

## Pride goeth before defeat

There were two games this week I thought I had figured out. I thought Stanfield would beat Heppner, and I thought Washington would beat Oregon.

Now, I obviously had a little more emotion at stake in the Washington-Oregon game, as I went to UW, and I was objectively covering the Stanfield-Heppner game.

But the losses by both teams over the weekend made me a little sad, to be honest.

I felt bad for the Tigers because they let it slip away. It was 14-6 in the second quarter when a blocked punt turned into a Heppner touchdown, then Stanfield fumbled and Heppner scored right away. That quickly, in the time

it took you to read that sentence, Heppner turned a 14-6 lead into a 30-6 lead before halftime, and it only got worse until it finished at 60-6. Greg Grant said Stanfield threw the Mustangs back on their heels early, and they had to adjust. Davy Salas said they made too many mistakes against "the best team in the state," and they couldn't recover.

Both were true. If Stanfield hadn't fumbled four times and had two punts blocked, that game is different. But those six things happened, and the game was as it was.

That Stanfield team is close. Heppner, which was bigger both in size and in numbers, simply capitalized on all of Stanfield's mistakes, and Stanfield didn't capitalize on any of Heppner's, though they were fewer. Heppner also knew Stanfield has the wherewithal to come back, as demonstrated by its 20-point comeback against Irrigon, and the Mustangs weren't letting it happen.

But Washington's loss was just painful. On Washington's radio broadcast, the play-by-play man was giving a list of things that had happened since Washington last beat Oregon in 2003 (a game I attended and Washington won 42-13): The United States invaded Iraq and then declared victory soon after. Michael Jordan was just about to begin his final season with the Washington Wizards. MySpace launched. The Space Shuttle Columbia exploded on re-entry.

I remember the advent of MySpace. I remember the Columbia tragedy. I remember the Shock and Awe campaign; we watched it in class (what a lesson!).

I never thought that 12 years later the streak would be intact. I didn't think there would be a streak. I didn't think it was fathomable. I didn't know what fathomable meant then.

But, alas, there's nothing I can do to change it. I still root hard for the Huskies and try to sympathize with their pain. They are the ones actually feeling the pain. Me sitting on a couch yelling at the TV isn't real pain.

There is a lesson in all of this, somewhere, buried deep. It has to do with loyalty, or pride, or something. I know no different than to be a Huskies fan — partially because I was raised that way and partially because I went to school there — but I would never ditch my allegiances for another team. I'll never stop being a Mariners fan, either, for what it's worth. I don't believe in jumping bandwagons. Losing is what makes winning so much fun.

Except when it's to Oregon. Then it's just miserable.

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## Friday night's winner has best shot at

By **SAM BARBEE**  
Staff Writer

As the Hermiston Bulldogs were struggling through their difficult non-conference schedule, there was hope at the end of the bleak tunnel.

That hope was Columbia River Conference play.

The Bulldogs (2-5, 1-0 CRC) enter Friday's homecoming game against Hood River Valley (4-3, 1-0) on a two-game winning streak after a 13-7 double-overtime win over Sandy followed by a 56-10 beat down of The Dalles last week. Like last year, Hermiston knew its schedule would lighten up in conference play, and it happened just in time.

"We were looking forward to it, but we still had to play one game at a time," first-year head coach David Faaeteete said. "We

### Online

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still gotta survive that first part of the schedule. We've got guys hurt, guys dinged up a little bit. We still don't have our starting quarterback, starting running back, starting wide out. Do I keep going?"

Dayshawn Neal, Hermiston's injured sophomore quarterback, was seen with a cast on his injured ankle, likely signaling his status for the rest of the season.

In his stead, senior Nathan Hunsaker is starting to split time with senior DJ Gossett, who moved from offensive/defensive line this season. Last year, the two split reps for the JV.



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

**Hermiston Bulldogs head football coach David Faaeteete walks the sidelines during a recent game at Kennison Stadium. Faaeteete leads the Bulldogs this weekend against Hood River in Hermiston's homecoming game and a key game to decide the eventual conference championship.**

"The kid's got a cannon," Faaeteete said of Gossett. "Because of guys dropping left and right, we gotta get another solid backup out there and going and test his skills and let him see what it's like. And Nathan has become such an asset out there as a receiver, we're trying to put the best guys out on the

field." Friday night's 7 p.m. matchup likely serves as the de facto CRC championship game. A win from either Hermiston or Hood River Valley puts either team in a position to clinch the CRC title. Hood River might have the easier road with its final league game against The Dalles, but the

door is still open for the Bulldogs.

Since the Columbia River Conference was formed before the 2010 season, Hermiston has won the league title twice, in 2013 and 2014. Hood River has a league title, as well, from 2012.

The Eagles now have a high-powered offense led by dual-threat quarterback Dallas Buckley. The 6-foot-2, 171-pound quarterback threw for 220 yards, rushed for 146 yards and was responsible for six total touchdowns in Hood River's 49-14 week 6 win over McKay.

"We just gotta contain the passing game and shore up our run defense," Faaeteete said. "We've gotta tackle better and play assignment football. No mental busts or coverage busts."

