

Herald Sports



Buckaroos overpower Bulldogs

Hermiston's slide continues against unbeaten Pendleton

By **ERIC SINGER**
STAFF WRITER

A young Hermiston volleyball squad ran into their more experienced Pendleton rivals on Thursday, and the Buckaroos are showing their early season dominance of the Columbia River Conference.

Through one round of league play, Pendleton is a perfect 3-0 and has won nine of 10 total sets played, including Thursday night's dominant 3-0 victory over the Hermiston Bulldogs at Warberg Court. It's a remarkable turnaround for the same core of Pendleton (7-0, 3-0 CRC) players that began league play 0-4 last year, but the Buckaroos' are having fun on the court this year and are reaping the benefits.

Pendleton's varsity experience within the 12 players on its roster may be the biggest reason for the turnaround, and it was also a big reason for the commanding victory over the inexperienced Bulldogs (2-8, 0-3) on Thursday.

The two experience levels showed throughout the match, which Pendleton won 25-12, 25-9, 25-13.

Hermiston's youth and inexperience was obvious at times, with numerous hitting and service errors, inaccurate passes and miscommunication that led to numerous points for the Buckaroos. But in the midst of all that, the Bulldogs showed their potential as well. Junior Sophia Streeter used her height to take away hitting lanes at the net and led the team with four kills. Sophomore libero Halee Stubbs tallied



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston's Ireland McDonough spikes the ball over Pendleton's Ellen Nirschl in the Bucks' win against the Bulldogs on Thursday in Pendleton.

a few big-time digs and led the team with 10 digs overall. Meanwhile, sophomore Emma Combes and juniors Scout Reagan and Ireland McDonough flashed some power in their right hitting arms.

"A lot of these girls haven't ever known how to win at a high level, never had to be put in that position where it's high stakes and have to fight through

the pressure and the stress and to also stay calm, which is difficult," Hermiston coach Amy Dyck said of her team. "We're asking a lot of maturity from some young players and they're getting there. They're working really hard and we're hoping eventually our ability to overcome adversity catches up to our skill level and I think when that happens, we'll be in

pretty good shape."

Hermiston played Pendleton very tough right out of the gates in the first set, even taking a 6-5 lead at one point after a serving ace by McDonough. But from that point on, Pendleton was in control.

Contact Eric at sports@hermistonherald.com or 541-966-0839.

Hermiston conquers Summit

Bulldogs win on road against tough league opponent

HERMISTON HERALD

On Friday, Hermiston had to travel back down to Bend where a week ago it suffered a 21-point loss. But there was something different in the air Friday night, as the Bulldogs upset the favored Summit Storm.

The 34-14 win put an end to the Storm's (2-2, 1-1 Special District 1) 15-game league winning streak that started back in 2014, and gave the Bulldogs (2-2, 1-1 SD1) something to howl about.

Things came together for Hermiston on Friday, especially for junior quarterback Andrew James. He had struggled previously in the pocket and started to rely heavily on his ground game, which had been an essential part of the Bulldogs' performances. There was no doubting James' arm Friday night, as he completed 17-of-20 passes for 256 yards and three touchdowns. He looked to his favorite target, senior Dayshawn Neal, who ended the game with 14 receptions for 206 yards and two scores.

Hermiston took the early lead near the end of the first quarter when James found Neal for nine yards. A successful extra point attempt gave the Bulldogs the 7-0 advantage.

Summit quickly responded, and added a touchdown of its own to the board when junior quarterback Henry Bledsoe found Konrad Collins for 21-yards. The score stayed knotted at seven points apiece until the Bulldogs took back the lead two minutes before half time.

Twenty-four minutes and three touchdowns later, Hermiston claimed its well-deserved upset victory.

The defense held Bledsoe to only 131 passing yards, and a 60-percent completion rate.

All the while, the Bulldogs' offense racked up 530 total yards. Up next, the Bulldogs will host Hood River Valley at 7 p.m. Friday.

HEPPNER 48, TOLEDO 6 — At Heppner, the Mustangs finally got into the win column in 2017 as they defeated a banged-up Toledo team, 48-6, on Friday night.

Heppner (1-3) finally got its ground game working as it rushed for 204 yards on 35 carries as a team. Coby Dougherty was the team's leader with 128 yards on 15 attempts with two touchdowns. Quarterback Jayden Wilson also threw for a touchdown to Logan Burright.

"Our offensive line did a nice job getting things going," Heppner coach Greg Grant said. "We're improving, we had a good week of practice and I'm happy for the kids and for their effort."

Heppner's defense stepped up as well, allowing just 123 total yards to the Boomers (0-4). Tyler led the team with seven tackles and two sacks, while Derek Howard had four tackles, three sacks.

Heppner will open up league play this week at Weston-McEwen.

IRRIGON 32, LAKEVIEW 21 — Irrigon ground out a victory on homecoming night, even though the Knights weren't playing at their best. The win over Lakeview pushes Irrigon's record to 2-1 as it gets ready

for league play next week. "We had a helluva night," head coach Steve Sheller said. "We really did not play our best. We played just good enough to win."

En route to its 32-21 victory, quarterback Zach Hendrix threw 5-of-10 for 115 yards and three touchdowns. Josue Aguilera ran for 188 yards and a touchdown on 32 carries. However, it didn't come easy.

"I'm proud they fought," Sheller said.

Because without that fight, it would not have been a homecoming to remember. Sheller went on to say there were a lot of self-inflicted wounds, and even said one of the players admitted he didn't want to watch the film from Friday night.

