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Rivalry split

Bucks, Dawgs each win one

By ERIC SINGER
Staff writer

HERMISTON — Any time Pendleton and Hermiston teams meet up for a sporting event, it is sure to be an action-packed clash between the geographic rivals.

Friday's battle on the baseball diamond between the Bulldogs and Buckaroos was just that, as the both teams came in trying to climb the ladder to the top of the Columbia River Conference with the season beginning to wind down. Pendleton and Hermiston battled back-and-forth in a doubleheader at Armand Larive ball park, and for the most part neither team was able to really have a comfortable advantage.

At the end of the day, each team walked away with a victory as the Bulldogs defended their home turf in Game 1 with a 10-5 victory and Pendleton rallied time and time again in Game 2 to cement a 10-8 victory. The split leaves Hermiston (9-12, 3-5 CRC) and Pendleton (7-14, 3-5) in a three-way tie with The Dalles for second place in the CRC.

Hermiston certainly had its chances in Game 2 to seal down a win for the sweep, holding a three-run lead early and a two-run lead in the sixth inning, however the Bulldogs couldn't keep the Bucks down. Bulldogs coach Lance Hawkins said that while he would have loved two victories, he was pretty satisfied with the way his team played.

"I told the guys before that at the end of the day if we can look at ourselves and say we tried our best and worked hard it doesn't matter what the outcome is," Hawkins said, "and I really think we did that today. That's two teams that are pretty compatible squaring off and we just fell a little short in the second game."

Pendleton coach T.J. Haguewood was ecstatic the Buckaroos were able to find a way to win Game 2.

"We had our backs up against the wall about five times I think and we battled back again and again," he said. "Credit to Hermiston, though, they pounded and pounded and kept putting pressure on us and it was a good seesaw battle, what you'd expect from a rivalry game."

The Buckaroos breakthrough in Game 2 came in the sixth inning which started with back-to-back walks by Chris Large and Wyatt Morris. That set up a bunt attempt by Shaw Jerome, which was laid down perfectly but an errant throw to first from Hermiston catcher Slade Gritz allowed two runs to score to tie the game at 8-8 and Jerome ended up at second base.

Next batter up was Nick Bower, who dropped in a flare into shallow right field for his third hit of the game to bring in Jerome for a 9-8 lead.

Jerome gave the Buckaroos an insurance run in the seventh inning, when he ripped an RBI single into right field to bring home Parker Smith to make it a 10-8 game. After the game, Jerome said that being able to get the win really showed who they are as a team.

"It was a big mental test to see who we are and we came out and sprayed the ball around and it was a good comeback," Jerome

said. "We've been saying we're made of iron, so we showed it and kept battling back."

The junior outfielder had an incredible day at the plate for Pendleton, going a combined 6 for 8 on the day with a triple, a double, five RBI, two runs scored and two stolen bases from his No. 2 spot in the lineup.

"I was seeing the ball pretty well today," Jerome said wearing a big smile. "I was getting some extra hacks at practice with the coaches and I think that helped."

"He's a catalyst for us for sure," Haguewood said of Jerome. "He's always doing something dynamic on the field and today it was great to see him break out and smack some balls around, some of them the hardest he's hit all year ... he found a groove and capitalized on it."

Large pitched the last 2 2/3 innings of Game 2 for Pendleton and slammed the door shut on Hermiston's offense, as he gave up just one hit and zero runs in relief of starter Ryan Russell. And on a day where the pitchers on both sides struggled to get outs, Haguewood said what Large was able to do was crucial for the Bucks.

"We preach throwing strikes and letting the defense work behind you and I thought Chris came in and did a great job," Haguewood said. "He threw strikes, kept the ball down and beared down when we need it."

But Hermiston's offense feasted on Pendleton pitching in Game 1, as the Bulldogs smacked 10 hits to get their 10 runs. The Bulldogs wasted no time getting the offense going, as Joel Mendez started the first inning with a walk and two batters later Wyatt Noland dropped a single into center field to score Mendez for a 1-0 lead. An RBI groundout by Cole Campbell made it a 2-0 lead after one inning.

