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DAWGS 'READY TO HIT'

Practices begin for all fall sports

By **MATT ENTRUP**
Staff writer

The Hermiston and Pendleton football teams took to the gridiron with excitement and optimism for the 2016 season this week, which sees both teams joining the eight-team mash-up of the Columbia River and Intermountain Conferences that will be called Special District 1.

"It's hype, we're all out here's having fun and putting in work. We're looking good," said senior Hermiston wide receiver Tucker Salinas. "We're ready for pads. Can't wait actually. I think we're ready to hit each other."

"It's fun to get going again, back from summer

break, it's go time now," said Pendleton junior wide receiver Shaw Jerome.

Both Hermiston coach David Faateete and Pendleton coach Erik Davis reported strong turnout in their summer camps and weight lifting programs, and like the players were just happy to have the fall activities officially underway.

"We had about 75-80 kids out all summer long, working out, doing stuff and getting after it from freshmen on through seniors," said Faateete, who enters his second season as the Bulldogs' head coach. "It's always exciting when we start. We wonder if all this hard work we put in is going to pay off."

Pendleton's turnout was a bit lower, but the players that are there are dedicated, Davis said.

New conference

The Columbia River Conference and Intermountain Conference have merged for this athletic season. Here are the teams in the new league, and how they finished last season overall (including playoffs) and in league play.

Summit	12-1	(4-0 IMC)
Redmond	8-3	(3-1 IMC)
Bend	6-4	(2-2 IMC)
Hermiston	4-6	(3-0 CRC)
Hood River Valley	5-5	(2-1 CRC)
Ridgeview	4-5	(1-3 IMC)
Pendleton	3-6	(1-2 CRC)
Mountain View	1-8	(0-4 IMC)

"We took 55 kids down to the Western Oregon (University) camp and we have a great foundation coming into the fall," he said. "That just kind of spring-boarded into our summer workouts, and we had a consistent group that were lifting and

running all summer long. "The first day is always trying to get the paperwork and trying to get all the kids here and back from vacation and seeing who you have to work with, so I'm just excited to get everybody out here and going.

Put the helmet on and get things started."

Pads come on Wednesday for both teams, and both teams open the season on Friday, Sept. 2. Hermiston hosts Union (WA) at 7 p.m.

Here are a few things to

watch this season:

PONDERING PASSERS: Hermiston will hold a quarterback competition between incumbent junior Dayshawn Neal and sophomores Andrew James and

See **BULLDOGS, B2**



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston football head coach David Faateete runs defensive drills Monday during the first day of practice in Hermiston.

RODEO:

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The Hermiston cowboy was a bit disappointed with the overall performance, but was happy he could have one more run at the arena.

"It's just so much fun here," he said, "I'm so fortunate that my hometown rodeo is so nice and so fun, because a lot of people don't have that luxury. It's an awesome event from the committee and the fans that come out."

The Hermiston native that had the best evening came in barrel racing as Callahan Crossley sped her way to a time of 17.21 seconds which earned her the top time of the night and a third place finish overall. The placing brought her a nice \$2,920 check and a \$100 dash-for-cash bonus.

"It was definitely one of the best rides I've ever had," Crossley said following her run, "So I guess I just gave the best for last here."

Also competing on the night in front of their hometown fans were Stanfield's Travis Taruscio in steer wrestling (16.8 seconds on two), Hermiston's Dalton Massey in steer wrestling (5.6 seconds on one), Hermiston's Andy Carlson in team roping (5.5 seconds on one), and Hermiston bull rider Cody Ford.

Ford, a 2006 graduate of Echo High School, fell just short of a qualified ride getting bucked off his bull at 6.4 seconds in his first professional trip back to the Farm-City rodeo. After finding out it would be the last rodeo in the fairgrounds arena, he knew he had to come back.

"I've watched so much rodeo here since I was a kid, and it woulda been cool to come here and win it," he said, "but there's always next year, I guess."

Saturday also brought the most successful night for bull riders of the week, as four riders garnered qualified rides after only five did in the three nights

prior. Liberty, Texas' Cole Melancon mastered Corey & Lange's Comatose for the eight seconds he needed and the judges liked what they saw as they awarded him an 83.5 point ride, vaulting him into the victory and a \$4,935 payday.

"It feels good, it's been a rough few weeks for me, but I think it's turning around," Melancon said, who sat in 25th in the PRCA world standings coming into the weekend.

In bareback, Jessy Davis of Power, Montana kept his hot streak going with an 86.5 point ride on Korkow's Onion Ring for the top score of the night and a second place overall finish with a \$4,394 payout. Davis only started competing in May after missing the previous six months rehabbing from a shoulder injury, and has since worked his way up to 15th in the world standings. He said following his ride that he was happy to be healthy enough to make the trip to Hermiston, which is a staple on his schedule each year.

"I love it here. You can always win a lot of money and the best contractors come here and the bucking horses are really good," Davis said. "You gotta take advantage of a great rodeo like this."

In saddle bronc, Cody DeMoss of Heflin, Louisiana, took advantage of his re-ride chance with the top score of the night with an 80.5 on Korkow's Free Sample. His score put him into a tie for fourth place overall behind co-champions Sterling Crawley and Tyrell Smith's 83 points. Elsewhere, Terrebone's Shane Erickson had the best night with a 9.3 second time in calf roping and Wenatchee, Washington's Colinn Wolfe soared at steer wrestling with a time of 5.8 seconds.

Roosevelt, Utah's Rhen Richard took home the coveted trophy saddle and a \$5,333 paycheck as the top all-around cowboy.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Steer wrestler Mike McGinn, of Haines, turns his steer in 4.1 seconds Friday at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.

Highlights from the Farm-City Pro Rodeo

HERMISTON HERALD

In what is expected to be its final go-round at the downtown arena, the Farm-City Pro Rodeo went out with a bang last week.

Here are the highlights from the first three days of action.

Wednesday

For 10 years, bareback rider R.C. Landingham called Umatilla County — Pendleton, specifically — home.

So every year the 25-year-old cowboy, who now resides in Hat Creek, California, makes sure he can make it back to his hometown rodeos. And he was, indeed, in Hermiston on Wednesday night to help open the 28th Farm-City Pro Rodeo at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds and gave many of his family and old friends a good show as he rode Kesler Rodeo's Double Dippin for 81.5 points. His score was the best of the night and earned Landingham the \$100 dollar dash bonus.

"I'm glad to finally perform well for you," Landingham said to the crowd following his victory lap around the arena.

The performance was a continuation of what has become a breakout season for Landingham, who is in

his seventh year on the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association tour. He sits in fifth place in the bareback Weather Guard PRCA World Standings with \$89,068 in winnings and is poised for his first-ever trip to the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas, Nevada in December. He credits his success to a better understanding of how to take care of himself and his health.

"I tried to workout more, eat more healthy, and learned to turn away a lot of horses," Landingham said. "Guys give me heck about turning away so many, but I've learned if you don't feel you can place, there's no point in (hurting) yourself ... it's worked and I've probably placed at 75 percent of the rodeos I've been to."

Another Oregon cowboy that was happy to be back on Wednesday was Terrebone native Russell Carozzo. The all-around cowboy, who recently vaulted into the No. 1 spot in the all-around World Standings with more than \$82,000 in winnings, gushed about Farm-City following his turn in steer wrestling.

"It ... sure feels good to

See **HIGHLIGHTS, B2**



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

R.C. Landingham of Hat Creek, Calif. rides Double Dippin for 81.5 points in bareback riding Wednesday at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Mason Clements of Santaquin, Utah, rides Trail Dust for 84.5 points in bareback riding Saturday at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.