

Isaac Sanchez runs in father's footsteps



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston's Isaac Sanchez leads the pack in front of Hood River's Josh Haynes at the Columbia River Conference district meet on Thursday in Mission.

Hermiston runner wins district title 22 years after Juan Sanchez took first in school history

By **ERIC SINGER**
STAFF WRITER

MISSION — In 1995, Juan Sanchez won the boys cross country district title for Hermiston High School, the first individual title for the school.

Twenty-two years later on Thursday afternoon, his son, Isaac, bookended the family legacy at Hermiston and captured the final district title in Oregon for Hermiston. The school will join the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association next year.

Isaac, a senior for the Bulldogs, completed the 3.1 mile course that winds through the hilly front nine holes at the Wildhorse Resort Golf Course in a time of 16 minutes, 11 seconds for the Columbia River Conference 5A District 5 boys title.

It was the first thought that went through his mind as he sped toward the finish line to seal his victory.

"For my dad to be the first and now I'm the last in Oregon, I thought that was pretty neat," Sanchez said proudly after the race. "It feels great, I've worked hard ever since my freshman year ... and it finally paid off today."

Sanchez and his Bulldog teammates ran the same course just one week ago at the Kyle Burnside Memorial Invite where he ran a time of 16:32 with a fourth place finish. He confirmed that having that prior experience on the course was a help to him, making him feel more prepared for some of the challenging hills and quick turns. It seemed to help, as Sanchez hit the one mile and two-mile markers neck-and-neck with Hood River Valley's Josh Haynes. Then with roughly a half-mile left, Sanchez turned it on and finished with a 14-second cushion on second place.

"My strategy was to try and take the lead early but not go too crazy," he said. "Kind of maintain my pace until the end and then kick it in towards the end of the

race."

Hood River Valley won the boys team title with 33 points and The Dalles finished in second place with 40 points. Hermiston missed out on a team qualification to state with a third place finish with 53 points and Pendleton finished in fourth place with 119. However, senior Emmanuel Ibarra will join Sanchez at state after finishing in fifth place individually on Thursday with a time of 16:49.4. Pendleton's top finishers were senior Nick Oja in 21st with a time of 18:04.2 and senior Richard Scott in 23rd with a time of 18:28.2.

On the girls side, Hermiston senior Melany Solorio (19:34.1), and freshmen Amanda Nygard (19:42.7) and Julianna Joyce (20:03.80) all earned top-10 finishes to help the Bulldog girls team finish second in the district and qualify as a team for the state meet. Solorio, who finished in fourth place with a time of 19:34.1, said that qualifying for state was one of their biggest goals of the season in Hermiston's final year in the OSAA.

"It feels really great, wonderful," Solorio said happily. "Since the start we've said 'We have to go' and we really wanted to because we haven't been in a few years and it feels really good."

All three Bulldogs also improved their times from last week's meet, though it wasn't enough to catch the Hood River Valley trio of Josephine Dickenson (19:18.7), Frances Dickenson (19:20.9), and Lottie Bromham (19:27.2) who took the top three spots individually. Hood River Valley also won the girls team title with 23 points, while Hermiston was second with 46, The Dalles third with 55 and Pendleton fourth with 108.

The OSAA 5A State Championship will take place on Nov. 4 at Lane Community College in Eugene.

District Meet Results

Boys Team Scores
1. Hood River Valley, 33; 2. The Dalles, 40; 3. Hermiston, 53; 4. Pendleton, 119.

Girls Team Scores
1. Hood River Valley, 23; 2. Hermiston, 46; 3. The Dalles, 55; 5. Pendleton, 108.

Hermiston Individual
(BOYS) 1. Isaac Sanchez, 16:11.1; 5. Emmanuel Ibarra, 16:49.4; 12. Gregory Anderson, 17:22.2; 16. Angel Benites, 17:38.3; 19. Freddy Ibarra, 17:53.2; 20. Martin Heredia, 17:57.9; 22. Nicholas Breshears, 18:24.3.
(GIRLS) 4. Melany Solorio, 19:34.1; 5. Amanda Nygard, 19:42.7; 10. Julianna Joyce, 20:03.8; 11. Sheila Solorio, 20:17.4; 16. Sidney Tovey, 21:08.7; 22. Faith Barch, 22:02.2; 25. Morgan Hancock, 22:11.7.

Postseason hopes alive



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Hermiston's Joel Mendez (7) gets ready to change direction as Alex Valyavskiy (19), of Milwaukie, heads the ball Saturday at Kennison Field.

By **ALEXIS MANSANAREZ**
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — After pulling off a hat trick on senior night, Joel Mendez was feeling good. And so was the rest of the Hermiston boys soccer team. The Bulldogs ended their regular season with a commanding 8-0 win over Pendleton on Tuesday, and had to prepare for a quick turnaround to keep their season alive.

The play-in game at Kennison Field on Saturday did just that.

Hermiston hosted Milwaukie for a win or go home match up, and defeated the Mustangs 3-1.

The physical match once again showed off the talent of Mendez, as he was responsible for two of the three goals en route to the victory.

"It's the strikers instinct and he's always had that," head coach Rich Harshberger said of Mendez. "I look back, and he hasn't always gotten the most minutes through his sophomore and junior year but he has scored some big goals for us over the years, tonight not the least of any of them."