"The boys knew they didn't play well," he said, "I don't anticipate it will continue."

Irrigon will travel just down the road this week for its next match up against Riverside.

UMATILLA 52, PORTLAND CHRISTIAN 26 — Umatilla sophomore Pedro Alvarez had another standout performance this week when the Vikings traveled to Portland. The running back ran 313 yards on just 16 carries and was responsible for three touchdowns as Umatilla took the 52-26 victory.

"He kind of woke up tonight," head coach Dan Durfey said. "It was his night."

The Vikings (3-1) were finally able to keep focus throughout the entirety of the game, something they had previously struggled with especially in the second half. On Friday, against the Royals (0-4), that wasn't the case. Although, Umatilla did have a hiccup in the second half, Durfey said they were able to pick things up and finish the game strong.

The effort was a true team performance, even though Alvarez did steal the show.

"For someone to get that many yards the rest of the team has to be working and blocking," Durfey said. "It was a team effort to get Pedro that many yards."

Quarterback Kaden Webb added 75 yards to Umatilla's total and three rushing touchdowns. He finished 8-for 14 from the pocket with 114 yards and one touchdown.

Alvarez also notched a special teams touchdown after running back an 80-yard kick return.

"Our defense played really well," Durfey said. "They played a tough running game and got punched in the mouth a couple of times. Both sides of the ball tonight did well."

Umatilla will begin league play this week at Burns. Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m.

MCLOUGHLIN 35, RIVERSIDE 6 — The Riverside Pirates could no longer keep up their winning streak, dropping their road match up against McLoughlin on Friday night.

Despite the 35-6 loss, the Pirates (2-1) did show head coach Boor David some positives.

"The good thing that we can take away is that they played tough," he said, "they never stopped. One of the things we're going to have to work on is tackling. Offensively, the quarterback needs to have time to get the ball in the air so our receivers have time to do their jobs."

This marked the end of non-league play for both teams. Riverside returns home this week to face Irrigon.

Sanchez runs sub-16, Hermiston wins

Bulldogs gain big confidence boost after meet at Umatilla

By **ALEXIS MANSANAREZ**
STAFF WRITER

There was a sea of local high school pop-up tents surrounding the track at Umatilla High School on Friday afternoon. Twelve regional high schools gathered for the Footrace to Valhalla cross country meet, and only one dominated. Hermiston has fared well through the start of the season, but proved Friday the Bulldogs are true contenders for postseason success.

The long day of races on an unusual course — three loops around a mapped out one-mile radius that started on the track and ended near the 50-yard line of the football field — started at noon with the field of middle school girls. As the competition continued, the scheduled times were pushed back nearly 30 minutes to accommodate the final runners of each race.

The wait for the final high school race was well worth it, as fans, fellow competitors, and even volunteers were cheering on Hermiston's Isaac Sanchez. Sanchez led the field from the beginning, at first with a group of about three other Bulldogs but then as he came around for the second lap and then the fi-



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston's Isaac Sanchez leads the pack during the Footrace to Valhalla cross country meet Friday in Umatilla.

nal lap, he was in a race all his own. There was no other runner he had to worry about, it was just him and the clock.

Sanchez was seen checking his pace when he would make appearances on the track's straight away before disappearing into the forest. By the time he made it to the final stretch denoted by chute ropes and pennants, the crowd was simply cheering because he was the leader. It wasn't until a fellow runner watching from outside of the marked course yelled, "break 16, break 16" that everyone realized they were witnessing the best race Sanchez has ever ran. Unofficially, he clocked 15:52.

"I'm overjoyed right now," he said breathlessly after his race. "I have never even gotten close to breaking 16 (minutes) before, so this is awesome."

The new personal record came as a shock, because Sanchez wasn't pushing his pace until after the first mile.

"I'm really surprised," he said. "Because the pace I was running at the beginning was just the pace set to help hold some of my other teammates along but I felt good at a mile and my coach told me to go so that's what I did."

He wasn't the only Bulldog to up put a new PRs.

"All of the top five (boys) ran PRs and you can't be upset with that in the least, very good performance for the boys," head coach Troy Blackburn said.

A key to a successful post season is for the runners inside and just outside of the top five to clock around 17 minutes, Blackburn added. Something the boys team accomplished today.

"It's a big confidence

boost," he said. "For them to go in a smaller meet and push themselves and show they can go and compete with anyone in the state. The times ran today were competitive."

The girls were just as competitive Friday, despite being down a few runners. The team was missing four of their top eight competitors, but that didn't stop them from also clocking top times and new PRs.

"I still thought we could take it," Blackburn said. "We were in the running."

From Hermiston's No. 1 runner Melany Solorio, who unofficially ran 19:58, all the way to its No. 7 runner Faith Barch, Blackburn was impressed with each performance.

"If we continue to make progress and improve, it's good for our team and it helps us to continue to build that confidence that we can go compete at state and bring back the trophy," Blackburn said, "which is the goal we have on both the girls and boys side."

Contact Alexis at sports@hermistonherald.com or 541-564-4542. Follow her on Twitter @almansanarez

Official team scores
Girls 5,000-meter varsity

1. Hermiston	47
2. Redmond	53
3. Pendleton	56
4. Griswold	71
5. Stanfield	107

Boys 5,000-meter varsity

1. Hermiston	22
2. Redmond	58
3. Pendleton	80
4. Heppner	88
5. Griswold	148
6. Grant Union	165
7. McLoughlin	199
8. Riverside-Irrigon	213