

## Bulldogs' win a good first step

The interception happened right in front of me in near the east goal line, and as Vaemu Ena ran up the near sideline, I forgot myself. I started running. I don't know where, or why, but I didn't get very far.

Perhaps I was excited by the play, a clutch interception that kept Hermiston in the game after a missed 24-yard field goal in the first overtime. Perhaps I was assuming Ena would score, and was trying to get down to the other end zone to get photos or whatever.

Perhaps I was excited for this Hermiston team, so beleaguered after climbing the 5A mountain last season. With rather high expectations for themselves — realistic or otherwise — the season's first five games had been difficult to endure: a 23-point loss to a Hanford team that went win-



Sam Barbee FROM THE SIDELINES

less last year; a 48-point loss to Kamiakin, losses to Springfield, Lewiston and Coeur d'Alene saw Hermiston make critical mistakes or fail to seize opportunities handed it, all resulting in double-digit losses.

But then Friday happened. Finally players had something to celebrate, something to smile about, something to remember.

Friday's 13-6 double-overtime victory over the Sandy Pioneers is just one win, true. But it was the first win of a season that is largely forgettable, especially since it comes on the heels of last year's magical run. But it was how Hermiston won — not simply that it did — that will have an impact on this season.

After missing that chip shot, a field goal Freddy Rodriguez most certainly can and will make, Ena came up with a play he'll never forget. Remember, he had two sure interceptions slip through his gloved hands on a misty September night against Hanford, and he told me he wanted to make up for those. And boy, did he. His second interception, in roughly the same spot as the first, gave Hermiston the upper hand in amateur football's Kansas overtime rules, and an Omar Garica touchdown from 2 yards out sealed the win.

That first interception was massive, too big to accurately describe. It saved the prospects of league play. It saved the confidence of a defense that hasn't played four full quarters all season.

After the missed field goal in overtime, Hermiston's nonverbal communication was off-the-charts negative, and Sandy's was off-the-charts positive. One play entirely changed that. For Hermiston and its young team, that success was just what it needed: backs up against the wall, do-or-die situation, stakes as high as can be, and they made a play. Two plays, in fact.

It's a step forward by the Hermiston Bulldogs, and the size of it doesn't matter. After coming somewhat close against Springfield, then closer at Lewiston and closer still against Coeur d'Alene, to finally break through and make the critical plays when the time calls is a big deal. With a winnable game at The Dalles this Friday, Hood River at home next week at the War on 84 in Pendleton Halloween weekend, Hermiston has just as good a shot as any in the Columbia River Conference to wear the crown.

That would sure be something to run around about.

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## Colbray to get national shot Saturday

Hermiston senior and 3-time state champ flies to Pennsylvania to compete in FloWrestling.org's Who's #1 event

By SAM BARBEE  
Staff Writer

Three-time 5A champ at 195 pounds Sam Colbray has a chance to make a national statement.

On Oct. 17 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a city about 70 miles north of Philadelphia, Colbray will wrestle in FloWrestling.org's Who's #1 event, an attempt to find the best amateur wrestlers in the country.

Colbray, who was the runner-up at 195 pounds in both



FILE PHOTO

Hermiston senior Sam Colbray (top) heads to Pennsylvania this week for FloWrestling.org's Who's #1 event.

freestyle and Greco-Roman at 2015 Cadet-Junior National Championships in Fargo, North Dakota this summer, will wres-

tle Pennsylvania's Nick Reenan, who is moving up from 182 pounds. Colbray will be coached by Shaun Williams, who re-

signed as Hermiston head wrestling coach this summer and took a job at West Valley High School in Spokane, Washington.

At the moment, Reenan, a senior, is the top-ranked wrestler at 195 according to FloWrestling. Colbray is second. Colbray is the second-highest ranked Oregon wrestler after top-ranked heavy weight Osawaru Odighizuwa from Douglas. Roseburg's Layne Van Anrooy is 10th at 152, Brandon Kaylor is 16th at 106, and Travis Wittlake is 19th at 170. Meanwhile, Pennsylvania owns the top spot in eight weight classes with top threes in ten classes.

