

HeraldSports

 Follow sports on Twitter
@HHeraldSports



Hermiston's Jazlyn Romero attempts a one-handed put back as teammate Sydney Stefani looks on in the Bulldogs' 55-46 loss to Wilsonville on Friday in Hermiston.

STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Bulldogs drop home opener

Hermiston's first game in the Dawg House showed promise despite outcome

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — After the Hermiston girls basketball team's 40-29 loss to open the season Wednesday, Nov. 29, they asked head coach Juan Rodriguez for a tough practice the following day.

The Bulldogs got just that and it showed on the court in their home opener on Friday. Despite the 55-46 loss at the Dawg House, Hermiston efforts multiplied.

"This game is 10 times better than the one we played on Wednesday," Rodriguez said. "We got out on the floor and ran, we played great defense. Wilsonville is a good team and they hit good shots and they put us in bad situations."

The Bulldogs (0-2) didn't have to climb their way back up the scoreboard for the entire 32 minutes.

Hermiston opened the game with a 15-4 lead after



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston's Maddy Juul shoots the ball guarded by Wilsonville's Jessica Classen in the Bulldogs' 55-46 loss to the Wildcats on Friday in Hermiston.

the first quarter. The Bulldogs held the Wildcats (1-0) scoreless until they went to the free-throw line three minutes into the game. It was at the charity stripe that Wilsonville proved most effective, making 21-of-29 attempts when it was all said and done.

The Bulldogs managed to hold on to their lead until the Wildcats became a threat halfway through the second quarter. A strong defensive effort from Hermiston kept Wilsonville's offense at bay until some sloppy mistakes gave the Wildcats their chance to top the scoreboard.

A 14-4 run before half-time put Wilsonville up 25-23 after two quarters of play. The Wildcats used that momentum as they entered the third quarter and were up by as much as 10 points before Hermiston sophomore Jazlyn Romero hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer to end the third quarter and cut the Bulldogs' deficit to 40-33.

Again Romero proved to be an asset following up her team-leading 12-point performance Wednesday with nine points on Friday. This time around it was junior Jordan Thomas who had a team-high 12 points, and senior Maddy Juul followed with 10 points.

"I'm pretty blessed, and I have told the girls this, that we have the team makeup to make a pretty deep run," Rodriguez said.

The talented core group of girls — and the other two starters, juniors Madison Wilson and Sydney Stefani — were pushing the pace of the game and playing aggressive on both sides of the court. But with Juul nursing a knee injury and Thomas' presence in the paint putting her in foul trouble, Hermiston looked to its young bench to help with the load. Unfortunately, it was too heavy.

"I think what hurt us is when we brought off girls off the bench, they have

low confidence right now," Rodriguez said. "So what we just talked about was having that confidence. They are on the team for a reason and when they come in they have to provide, they have to be a positive for us and I think for the most part, most of those girls understand that."

The team's youth showed when Thomas was subbed out after tallying her fourth foul shortly after the third quarter started. The 6-foot 3-inch forward shut Wilsonville down in the low post, and without Thomas' presence the Wildcats, at times, easily made their way to the basket.

But even with another quick turnaround tomorrow, Rodriguez is confident the girls will continue to improve.

"I'm just happy that we competed and we played hard and that's kind of what I want," he said. "Our philosophy is up-tempo, we're going to press and we're going to get in the passing lane. While the losing is not ideal, I was actually kind of happy with the way they played."

The Hermiston Holiday Tournament continues with the Bulldogs facing the Lewiston Bengals. The school out of Idaho has already had a few games under its belt, as its season started mid-November.

Cougars split record in Fossil

HERMISTON HERALD



Nothing was going to stop Echo after the Cougars took an early lead against Condon/Wheeler on Saturday to close out the Paul Humphrey's Tip-Off Tournament in Fossil. The 47-33 win over the Knights was thanks in part to a 15-point performance from Rachel McCarty. Marti Huff also had a big game for Echo and notched 13 rebounds and had a major presence in the paint against Condon/Wheeler.

The win followed a 54-26 loss to Pilot Rock at the tournament on Friday, the first game of the season for the team.

Huff scored 13 points to lead the Cougars (0-1) and freshman Brenna McPherson added seven in her varsity debut.

