

Match turns on the luck of the kick

One-hundred minutes of soccer is ruined by 10 shots. One-hundred minutes of intense, physical, aggressive, life-on-the-line soccer is arbitrarily thrown out and decided by luck. If a soccer match goes to penalty kicks, that's what happens. And it's a shame.



Sam Barbee
FROM THE SIDELINES

It happened to Hermiston's and Umatilla's girls programs last season. Hermiston lost to Liberty on the final kick and the Vikings lost to Perrydale/Western Mennonite.

Saturday, Hermiston lost to Woodburn on penalty kicks, and it is just no fun.

I mean, I guess it was fun for Woodburn, who piled on keeper Jesse Lopez after he made the semifinal-clinching save. But it's no fun for the fans, who see a match decided by luck. It's no fun for the coaches, who have to stand back and helplessly watch as luck unfolds. And it's no fun for me, because penalty kicks are stupid.

I guess they do have their drama. Brandy Chastain won the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup on penalty kicks, and her celebration has survived. They do create tangible moments that are often lasting because of the nobody-knows-what-will-happen tension. But it's such a waste. The kicks, which are supposed to be awarded to the offensive team when a penalty was committed in the box, have no bearing on the match as a whole.

Imagine a baseball game went extra innings, but they only played two. Then afterwards it came down to a home run derby, and one team loses because they don't have a power hitter. Kansas City Royals, sorry, guys, all those extra inning games wouldn't have gone your way. Probably. Or in football, if a double-overtime game is decided by a field goal kick-off.

I'm not sure what fix could be made. It's so ingrained into the sport that it seems impossible to make any changes. Perhaps that's just the thing, it only seems that way. Change is always possible, but the most popular sport in the world isn't going to simply make a decree and have sweeping changes implemented overnight. It's a logistical nightmare.

I also understand you just can't keep playing soccer like you do baseball, football or even basketball. The matches are already physically demanding, and 100 minutes is a long time to be running up and down a huge space. But come on, guys standing 8 yards from the net and pounding it one after another past the keeper is boring and disappointing, especially after a well-played match.

Perhaps they could go the route of the NHL, which is trying to phase out shootouts because of the arbitrary nature of deciding a winner. So, they instituted three-on-three overtimes to increase scoring. It worked. Overtime hockey matches are more exciting than they've ever been, and shootouts are down. Everyone wins.

I just feel bad for the Hermiston boys team and any soccer team that loses on penalty kicks. That match was so much fun to watch and cover, yet the ending left something to be desired. That something is fairness, or something approaching it.

The obvious argument against this is, "Well, make your kicks and you'd win." And I suppose that's a reasonable point, but it's all luck. The kicker decides where to put it, and the keeper tries to guess where it's going. It's luck.

Games and matches shouldn't be decided on luck and luck alone. It takes 100 minutes of skill and effort to get to penalty kicks, and luck decides it. It's a shame.

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Stanfield gets No. 1 Central Linn in quarters

Cobras, Tigers alike offensively

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Results: For a recap of Stanfield's game against Vernonia, see Page A11.

By **SAM BARBEE**
Staff Writer

For its first-round playoff game, the Stanfield Tigers traveled the dense forests of northwest Oregon to play the Vernonia Loggers and had to recalibrate its defensive scheme to defend against the high-octane passing attack employed by the Loggers.

For its semi-final matchup, the No. 9 Tigers travel further south to No. 1 Central Linn, where they will face a more familiar offensive attack. The Cobras run a ground game eerily reminiscent of the Tigers' Wing-T scheme, and they're ready to go toe-to-toe.

"My kids are hungry," head coach Davy Salas said. "Since we've been together, we told ourselves we want to go play for a state championship. That's been our goal for these guys. That's what we want to do. We're go-

ing to go play the games on our schedule, and if we play a great game we'll come out on top."

In preparation for the Cobras, Stanfield isn't changing anything. But that's been the modus operandi of first-year coach Salas since he took over before this season. The first time he addressed his team, he told them he isn't interested in sexy big-play football. He wanted to play "man-on-man, hat-on-hat" football and run between the tackles.

The Tigers have done just that this season.