When Pendleton tied the game at 2-2 in the second with the help of two Bulldog errors, Hermiston re-took the lead in the third when Gritz mashed a fastball deep to left field for a solo home run, his first of the season. It added on in the fourth on a Pendleton error and an RBI single by Kaden Caldwell and Hermiston went to the sixth inning with a 5-2 lead.

But once again Pendleton clawed its way back with three runs in the sixth with a two-RBI single by Jerome and a wild pitch to bring in Morris as the Buckaroos tied the game at 5-5.

But the tie was short-lived. Hermiston deployed some great plate discipline against Pendleton pitcher Nick Lani, working two walks in the inning, tapping a pair of infield singles and then getting a timely two-RBI single by Mendez to work in five runs to boost up to a 10-5 lead on the Buckaroos.

Offensive consistency has hampered the Bulldogs at times this season, and the Bulldogs were able to string together a total of 21 hits with their 18 runs on the day which was a pleasant sight for Hawkins but he knows there is still work to be done. "I'm very pleased," he said. "Of course, we had a couple innings without some competitive at-bats, but we showed some pretty good plate discipline."

See SPLIT, A9

Gritz happy to stay home

Hermiston catcher signs with BMCC baseball

By ERIC SINGER
Staff writer

Slade Gritz did not want his baseball career to end in high school.

But as the days of his senior year of school began to dwindle and his senior season churned away, Gritz was left wondering if he would get a chance to continue his

career in college. This season he not only improved his hitting, but he further entrenched himself as one of the best defensive catchers in the region.

Yet, the college offers weren't there. He had shared some communication with coaches and shown interest in some programs, but that's as far as it had gotten.

Until one day, Blue Mountain Community College coach Brad Baker invited Gritz out to a practice



PHOTO COURTESY OF HERMISTON ATHLETICS/LINDY THOMPSON
Hermiston senior Slade Gritz, second from right, receives congratulations after signing a National Letter of Intent to play baseball at Blue Mountain Community College next season during a ceremony on Thursday at Hermiston High School.

See GRITZ, A9

T-WOLVES DOMINATE IN HERMISTON

BMCC extends leads in Northwest Region

Hermiston Herald

The Blue Mountain rodeo teams extended their leads in the Northwest Region with a dominant three rounds in Hermiston over the weekend.

The Timberwolves were on top of their game on Saturday to win the two-round BMCC Rodeo at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo arena at the former Umatilla County Fairgrounds, and the men's team scored 695 points while the women came in with 580.

Then in Sunday's one-round NW Region Rodeo #6 the men pulled in a whopping 1,109 points to win again while the women were second with 460 to Treasure Valley.

After the weekend's action the Timberwolves are ahead in the season standings by more than 2,400 points on the women's side and by more than 1,600 on the men's.

BMCC's John Espeland leads the men's all-around standings, and he was the all-around cowboy for Saturday's action with 300 points in saddle bronc and bareback.

He won both events with 78 points on one and



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY
Calvin Shaffer, of BMCC, scores 72 to win the saddle bronc event Saturday at the Northwest Intercollegiate Rodeo Finals in Hermiston.

123 on two, respectively.

The T-Wolves' Quincy Pendergrass won the women's all-around for

that rodeo with 345 points in barrel racing and breakaway roping. She won the barrels in 35.12

seconds on two, and was third in breakaway with 7.8 on two.

Also winning and event Saturday was Preston Pederson in tie-down roping with 19.5 on two — he was third in steer wrestling with 25.9 on two.

Jessica Lewis was third in barrel racing with 35.43 on two, and Candida Eldridge was second in goat tying (16.8 on two) and team roping (30.6 on two) as a header for Boise State's Wyatt Williams.

The BMCC men had the top three all-around placers on Sunday led by Jared Parke with 359 in tie-down, team roping and steer wrestling. Jordan Tye was second with 252 and Chase Hansen was third with 214.

Parke and Tye partnered up to win team roping in 5.9 seconds, and Hansen was second with Chase Robbins in 6.9. Parke also won tie-down in 9.2 and was fifth in steer wrestling.