"It's just that strikers instinct that you can't train," he continued. "You can't teach somebody to do that. They just have to know where to be, know what to expect from their teammates and fortunately these guys have been playing together for a long time so they know what to expect from each other."

Mendez scored his first goal in the ninth minute with three defenders on him in the box. He managed to head the ball from a cross just outside of the keeper's reach and Herm-



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Hermiston's Jael Fuentes prepares to kick the soccer ball during Saturday's state play-in game against La Salle at Kennison Field.

iston held onto the 1-0 lead into halftime.

After the break, Mendez knocked in another one as he slid the ball into the net.

There was no shortage of shots on goal for Hermiston in the second half, but it would take nearly the rest of the half until the Bulldogs scored again. During that time, Milwaukie made things interesting when it got one past Hermiston goalkeeper Juan Navarrete in the 71st minute, but Hermiston then scored its insurance goal and sealed its post-season fate.

"Sometimes these play-in games can be as hard as a semifinal or quarter-final," Harshberger said. "They brought it and they stepped up to that challenge and they didn't back down from it at all."

Hermiston will face Hillsboro in Round 1 of the 5A Boys Soccer State Championships. Hillsboro will host the match on Nov. 1. The start time has yet to be determined.

Hermiston girls end season at home

The Hermiston girls season came to an end Saturday evening as the La Salle Falcons escaped Kennison Field with a 3-1 win in a play-in game.

The defensive effort on both teams kept the game scoreless for a good part of the first half. Hermiston's Heidi Fuentes had some good stops to keep La Salle at bay, but the Falcons finally broke through in the 24th minute, as a header from La Salle's Audrey Schelb off a corner kick

put the Falcons up 1-0.

They would enter half-time up by one more score after a Hermiston handball in its own box led to a penalty kick. Megan Lyver set up a nice fake that sent Hermiston's goalkeeper Lanie Gomez in the opposite direction of the ball.

Four Bulldogs were missing from Saturday's contest: Jael Fuentes, Amanda Nygard and Daniela and Adriana Rodriguez. Hermiston missed their presence, especially Nygard's speed up front but a handful of junior varsity players stepped in to help.

"We had a few holes but we asked a couple of the JV girls to come up and they stepped up and they were good for us," head coach Danielle MacBride said.

After the break, the Bulldogs were finally able to get on the board of what seemed like an impossible shot by Hannah Thompson in the 54th minute.

Johnson controlled a short pass on the far right side of the field, and then sent the ball sailing into the opposite side of the goal. The ball barely caught the net, and then bounced in to cut Hermiston's deficit.

"She does that, I don't know where it comes from," MacBride said of Thompson. "There's not much more you can say to it. I told David (Wattenburger), 'I want to see her do it again, prove it.' At the same time, a goal is a goal. We'll take it."

But it was too little too late for the Bulldogs, as La Salle scored its third and final goal just minutes into the second half. Again it was a header from Schelb off a corner that sealed the deal.

ROUNDUP

Mustangs, Tigers, Cougars roll into playoffs

HERMISTON HERALD

HEPPNER — The Heppner Mustangs put together their fifth consecutive victory on Friday night with a 48-6 win over Corbett at Les Payne Field.

Heppner (5-3 overall) held Corbett to just 98 yards of total offense, while the Mustangs piled up 491

yards in the victory.

The Mustangs ran the ball 53 times for 363 yards and two touchdowns, with Coby Dougherty leading the way with 181 yards on 20 carries. Beau Wolters had 54 yards and one touchdown and Jayden Wilson ran for 28 yards and a score as well.

Wilson's more impressive night came in the passing game, where the freshman completed 11-of-18 passes for 128 yards and four touchdowns. Wolters was on the receiving end

of two of those and led the team with 51 yards, while Kevin Smith and Logan Burright also hauled in a touchdown reception.

Heppner will host Neah-Kah-Nie (Rockaway Beach) on Saturday at 1 p.m.

MONROE 55, STANFIELD 27 — In Stanfield, the Tigers finished the regular season with a loss to the No. 2-ranked Monroe Dragons, but showed an impressive offensive performance heading into the playoffs.

The Tigers will get a second chance at the Dragons this week in a first-round playoff rematch, this time in Monroe. The game is at 6 p.m. in Monroe.

The 27 points Friday were the second-most scored in a game by the Tigers this season, but Monroe's offense was too much for the Tigers defense.

Stanfield finished the regular season 2-5 overall and 2-1 in the Columbia Basin Conference.

ECHO 70, HARPER CHARTER 14 — At Echo,

the Cougars clinched a spot in the 1A state playoffs by thumping Harper Charter 70-14 in a league playoff game on Friday night.

Echo (7-2 overall, 4-1 Special District 1) will travel to Falls City on Friday for a 7 p.m. playoff game.

BURNS 30, IRRIGION 6 — In Irrigon, the Knights' season came to an end Friday when they suffered a 24-point loss at the hands of Burns. The Knights (4-4 overall, 2-3 Eastern Oregon League) played tough in the first half and entered the

break down only 8-6, but the Hilanders (5-4, 3-2) rallied in the second half, and their efforts were too much for Irrigon to stop.

"(Burns) came out and had some answers for us in the third quarter and we had answers for them in the first half," head coach Steve Sheller said.

"We're trying to compete and this Eastern Oregon League play. The kids played well and actually to their credit, we ended up 4-4 while playing a really tough schedule."