Junior running back Thyler Monkus has three games of 200 or more rushing yards, and he's eclipsed 100 in every game but two. In total, Monkus has rushed for 1,353 yards on 153 carries



STAFF PHOTO BY SAM BARBEE

Stanfield quarterback Dylan Grogan (center) leads the No. 9 Stanfield Tigers into Central Linn to play the No. 1 Cobras in this Friday's 2A quarterfinal football game.

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BULLDOGS WILL RETURN PLAYERS WITH EXPERIENCE

DAWGS WILL RETURN IN 2016 WITH DEPTH AT ALL POSITIONS

By **SAM BARBEE**
Staff writer



Hermiston head football coach David Faaeteete will walk into his classroom next week and erase the current depth chart he has written on a white board.

Names like Tre Neal, Bob Coleman, Hayden Simon, Ethan Snow, Nathan Hunsaker and more will never again appear on it, but that means new names will. It all feeds into a belief that isn't uncommon that the Hermiston program has adopted: next man up.

"The next man up mentality is a belief," Faaeteete said.

That philosophy was on display all year. All-state wide receiver Ethan Snow broke his collarbone in the first half of the first game against Hanford, and he never returned. Starting quarterback Dayshawn Neal broke his ankle against Coeur d'Alene, and never returned. In all, Hermiston was without six offensive starters and a handful of defensive starters in its 49-14 home playoff loss to Wilsonville. Faaeteete said the Bulldogs started 11 different sophomores throughout the 2015 season.

For a program that was returning just a handful of starters from last year's state championship run, "next man up" became the rallying cry for the Bulldogs as the injuries and losses mounted.

Guys stepped up. Hunsaker took over under center and took the offense from stumbling to sprinting. Coleman and Simon took over the running back slot for the injured Jonathan Hinkle, and turned it into a physical ground game that wore down opponents.

"I think if people work hard enough, with hard work that's how the program runs," junior center Kaden Caldwell said. "I think we'll be OK next year. (The graduating seniors) were big guys for us, but I think we'll be OK."

In all, 13 Bulldogs played their last game Friday night. But many strong contributors will return. Neal, a sophomore, will return. Kick returner, wide receiver and defensive back Brady Christensen is just a junior. Wide receiver Tucker Salinas, H-back Jerry Ramirez, line backer Ty Knutz and offensive lineman



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston sophomore Tyler Rohrman returns an interception in the Bulldogs' loss to Wilsonville on Friday in Hermiston.

Hermiston ousted by Wilsonville

Slow start proves to be too much for Bulldogs

By **ERIC SINGER**
Staff Writer

The 2014 OSAA state playoffs were something to remember for the Hermiston Bulldogs, culminating in the win of the Class 5A state championship.

But the 2015 OSAA playoffs will be a thing to forget for the Hermiston squad, as they were booted from the bracket in the first round on Friday night, falling to the Wilsonville Wildcats 49-14.

The Bulldogs (4-6) were simply overmatched in the game, as their offense could not find develop a rhythm against the Wildcats defense. Defensively, the Bulldogs started out with a fire, holding Wilsonville (9-1) to a short possession and a punt on its first possession of the game.

But after the Bulldogs second-straight punt to begin the game, Wilsonville's offense found its own rhythm and started to put the Bulldogs in a big hole.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston's Robert Coleman rumbles up field in the Bulldogs' loss to Wilsonville on Friday in Hermiston.

"(Wilsonville) definitely came out to play, and I don't think we came out at nearly the level that they did," said Hermiston senior running back Bob Coleman after the game. "It's hard, because nothing was clicking for us and it's hard to build momentum that way."

On Wilsonville's second possession, stud junior quarterback Conner Neville led his team on 10-play, 73-yard drive that Neville capped off with a one-yard touchdown plunge to put his team up early in the first quarter.

But the drive did come

with a little controversy.

On the second play of that drive, Neville threw an interception deep in Wilsonville's own territory that would have set the Bulldogs up well. However, a penalty flag was thrown for pass interference against Hermiston, giving Wilsonville new life.

Bulldogs head coach David Faaeteete said after the game that he believed that's where the game turned.

"That phantom interception pass interference when the guy trips over the line,

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