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## Hoffert retires after eight seasons

Bulldogs coach steps aside after seven state tournament appearances

By ERIC SINGER  
Staff Writer

After eight years at Hermiston and more than 30 years in coaching, girls basketball coach Steve Hoffert is retiring.

"I just felt that it was time," Hoffert said. "I've been thinking about it for a little while now, and I always said that I wanted to get out when I still had the passion for the game, not when I was tired of it, and I still love it so everything just sort of fell into place."

Hoffert had been trying to figure out the right time to announce the decision and decided that the banquet on Tuesday evening was the best form since the players and families tied to the program would all be in attendance.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston girls head basketball coach Steve Hoffert announced that he is retiring from coaching basketball and plans to focus on his business and his family.

The announcement came as a shock to numerous players and parents at the banquet, but the reaction quickly turned to loud cheers and a

standing ovation.

"It made me feel good to see the support from the community and to know that my time here was appreciated,"

he said.

Hoffert compiled a 159-57 overall record in eight seasons in Hermiston, including seven trips to the OSAA

state tournament in which the team earned six trophies — most recently a fourth-place finish in 2016. He says that those accomplishments with

those teams will be one of the things that stick with him moving forward.

"It means that what we were doing was successful. If I'm on the outside looking in it would be hard to question this program because we've been able to sustain that success," he said. "And what we've built makes you only feel better about the future."

Aside from success on the state level, the Hermiston Bulldogs were dominant in conference play under Hoffert's leadership, compiling a 59-1 record during that time — with the last league loss coming on January 15, 2013 on the road at The Dalles. Hoffert also led the Bulldogs to an unbeaten record against their rival Pendleton Buckaroos.

Hermiston athletic director Blaine Ganvoa said that the school would like to have a quick search for the new coach, but the school

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## IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN THE GAME

Hermiston lacrosse team plays first game after passing of head coach

By ERIC SINGER  
Staff Writer

When Hermiston freshman Jake Palmer took the field at Sunset Elementary on Friday night, he couldn't believe his eyes.

Hundreds of people flocked to the Bulldogs' lacrosse game against the Lincoln Cardinals to support the team and pay tribute to Jake's father, Hermiston lacrosse coach Trampis Palmer, who passed away on Sunday at the age of 42.

"It was great ... families of people he coached 15 years back even came out to support him and support us," Jake said. "He's been coaching youth sports for so long and it was cool to see them here."

Bulldogs coach Jacob Arnold couldn't really put into words the emotions and feelings he felt seeing the large crowd.

"It was just unreal to see," he said. "It really shows how many people (Trampis) touched."

Arnold has coached lacrosse with Palmer at the youth and high school level for the past six years, but has known Palmer since both were involved with coaching in the Hermiston Grid Kids youth football program several years ago. Arnold will now take over the reins as the varsity head



STAFF PHOTOS BY E.J. HARRIS

Top: Megan Palmer, daughter of Hermiston lacrosse coach Trampis Palmer, catches the coin while performing the opening coin toss of the Bulldogs' game against Lincoln on Friday in Hermiston.

Above: Hermiston's Jake Palmer goes to pass in front of Lincoln's Sam Paris in the Bulldogs' 15-1 loss to the Cardinal on Friday in Hermiston.

coach, moving up from his varsity assistant position, while junior varsity coach Carter Christiansen takes on varsity assistant duties.

Before Friday's game, a moment of silence was held in Palmer's memory and then the honor continued as Palmer's daughter Megan performed the pre-game coin toss at midfield with Luke Palmer serving as the captain.

Once the game was played, things did not go how the Bulldogs (2-4) had hoped as the Cardinals (2-4) pulled away after a close opening quarter to earn the 15-1 win.

Lincoln scored the first goal of the game two minutes into the first period,

and then scored again a mere 15 seconds later to take a quick 2-0 lead. Hermiston was able to battle back and get a goal from sophomore Luke Walchi at the 2:36 mark of the first — Walchi's team-leading 17th goal of the season — to bump the score to 2-1 which the teams would take to the end of the first period.

But in the second period, the wheels fell off for Hermiston as Lincoln turned up their intensity and held the possession for the majority of the game. Lincoln scored seven goals in the second period, using their speed to fluster the Hermiston defense and get some easy looks against Bulldog

goalie Beau Blake.

"We just kind of ran into a better team today," Arnold said. "We played with a lot of emotion in that first period, but the boys played hard with what they had faced this week."

Walchi said he and his fellow teammates were very disappointed in the result.

"Before the game our emotions were running really, really high and everybody wanted to do well for Trampis," he said. "But we just kind of got flustered as the game went along and didn't do what we wanted to do."

Friday's game pre-

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## Robles pitches perfection against Parkrose Broncos

Hermiston baseball shuts out Parkrose for sweep

Hermiston senior R.J. Robles pitched a perfect game and the Bulldogs baseball team heads into league play on the strength of a doubleheader sweep of Parkrose on Friday.

Robles struck out 13 of the 15 batters he faced in the opener and the Bulldogs supported him with 13 hits in an 11-0 win in five innings. Then in the night cap, Tyler Sexton and Chase Root combined to throw a shutout and the Bulldogs scored late to get a 3-0 victory.

"It was really nice to see," said Hermiston assistant coach John Christy. "We really came out and, number one, R.J. Robles is pitching a gem for us. He threw tons of strikes and really battled. It was tough for (Parkrose) and he really overwhelmed them with his stuff today."

The two batters Robles didn't strike out put

the ball in play, but the defense maintained the perfect outing. Chase Root made a diving play on a bloop behind third base on one, and Caden Schwirse snagged a line drive at second base for the other.

Robles also helped his own cause going 3 for 4 at the plate and scoring twice. Hermiston (7-5) plated nine runs in the first two innings and Sexton (3 for 4, 4 RBI) and Slade Gritz (2 for 4, 2 RBI) also had big games on offense.

"We got a little bit healthy in the first game with the bats," Christy said. "We made a lot of contact, got a lot of hits, and the other balls that we hit were really hard."

Sexton added to his big afternoon in Game 2 by going 2 for 2 with another RBI, and he pitched the first six innings allowing just two hits and striking out 11. Root struck out all three batters he faces in the seventh for the save.

Parkrose (3-5) Game 2 starter Gunnar Schlichting kept the Bulldogs off balance through four

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STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston's R.J. Robles throws from the mound in a game earlier this month. Robles earned a perfect game for his work from the hill Friday on the road against Parkrose.