Tyler Potter won bareback for the T-Wolves with 73 points, and Kenneth Haworth was second with 71.

BMCC's Trey Tucker was the goat tying winner in 7 seconds flat, and she was second in the women's all-around behind region leader Dalli Bean of Treasure Valley.

Bulldogs edge out the Eagles

Hermiston Herald

Steady improvement throughout the season led to a bump in status for Hermiston doubles team Reed Middleton and Breana Wadekamper on Monday, and the girls responded with a big win at No. 1 doubles to help the Bulldogs earn a 4-4 (68-60) team vic-

tory over Hood River Valley when their Columbia River Conference match went to games won to break the tie.

It was their first match at No. 1, and they won 6-3, 6-3 over the Flores/Flores duo of the Eagles.

Hermiston coach Jason Sivey said he was im-

pressed with the result, and also was happy with the play of his No. 1 singles player as Mackenzie Hill earned a 6-1, 6-1 win in her match.

Hermiston also won in straight sets at Nos. 2 and 3 doubles.

UP NEXT
Hermiston hosts Pendle-

ton on Wednesday at 4 p.m.

Singles
M. Hill (HM) def. M. Garrido 6-1, 6-1
H. Davies (HR) def. A. Stewart 6-1, 6-1
B. Badillo (HR) def. B. Meacham 7-6, 6-2
C. Oswald (HR) def. K. Bradshaw 6-1, 6-0
Doubles
R. Middleton/B. Wadekamper (HM) def. Flores/Flores 6-3, 6-3
J. Ternese/K. Millard (HM) def. Doslen/Zeigner 6-0, 6-0
P. Sanchez/K. Hamilton (HM) def. Green/Hardnyi 6-0, 6-4
Ziadd/Evans (HR) def. A. Perkins/E. Snyder 6-4, 7-5

Bulldogs drop two to Bucks

Pendleton keeps pace in CRC title race

Hermiston Herald

The Pendleton softball team kept pace in the Columbia River Conference title hunt with a pair of wins over Hermiston on Friday.

The Buckaroos, who are tied with Hood River for first with five games left in the regular season, came out hitting the ball consistently for a 13-4 win in Friday's opener, then scored a pair of runs in the first inning and held on behind a strong defensive performance to win 3-0 in Game 2.

Lauren Richards earned both wins in the circle, but wasn't her typical dominant self as the Bulldogs' smart plate approaches forced Pendleton's defenders to make plays in the field.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY
Hermiston's Sydney Stefani throws the ball to the pitcher after putting out Payton Hergert, of Pendleton, at second base during a Columbia River Conference game Friday at Rocky Heights Elementary School.

They failed to do that in the Bulldogs' four-run third inning in Game 1, but the offense was clicking and Pendleton still led 6-4 coming into the dugout.

Eighteen of the Bucks' 19 hits in Game 1 were singles, and Pendleton coach Tim Cary said it was their

ability to string those singles together that led to such a lopsided win.

Richards was 4 for 5 at the plate, and Alexi Brehaut and Payton Hergert were both 3 for 5.

Hermiston kept up the pressure in Game 2, but Pendleton's defense didn't

falter this time and the Bucks won their ninth shut-out of the season.

Kalan McGlothlan went 5 for 8 on the day with two doubles for Pendleton.

The Buckaroos may have gotten out of Hermiston with a sweep, but Cary came away impressed with the Bulldogs.

"They're a tough team, even though their record may not show that they're getting a lot of wins," he said. "They come out and battle every inning and they make you earn everything. They're a quality team."

Game 1
PHS 231303 1 - 13 19 4
HHS 004000 0 - 0 2 2
L. Richards and K. Solomon. Ju. Almaguer, Ja. Almaguer (5) and B. Noland. W — Richards. L — Ju. Almaguer.
2B — Ka. McGlothlan (PHS).
Game 2
PHS 200000 1 - 3 7 1
HHS 000000 0 - 0 2 3
L. Richards and K. Solomon. Ju. Almaguer and B. Noland. W — Richards. L — Almaguer.
2B — Ki. McGlothlan, Ka. McGlothlan (PHS).