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Bailey leads Tigers past Irrigon

Stanfield junior scores 19 to power Stanfield to sweep of Knights

By **SAM BARBEE**
Staff Writer

Ryan Bailey is going to remember this game for a long time.

The Stanfield junior, coming off the bench on Senior Night in Stanfield, scored 19 points, had a four-point play and a clutch three-point play in overtime to lead the Tigers to a 52-47 win Saturday night and a sweep of the Irrigon Knights. With the win, the Tigers (15-5, 7-2) keep pace with Heppner, who beat Culver Saturday.

Dylan Grogan added 16 points for Stanfield. Austin Rice led Irrigon with 18 points and Xavier Rambo

pitched in with 11.

Bailey said he wasn't sure of the stakes entering Saturday's game.

"We knew coming in we wanted to get ready for districts and state and were just gonna play as hard as we could," he said. "...It's big. It gives us a lot of confidence. We played great tonight. Everyone stepped up from one to whatever. Everyone played hard. It was awesome."

Stanfield coach Victor Baros knew the stakes, though.

"We knew that it was gonna be a tough game," he said. "We knew that if we didn't come out on top we could still have a possibility to see them at districts. We were just glad to go the extra quarter and come out and play our game."

Irrigon (15-6, 6-3) coach Mitch Thompson made himself unavailable for comment.

Bailey's first big shot came in the first quarter with the

Tigers down 11-3. Stanfield hadn't made a field goal since its first try of the game, while Irrigon's offense flowed and got good looks. Austin Rice hit two 3-pointers in the stretch, and Fredy Vera and Xavier Rambo were causing havoc driving the lane.

After Rambo made an acrobatic layup with 1:55 on the clock, Stanfield came down and found Bailey on the wing, who launched a 3 over Daniel Vera, who fouled the junior as the net ripped for three points. Bailey hit the free throw, cutting the Knight lead to four at 11-7. Stanfield added a free throw to end the first quarter down 11-8.

"It just feels good I could come through for my team," Bailey said. "I struggled in the earlier games, but it felt good to come through. We played so hard. It just feels so good to win this game."

See **TIGERS**, A11



STAFF PHOTOS BY SAM BARBEE
Above: Stanfield junior Dylan Grogan (22) shoots over Irrigon's Fredy Vera early in the Tigers' 52-47 overtime win Saturday night in Stanfield.



Right: Stanfield junior Ryan Bailey (3) dribbles around Irrigon's Fredy Vera (12) during the first half of Stanfield's 52-47 overtime win Saturday night in Stanfield.

A look at high school basketball playoff scenarios

The last week of high school basketball has given us some close calls, some fun, and some unexpectedness that figures to make the next few weeks of action interesting.

After Stanfield beat Irrigon Saturday night, I got a message on Twitter asking about the Columbia Basin Conference standings and who would get what seed. That got me thinking. So, let's run through some playoff scenarios in some of the more curious leagues around the area.

First, let's start with the CBC boys, since that's where the most intrigue resides. Atop the league are Heppner (17-3, 7-2) and Stanfield (15-5, 7-2), though the Mustangs have already swept the Tigers this season with a 28-point win at home Jan. 9 and a one-point win on the road Jan. 30.

But Stanfield hasn't gone away, obviously.

The Tigers, though, have a tougher final game than the Mustangs, when they travel to Athena to face the Weston-McEwen TigerScots (10-10, 5-4) this Friday. Don't be fooled by the record hovering around .500, though. Weston can play. The TigerScots are perhaps playing their best ball of the year, with a 53-51 win over Heppner not too long ago.

So what will happen? Who will be seeded where? Let's think it through.

First, let's assume Heppner wins and Stanfield wins. That would put the Mustangs and Tigers at 8-2 for CBC play, giving Heppner the top seed and Stanfield the No. 2 seed with Irrigon at No. 3, assuming the Knights beat the Culver Bulldogs Friday night.

Now, if Heppner loses and Stanfield wins, that would put the Tigers a game up on the Mustangs and Stanfield would be No. 1 with Heppner No. 2, despite beating Stanfield twice.

