

# Tigers pound Loggers for playoff win

Stanfield ends streak of first-round losses with win over Vernonia

The Stanfield Tigers heard the whispers headed into their first-round state playoff game this Friday.

The last seven times the Tigers had been to the playoffs they were quick outs,

and the program hadn't won a postseason game since 1957.

First-year head coach Davy Salas didn't shield his players from that fact, and instead embraced it as a challenge.

The Tigers took the challenge and ran with it to the tune of a 56-26 rout of No. 8 Vernonia on its home field.

"We've taken a thumping in the first round and we told these kids, 'Eventually we've got to get that monkey off our back, and why not be us?'"

Why not go out and make a statement and show Stanfield football is for real?" Salas said. "I told the kids, 'This is our time to prove something, this is our time to do something special for our town, our friends, our family, our school.' It was just about getting these kids to believe how good they could be."

The Tigers played what Salas called their most complete game of the season and led 35-12 at halftime.

With several players tak-

ing turns toting the ball, Salas said the No. 9 Tigers (9-1) were able to follow their offensive line and keep the chains moving.

"One of the things that really helped us was us eating up clock and sustaining long drives," he said. "Vernonia scored on four big plays, but at that point we were up so big and we kept running the ball and relying on our power running game."

Quarterback Dylan Grogan led the team with 20 car-

ries for 180 yards and four touchdowns, and added a passing touchdown to Jason Fitzpatrick on 2-of-6 passing for 43 yards.

Thyler Monkus, a game-time decision with a tender ankle, added 18 carries for 120 yards and three touchdowns. Makiah Blankenship added 62 yards on 12 rushes.

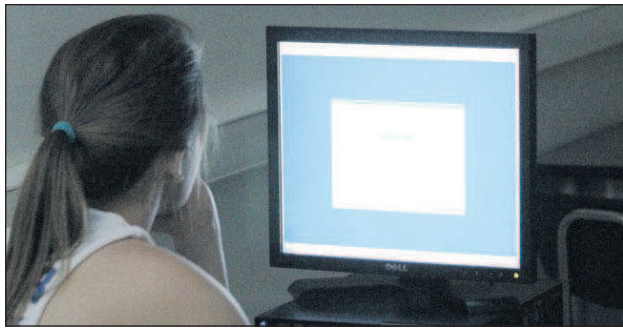
A package of aggressive blitzes held Vernonia's offense in check.

"Offensively and defensively we challenged our line

because their quarterback is really quick and can really make things happen with his feet," Salas said. "We were able to collapse the pocket tonight, we were sending blitzes all night."

Vernonia hadn't been to the state postseason since 2008.

Stanfield moves on to face No. 1 Central Linn in the second round since the Cobras beat No. 16 Nestucca 42-14 on Friday. That game will be in Halsey.



STAFF PHOTO BY SAM BARBEE

Echo senior Kelsey Ranger performs a memory exercise.

## Local schools getting ahead of concussions

By SAM BARBEE  
Staff Writer

Two Echo football players would have returned to the gridiron from concussions too soon had the school not implemented a new concussion management protocol this season.

The Oregon Scholastic Activities Association's concussion policy requires concussed athletes to sit out one week before returning to full participation.

Had Echo followed that policy, those two football players would have gone back to practices and games while still dealing with concussion symptoms.

Instead they were held out for three and four weeks, not just seven days, due to data gathered by trained concussion specialist Dr. Derek Earl.

Earl was hired in 2015 by Echo as well as Hermiston, Umatilla, Griswold, Irrigon and Riverside high schools to administer baseline concussion tests for athletes to create data about athletes' brain activity prior to and after concussions.

"Through (Dr. Earl's) support and help, it's really been impactful to have a specialist in concussion management who is on a national training level with concussion management, who can come in and help me understand why we should do the (testing), and how to do it right," Echo Superintendent/Athletic Director Raymon Smith said. "If just would've implemented it under the pattern I was told to implement it without Dr. Earl, we would've been doing it wrong."

The test, Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing or ImPACT, is administered by Dr. Earl and measures reaction times and impulse control. The participant begins with words flashed on the computer screen, and he or she must remember those words. Then they move to remembering the orientation of various geometric shapes, called "squiggles." After that, a grid of X's and O's is shown with three yellow characters. The test taker must remember where the yellow characters were.

Next they must count down from 25 on a grid with the numbers mixed up. After the first countdown three letters are flashed on the screen, and after counting down from 25 again the participant types in those three letters.

Finally, the words and squiggles are flashed again as they were at the beginning of the test. The idea is that brains function slower and less efficiently after concussions, so a baseline test, which some Echo student-athletes completed Fri-

day, can be compared to a test after a potential concussion to determine if further action needs to be taken.