From a piece by Ryan Holmes on FloWrestling.org:

"Colbray is a very strong wrestler that can attack with the best of 'em. He's going to be a lot for Reenan to handle in his

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## Tigers get shot at local Goliath

By SAM BARBEE  
Staff Writer

There is an old cliché in sports that describes a road. This road is the fabled road to a championship, and it's usually said to run through the site where the favorite resides.

For the 2A Columbia Basin Conference, that road runs right through Heppner, where the Mustangs hold the seat of local 2A football. This week, the Stanfield Tigers, fresh off a 49-41 come-from-behind victory at Irrigon, comes calling in a game that Tigers head coach Davy Salas will decide the conference title.

Salas, though, wasn't lacking in praise and respect for the Heppner program.

"If you want to be the best, you've got to beat the best," he said. "Heppner's been the best in this area. Greg Grant, to my eyes, is the best coach this area's ever seen at all levels. You can't disregard what the man's done in the last 30 years of coaching Heppner. Stuff like that just doesn't happen."

But with all that praise, this game still will have something to say about which school emerges from the CBC as champions.

"This will determine it," Salas said. "You couldn't have written a better script."

The ever-present stalwart,



STAFF PHOTO BY SAM BARBEE

Stanfield quarterback Dylan Grogan (left) and running back Thylor Monkus lead the 6-0 Tigers into a possible league title-deciding game Friday night against Heppner in Stanfield.

Heppner (6-0, 2-0), looks to continue its dominance over the CBC when the long-smoldering upstart, Stanfield (6-0, 2-0), plays host. Both teams are playing well. Both teams are mostly healthy with all the key players in the lineup.

Most of all, Heppner sits in the chair Stanfield wants to occupy.

"We gotta beat them," junior quarterback Dylan Grogan said. "They're in our way to getting where we want: to win league and go through state."

Last season after Stanfield beat Pilot Rock at home, then-head coach Dominique Coffin equated the Mustangs to Goliath and his team David, evoking one of the greatest underdog stories ever told. This season, it's a much more even matchup.

Stanfield, now at the top of the CBC and ranked third by OSAA, has scored 244 points while allowing 114, with 41 of those coming last week. Heppner meanwhile, has scored 305 points and allowed just 72, the third-fewest in 2A.

Both teams have effective runners, with Stanfield running back Thylor Monkus and quarterback

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## Hermiston will play The Dalles this week

By SAM BARBEE  
Staff Writer

The Hermiston Bulldogs and The Dalles Riverhawks will play in The Dalles this Friday, Hermiston Athletic Director Blaine Ganvoa announced Monday.

The date was in question after the Riverhawks (1-4) canceled last week's game against Nyssa that was scheduled to be played at Kennison Stadium in Hermiston. The Dalles Athletic Director Michael Somnis said player safety was a factor in the decision not to play Nyssa last week. With short numbers and injuries both a problem, Somnis and his staff decided

last week wasn't a viable option for his students.

"After looking over the injury reports from the varsity team, with student safety in mind, we feel it is best to re-evaluate the status of our varsity team on a weekly basis for the remainder of the Fall 2015 season," the release said.

Friday's football game is the Columbia River Conference opener for both schools. Hermiston (1-5) enters after winning its first game of the year after a 13-6 double-overtime win over Sandy. The Dalles' one win is a 43-0 effort over Mac-Hi on Sept. 18.

## Ena adds icing to Dawgs' first win

Hermiston downs Sandy in double overtime

By SAM BARBEE  
Staff Writer

Friday night against Sandy, Vaemu Ena intercepted Sandy quarterback Kelly Sanders twice in two different overtime periods, and Omar Garcia powered in from two yards out to give Hermiston a 13-7 victory, its first win of the year.

"I just saw an opportunity to do something great for my team," Ena said. "I just wanted to avenge myself and make the DBs

look good for once." In Hermiston's season opener against Hanford, Ena missed two interception opportunities.

The two overtime periods were icing on the proverbial cake for the Hermiston defense, which has struggled to hold down offenses this season. The Bulldogs held the Pioneers to just 18 yards rushing on 31 attempts, and kept bruising back Grayson Fenwick from getting anything going. He finished with 19 yards on 21 carries and four catches for 27 yards and a touchdown.

After the Bulldogs missed a

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Vikings prove too much for Bulldogs

The Culture of Home Vikings surprised the ball club late Friday night in Hermiston, but still managed to beat the Bulldogs 43-10. Mike