If both teams lose and finish up at 7-3, it works the same as if they both won. If Irrigon wins as well and we have a three-way tie at 7-3, Heppner is No. 1, Stanfield is No. 2 and Irrigon is No. 3 based on head-to-head matchups. On the surface it looks kinda complicated, but if we think it out it gets simpler.

Stanfield rightly isn't taking Weston-McEwen lightly. Ryan Bailey told me after the 52-47 overtime win Saturday night that they have a lot of confidence, and they should. But head coach Victor Baros, who has said all season neither he nor his team has taken any CBC opponent lightly — is being careful with what he says and how much emotion he carries into Stanfield's final regular season game. He's even-keeled on the sideline and after games, and that calmness seems diffused into his team. There is rarely any panic in the Tigers, even when down, and that bodes well with a possible chance to walk away Friday night conference champions.

There really isn't any more intrigue in any other leagues, not as much as in the boys CBC. Pendleton has sat down in the driver's seat and pulled the seatbelt across its lap with a 4-0 record in the Columbia Basin Conference and a three-game lead on The Dalles and Hermiston. The Bulldog girls have done the same, and the Umatilla girls have clinched an Eastern Oregon League championship with a two-game lead over Vale and one to play.

The first local district basketball tournament, 1A Old Oregon League district tourney, starts Feb. 18 in Baker.

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NEAL INKS WITH EASTERN WASHINGTON

Tre Neal signs as defensive tackle for 2010 FCS national champ Eagles

By **SAM BARBEE**
Staff Writer

To say it was a certainty wouldn't be accurate. Hope is a better word, but even so, likely would probably be the best fit.

Two years after a tall and lanky — yet strong and explosive — Tre Neal transferred from eight-man football at 1A Lone to the 11-man game at 5A Hermiston, he has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football at Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Eastern Washington University. Neal, listed as a 6-foot-3, 255-pound defensive tackle, joins a 19-man recruiting class. Neal is one of two recruits from Oregon, the other is running back Jason Tally from Jesuit High in Portland.

"I love the atmosphere, the family atmosphere," he said. "They don't just preach it. It's actual, like, these guys are brothers in arms up there. I love the coaching staff. I love Coach Beau (Baldwin), Coach (Josh) Fetter, they're all great. Love the facilities. The turf, I love the (red) turf. Overall I just feel like it's the best fit."

Neal said Eastern first approached him in the spring toward the end of track season. Linebackers coach and pro liaison Fetter, who saw Neal work out, and passed the then-junior onto defensive line coach Brian Stradley, 'Who loved (Fetter) for it,' Neal laughed.

Neal took an unofficial visit in October to watch the Eagles play Weber State, and visited again recently, this an official. He committed while on campus in Cheney, Washington, about a two and a half-hour drive from Hermiston up Highway 395. Cheney is about 16 miles southwest of



STAFF PHOTO BY SAM BARBEE
Hermiston senior Tre Neal (right) smiles with Bulldogs head football coach David Faateete after the 6-foot-3 255-pound defensive lineman signed a National Letter of Intent Wednesday to play football at Eastern Washington University.

Spokane.

"I knew they all want to come to the games and stuff," Neal said. "I'm happy that this worked out."

"My best friend lives in Spokane," Tre's mother Heather said. "She's real close so we'll always have sort of a watchful eye one way or the other if I can be there or not. But I'm so glad it's gonna be close because I'm gonna try to get up there as much as I can."

A huge benefit to Neal in the recruiting process was head coach David Faateete, who played collegiately for the University of Oregon in the early 2000s. Being it was his first year at the helm, Faateete wasn't super involved in the physical acts of working as Neal's representative to colleges. In-

stead, it was more of Faateete's experiences and advice for someone about to embark on a similar path.

"Every day is a time management lesson for Tre," Faateete said with a smile. "That being said, he's definitely grown a lot as a player since he's been here and he's definitely grown a lot as a human being. He's a very passionate guy about the game of football and very caring about the family he's leaving here at Hermiston."