"It gives us an opportunity to get kids back faster because we know where they started," Echo boys basketball coach Ben Campbell said. "Otherwise, we never really know because it's the brain."

"We have the data, hopefully by the end of this year we'll have all our athletes tested. Dr. Earl has access to that, so when the kids go in he has their baseline, he can retest, and figure out what they need to do to get better. With the big push in the media right now, it's important we get this right and take care of this. Because that's what it comes down to, the health of the kids."

Senior Kelsey Ranger, who completed her baseline test Friday, said it wasn't difficult.

"Concussions are serious, so it's good to (monitor them)," she said.

The test also gives coaches and faculty hard data to tell them whether to hold an athlete out of competition or send them back in. It eliminates the possibility of a player convincing a coach he or she is fit to play when actually in the throws of a concussion.

One of those two Cougars football players ended up in a situation comparable to that. During the game in question, there was no indication he was concussed. He showed no symptoms — no unsteadiness, no memory loss, nothing. So he finished the game and went home still showing no symptoms. It wasn't until the next morning when he awoke with dizziness and nausea did anyone think that he might have been concussed the night before.

"It shows even more in-depth of how we have to make sure we have a specialist working with us because the standard protocol doesn't apply to every kid," Smith said. "A concussion is not a standard interchangeable injury."

The whole focus of the program, though, isn't just to make athletes fit to compete. It's to be as safe as possible when dealing with brain trauma.

The three-step process implemented by Earl is "Get 'em back to life, get 'em back to education, then get 'em back to sports." Athletics is intentionally at the bottom of the list.

"Kids struggle enough as it is," Smith said, "let alone having to come to school with a concussion. If you're sitting in calculus and you're struggling with it anyway, and now the numbers are moving on you, it just doesn't work."

# BULLDOGS' SEASON ENDS ON PENALTY KICKS

By SAM BARBEE  
Staff Writer

An entire season came down to one kick and it bounced away harmlessly.

The No. 4 Hermiston Bulldogs played the No. 5 Woodburn Bulldogs to a 1-1 draw through 100 minutes of play Saturday at Kennison Stadium, but the blue-clad Woodburn Bulldogs advanced to the semi-finals with a 2-1 win on penalty kicks in the quarterfinal round. With one shot left and Hermiston needing to make it, Woodburn keeper Jesse Lopez saved Edwin Rosales' shot to propel Woodburn forward.

"I would've liked to have seen us pressure the goal a little more, impose ourselves a little more," Hermiston head coach Rich Harshberger said. "It was back and forth, but that's the one thing I wish we would've done more: pressure the keeper."

The match was played to a scoreless draw through the first 40 minutes, though Woodburn had a slight advantage. Woodburn, which had won eight of nine entering Saturday's bout, began frenetically, but Hermiston's defense anchored by sophomore keeper Antonio Campos routinely stonewalled blue Bulldogs attacks.

Woodburn had a near goal in the 29th minute when Crispin Rosales hammered one into the box off a pass from Francisco Martinez, but Campos saved it and Rosales' rebound went wide.

Hermiston had a chance to pull ahead a minute prior when Joel Mendez and Freddy Rodriguez worked a two-man break down the center of the field, but Mendez's chip was saved by Lopez.

The first half set the tone for the physicality of the match. Slides were hard.



STAFF PHOTO BY SAM BARBEE

Enrique Leal (10) of Hermiston passes passed Woodburn's Diego Ortiz (8) and Jaime Rodriguez (16) during Woodburn's 2-1 quarterfinal win on penalty kicks Saturday in Hermiston.

Challenges were aggressive. Hermiston was whistled for three yellow cards, the last setting up a set piece opportunity for Woodburn on a free kick with seconds remaining.

But the second half, though just as, if not more, physical than the first, was not scoreless. Sophomore reserve Amulfo Gaspar executed a slick give-and-go with Martinez and drilled an accurate shot right into the top left corner to put Woodburn up 1-0 in the 48th minute.

It was yet another time the Harshberger and the Bulldogs went down.

"That's something we've talked about all year," Harshberger said of his team's lack of panic when down. "It doesn't take a lot of time to score. We have good leaders to maintain the tempo of the game."

Woodburn appeared to have seized the match after Gaspar's goal. The blue Bulldogs wouldn't allow Hermiston to sustain any attacks,

and Hermiston's possessions became increasingly desperate. The purple Bulldogs had three straight corners immediately following the Woodburn goal but couldn't capitalize on any, then came a corner from the far side in the 64th.

Senior midfielder Enrique Leal lobbed a nice bender to the far post, where it bounced around and finally found the back of the net for the equalizer. It sent an already excited crowd into a frenzy, and made an already intense match explosive.

