to Tucker Salinas in the fourth quarter Friday night.

After the loss, senior defensive end Trey Neal, and Dayshawn's older brother, said he and the team have some "pretty big confidence in Nate."

Faeteete agreed. "We have all the confidence in



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Hermiston sophomore quarterback Dayshawn Neal (left) sits on the Bulldog bench late in the second quarter after injuring his ankle in the game Friday against Coeur d'Alene. He was replaced as the signal caller by senior Nathan Hunsaker.



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Hermiston's Tre Neal sacks Coeur d'Alene sophomore quarterback Colson Yankoff during Friday's game at Kennison Stadium.

the world," he said. "Nathan was one bad hit away from being in this role right now. He's always been one to roll with the punches and adapt. He was catching touchdowns. Now he gets to throw 'em."

So after Hermiston has played one of the toughest schedules in 5A Oregon football, the slate lightens up a bit with Sandy and then Columbia River Conference play, whose best team is just 2-3.

Faeteete and the Bulldogs can sniff a win.

"We're just excited to play Oregon schools again," Faeteete said. "It's nice to play a little bit different team. We feel like we can play with Sandy. We feel like we match up with them well."

"Any opportunity you get to play a team that has a matching record, it's a great opportunity to try and win. Somebody's going to leave Friday night with a W."

## Vikings prove too much for Bulldogs

Dawgs hang, but leave points on field

By **SAM BARBEE**  
Staff Writer

Before Hermiston's non-league football game against Coeur d'Alene Friday night, it would've been a reasonable assumption that five Viking turnovers might have them driving back to the Idaho panhandle unhappy.

But the Coeur d'Alene defense that had allowed 17 points in its last three games held firm, and came out with a 43-10 win at Kennison Stadium.

"I definitely think we came together a little bit," senior defensive end Tre Neal said. "I think we looked a lot better on defense and offense despite having a couple guys get banged up like Dayshawn."

Hermiston lost Dayshawn Neal, Tre's little brother, to an apparent ankle or foot injury in the second quarter. Nathan Hunsaker relieved the sophomore lefty, throwing a 60-yard touchdown pass in the fourth quarter. Tre said the team doesn't know any more on Dayshawn's status, but they have confidence Hunsaker can lead the offense.

"It's definitely going to be a pretty big impact, but I'm pretty sure we'll figure it out," Tre said. "I got some big confidence in Nate."

Most of Coeur d'Alene's turnovers came in the first half with the game still largely undecided. Up 6-0 after a touchdown pass from Austin Lee to Brody Lundblad, the Vikings forced a three-and-out then promptly put the ball on the artificial turf at Kennison Stadium when the senior Neal sacked Austin Lee and stripped the ball and the Bulldogs jumped on it. It was Neal's first of two sacks.

But Hermiston gave the ball right back after five

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