That growth as a player started with a positional change. Faateete caught his first glimpse of Neal, then 6-foot-3 230 pounds fresh off a growth spurt, and Faateete convinced him to come out for spring football.

See **NEAL**, A11

Bulldogs trounce Riverhawks

Matches season-high in points

By **SAM BARBEE**
Staff Writer

The last time the Hermiston girls faced off against The Dalles, the Riverhawks gave the Bulldogs all they could handle in a 44-32 win that was closer than the score would indicate.

Since then, head coach Steve Hoffert has been preaching finish teams early, don't give them a reason to hang around, with The Dalles as the catalyst. After a tight first quarter, Hermiston outscored The Dalles 62-32 the rest of the way to claim an easy 79-49 win Friday night in the Dawghouse. Sara Ramirez led all scorers with 22 points, Maddy Juul had 21 and Jansen Edmiston had 20.

As it's done in its previous three league games, No. 5 Hermiston (16-3, 4-0) started in a full-court press. But it didn't have the same effectiveness as it did in the previous

two league outings. With quick and patient guards, the Riverhawks (10-8, 2-2) broke the press more easily than Hood River or Pendleton could manage, and got some easy buckets early. On top of that, The Dalles is a notably fast-starting team.

"They're a hot-starting team," Hoffert said. "They're aggressive. They're physical. They run their sets really well. You have to play well that first quarter. If not, you're going to be down."

That was apparent Friday night, when The Dalles shot 60 percent from the field, 50 percent from 3-point range, and 80 percent from the free throw line to finish the first period tied at 17.

"I don't mind being tied. I don't mind it being close," Hoffert said. "Because I know that first quarter is just a survival quarter with The Dalles."

Iliana Telles scored eight points that quarter, only matched by Ramirez's eight. But The Dalles couldn't keep pace. Partial-

See **BULLDOGS**, A11

Hermiston dominates on the road in Oregon City

Bulldogs takes No. 1 spot, while Pendleton finishes No. 3

The Hermiston Bulldogs wrestling team rolled into Oregon City on Saturday and headed home a big winner as seven Bulldogs earned first place finishes to lead the team to a first place finish as well as the Oregon City Invite.

Hermiston's seven champions were Liam Tarvin (113 pounds), Andy Wagner (126 pounds), CJ Hendon (138 pounds), Brock McDonough (170 pounds), Bob Coleman (182 pounds), Sam Colbray (220 pounds) and Beau Blake (285 pounds).

To go with those seven first place finishes, Hermiston wrestlers also earned four second place finishes, with Isaiah Aguilar (120 pounds), Will Sharkey (145 pounds), Valen Wyse (152 pounds), and Julio Leiva (170 pounds). As a team, Hermiston garnered 336.5

points for the No. 1 finish with a comfortable cushion over the No. 2 team of North Marion, which finished with 224.5 points.

The Pendleton Buckaroos also put forth a strong performance at Oregon City with a third place team finish with 208 points.

The Buckaroos were led by champions Lane Evens at 106 pounds and Morgan Holcomb at 145 pounds, as well as second place finishes by Marcus Taylor at 195 pounds and Jacob Banks at 285 pounds.

OREGON CITY INVITE
106 POUNDS
1) Lane Evens (P) pins Cristian Ramirez (North Marion), 3:39
2) Ruben Madrigal, Hermiston
3) Caleb Temper, Pendleton
6) Chris Chambers, Pendleton
113 POUNDS
1) Liam Tarvin (Hermiston) pins Kyle McConkey (North Marion), 1:34
6) Gage Shipley, Hermiston
120 POUNDS
2) Isaiah Aguilar, Hermiston lost on 4-2 dec. to Jahziel Peak (Parkrose)
6) Jesus Rodriguez, Hermiston
126 POUNDS
1) Andy Wagner (Hermiston) def. Brandon Gibson (North Marion) by 10-2 maj. dec.
3) Alex Rendon, Pendleton
132 POUNDS
4) Brendon Bedolla, Pendleton
138 POUNDS
1) CJ Hendon (Hermiston) def. Tony Richter (Ore. City) by 17-4 maj. dec.

See **WRESTLING**, A11