But neither team could end it in regular time. Hermiston's defense ratcheted up in the extra periods and had some good looks at the goal, too. John Mejia's try off a cross from Rosales hit the outside of the near post in the 86th minute, and Rosales' header at the first extra period's buzzer went just high.

"We had better chances," Harshberger said.

Woodburn's offense be-

came frantic late, and Hermiston's defense was more than happy to punch balls out of bounds and reset the play.

The 1-1 match went to penalty kicks. Woodburn made its first and Hermiston missed its first, also a save by Lopez, putting the purple Bulldogs down early. Bernardo Araujo got Hermiston knotted when Woodburn's second deflected off the near post, and the next four penalty shots found the net.

Then Jesus Rodriguez put it away for Woodburn, and Lopez sent them to the semis.

For Hermiston, though, the ceiling was raised. The Bulldogs finally won a playoff game and advanced to the quarterfinals and were close to being one of four teams remaining.

"We were talking about that before the game," Harshberger said. "This is the first team to win a playoff game. Now it's an expectation. It's not a goal, it's an expectation."

## LOSS:

continued from Page A10

that's a game changer," he said. "(It would have) gave us the ball on the 15 (yard line) going in, and we got a kicker that can boot it from a distance."

Following the touchdown, the Bulldogs still couldn't get the offense to click, turning in a three-and-out and their third punt of the game. A good punt return from the Wildcats set them up at Hermiston's 27 yard line.

And Neville didn't waste any time to cash in on the field position, as on the first play Neville connected with his brother Jonny Neville down the seam for a 27-yard touchdown pass to put Wilsonville up 14-0.

On Hermiston's next possession, the Bulldogs offense finally got a little spark on

offense, as senior Hayden Simon bullied his way for a six-yard gain on third down to give Hermiston its first first-down of the game, coming at the 1:45 mark of the first quarter.

However, that spark would be short-lived as Bulldogs quarterback Nathan Hunsaker threw an interception on the very next play.

After having a career game against Pendleton last week, Hunsaker really struggled against the Wilsonville defense, completing 12 of 24 passes for 119 yards three interceptions and a pair of touchdowns.

In the second quarter, Wilsonville scored three touchdowns in a span of just under three minutes, with a pair of touchdown passes by Neville and a pick-6 of Hunsaker by defensive back Dom Schieres. The scores put Wilsonville up 35-0 on Herm-

iston, which the two teams would take into halftime.

Neville finished the game 13 of 25 passing for 297 yards and three touchdowns.

At halftime, Coleman said the Hermiston coaches gave the Bulldogs a speech which served as a bit of a wake-up call.

"It's a pride thing, and you're either going to be remembered as the team that got crushed in the first round, or the team that was getting crushed and stepped up and competed with them," he said.

And it seemed to work.

On Hermiston's first offensive possession, Hunsaker led the unit on a seven-play, 77-yard drive that he capped off with a 15-yard touchdown pass to Brady Christenson to cut the deficit to 42-7.

Then after forcing Wilsonville into a turnover-on-downs, Hermiston went on

another long drive, once again finished off with a 16-yard touchdown pass from Hunsaker to Jerry Ramirez to cut the lead to 42-14 with 2:46 left in the third quarter.

"Anybody can just (throw in) the towel there at the half but our boys came out and fought," said Faeteete. "It's not in us to quit and we kept going up till the end. Credit this group of seniors, nobody gave them a chance in heck to compete with these guys."

After the game, the entire Bulldogs team lined up in one end zone, linked arms and made one final walk across the Kennison Field turf, which sent a rush of emotions through Coleman's head.

"It's over," he said. "I mean it sucks that i'll never be able to suit up and play football at Hermiston High School again. Endings suck but they make everything you do more meaningful."

## BULLDOGS:

continued from Page A10

Beau Blake will all return, as well.

Faeteete is especially excited about some freshmen and sophomores who didn't get any snaps at the varsity level this season.

"It's tough to replace guys like Bob and Tre and Hayden," he said. "Those guys played a lot of games, won a lot of games, made a lot of plays. Those are big shoes to fill, but we got a young class of juniors, some sophomores and some freshmen. Watch out, world, here we come."

Unlike last season into this season, Hermiston will return with depth. And something to prove.

"We're good, just lock ourselves in the weight room. We know what we want," Faeteete said. "We wanted to upset a team who thought they were gonna do what they

did tonight. We wanted to fight. Our program's good, just keep working. It's hard to replace those guys, Bob Coleman, Tre Neal, Nathan Hunsaker — our steady Eddy, the guy who works hard — it's tough. We'll put our nose to the grindstone and get better."