## NEWPORT PARK REMODEL DRAWS MIXED REACTION

Though it's losing the baseball field, the park will gain versatility and safety

By **SAM BARBEE**  
Staff Writer

For decades there was one diamond in Hermiston that hosted youth baseball and softball games. A small park, it holds memories by its existence in downtown Hermiston.

But Newport Park is getting a face-lift. In response to the area flooding in springtime, the city of Hermiston is converting the field into a drainage basin and work has begun. The outfield fence has been removed and folded up and placed on home plate. The infield is now about a foot deep in the center and seven-foot high hills of dirt stand where infielders should.

Some residents in Hermiston are unhappy with the work.

"It's too bad they've taken a field where sons had learned for generations from their fathers," Eastside Market owner and operator Joe Thompson said. "It's unfortunate that happened. I've been there for 30-plus years and seen a lot of Little Leaguers come through. It's like a rite of passage (to play at Newport Park)."

"It feels like a huge loss when that happens," Parks Director Larry Fetter said. "It's a tradition. You kind of want your kids to play on the same field you did. There are some changes (locally), and this is just one of them."

But since Field of Dreams was built in 1998, Newport Park has been all but abandoned. Just one



STAFF PHOTO BY SAM BARBEE

**Newport Park in Hermiston is receiving a face-lift. In response to the area around the park flooding, the City of Hermiston is converting the former baseball diamond into a detention pond for rain water.**

youth softball team uses the park for practice anymore — a team coached by local dentist Greg Jones — and Jones helped design the new park.

It will keep the storage building behind where home plate currently sits and the backstop will be improved. The dugouts will be removed, however, due to some "unsavory" activities — including the finding of contraband, needles and other items not fit for community parks.

In doing so, Fetter hopes Newport Park becomes more versatile. With the backstop, dugouts and perimeter fence, the square-block park was limited to baseball or softball. By removing

the dugouts and perimeter fence, baseball and softball practices can still be held there, but activities that use open spaces, such as soccer, can utilize the space.

"I don't take anything away from the people who've lost something, but we've really gained something," Fetter said. "Now the neighborhood doesn't get flooded out twice a year. It's actually a net gain."

Then there's the matter of field space. Hermiston Little League is growing and is starting to wonder whether it's outgrown Field of Dreams, the four-field facility east of town. Though it didn't consistently use Newport Park for games, the loss of a field still

hurts a league already in need of field space.

But the Hermiston Parks and Recreation Department is looking into converting existing fields to host multiple levels. One idea Fetter has is to convert the two softball fields at Theater Sports Park to accommodate 40-foot base paths. It's not impossible to have multiple sets of base plugs on one field, as that is becoming more popular at youth fields with the advent of 12-year-old 50-70 baseball, meaning the base paths are 50 feet, instead of the standard 40 feet, the pitcher's rubber is roughly 70 feet from home

**See PARK, A12**

## Heppner spoils Stanfield's homecoming

Kaden Clark throws 4 TDs, Heppner blocks two punts

By **SAM BARBEE**  
Staff Writer

The blink of an eye was all it took. One second Stanfield was a thorn in Heppner's side, and in the next, Heppner had pulled out that thorn and flicked it harmlessly away.

Patrick Collins fell on a blocked punt in the end zone soon after Stanfield's first touchdown, and the Mustangs never looked back, spoiling the Tigers'

homecoming night with a 60-6 thrashing of the Stanfield Tigers Friday in Stanfield.

"I'm very pleased, because I think Stanfield is a solid team with some real good athletes," Heppner coach Greg Grant said. "They played hard. They had us on our heels. They were coming downhill at us, and they were getting after it like I thought they might. My kids had to adapt. They haven't seen that level of physicality."

"We felt like we had something to prove," Heppner quarterback Kaden Clark said. "We felt like we had to come out and play

hard and send a statement to the league."

The win partially solidifies the top portion of the 2A Columbia Basin Conference. Heppner (7-0, 3-0) remains undefeated and is the last CBC team to be without a loss. With Irrigon's loss to Weston-McEwen, Stanfield (6-1, 2-1) sits in a comfortable second position behind the Mustangs.

Stanfield coach Davy Salas said that's still a good place to be.

"We're 6-1. We've put ourselves in a good position," he said. "It's one game."

Though the final score has Heppner and Stanfield

separated by 54 points, the gap between these two teams is not that large. Grant said Stanfield, with their power run game and physicality, threw the Mustangs back on their collective heels early on. Quarterback Kaden Clark said that was the first power running team Heppner has seen this year, and it took some time to adjust.

"I'm not going to take anything away from Heppner," Salas said. "That's how champions are made. They know what it takes to get there. We're just not there yet."

Heppner also got some breaks from Stanfield mis-

takes. After winning the toss and electing to kick, Heppner forced Stanfield to punt from the Tiger 17 on 4th-and-23. The kick was blocked, giving Heppner wonderful starting field position at Stanfield's 17, but the Tigers rose and forced a rare four-and-out with their backs against their own goal line.

But another Stanfield punt — this one kicked away cleanly — resulted in Heppner's first score, a 4-yard plunge from CJ Kindle on a direct snap to put Heppner up 6-0 after the

**See TIGERS, A11**

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