Kayla Deist scored 17 points and Kaitlyn Evans scored 10 to lead the Rockets.

"It felt pretty good," Pilot Rock coach Dan Deist said. "It took us a few minutes to get going but once we did we played well."

Behind Deist and Evans, Sara Weinke scored nine points for the Rockets (1-0), while Breann Balez-

tina and Lillie Brewer each scored six.

BOYS: Condon/Wheeler continued its dominance at the Paul Humphrey's Tip-Off Tournament on Saturday, earning its second victory of the weekend with a 70-50 win over Echo.

The Knights got off to a hot start in the first quarter and continued to score in double digits through the next three quarters. Trey Homer led all scorers with 25 points. For the Cougars, Morgan Marcum finished with a team-high 19 points. Echo came out much better in the second half, but the Cougars efforts fell short.

The Cougars also dropped Friday's game to Pilot Rock 55-33.

Bryson Pierce exploded for 30 points for the Rockets (1-0) while Levi Thieme had eight and Logan Weinke had six. Devan Craig led the Cougars (0-1) with 10 points and Morgan Marcum had eight.

Dawgs return home after finishing 1-2 in Wilsonville

HERMISTON HERALD



Before the Hermiston boys basketball team returns to the Dawg House for three consecutive home games, the Bulldogs opened their season in Wilsonville at the Holiday Inn WIT Tournament.

Hermiston finished 1-2 after three days of play beginning Friday and wrapping up Sunday. The Bulldogs' most successful outing was in the final day of competition against Eagle Point. They pulled away with a 70-52 win thanks to a 24-point performance in the third quarter where five Dawgs scored two or more points.

Before Hermiston picked up its first win of the season, it had to endure some tough losses. The first was a 74-64 defeat at the hands of Mountain View to open the tournament Friday. Hermiston again fell Saturday, this time 59-42 against Springfield.

The Bulldogs are playing without one of their starts and key play makers, junior Andrew James — who has recovered from a back injury he suffered during the football team's championship game a week

ago.

Despite coming out of the tournament with only one win, there were some promising moments for Hermiston. The Bulldogs hit 13 3-pointers against Mountain View, and notched 15 more over the next two days of play.

Cesar Ortiz emerged as an early points leader for Hermiston with 24 points and five made 3-pointers against the Cougars. Ryan Andreason hit four 3-pointers and finished with 21 points to open the tournament.

In both losses the Bulldogs got off to a good start, but couldn't sustain their aggressive level of play throughout the entire 38 minutes.

Jordan Ramirez, one of the only returning starters, led the Bulldogs through the rest of the tournament. He scored a team-high 12 points against Springfield on Saturday and finished second to Andreason with another 12 points Sunday.

Vikings have opposite endings to a busy weekend

HERMISTON HERALD



Both Umatilla boys and girls basketball teams traveled to Vernonia to compete in the Vernonia Tournament. The season-opening weekend proved successful for the boys team, which finished 2-0, while the girls suffered back-to-back losses.

The boys were led by Sebastian Garcia and Kaden Webb, who added 19 points and 10 points, respectively, in Umatilla's last day of play against Vernonia. The 57-46 win capped off a very successful weekend. The Vikings opened up the tournament with a 50-30 win Friday

against Riverdale.

The girls, on the other hand, lost to both Riverdale (38-29) and Vernonia (37-20).

UPCOMING: Both teams will have home-court advantage this week as Umatilla will host the Columbia River Clash beginning Thursday. The boys will open the tournament against Union at 7 p.m. Thursday and the girls will face Union at 5:30 p.m.

Irrigon off to hot start with Ione Bonanza wins

HERMISTON HERALD



The Irrigon girls basketball team went to the fourth quarter trailing the Weston-McEwen TigerScots 46-34 and knew they needed to change things up to get a win.

The Knights pulled out a full-court pressure defense which threw the TigerScots off instantly and swung the game in the Knights' favor as Irrigon outscored Weston-McEwen 20-6 in the final frame to steal a 54-52 victory at the Ione Basketball Bonanza on

Friday.

"We really struggled against their press," Weston-McEwen coach Mike Giusti said. "They (Irrigon) sped us up and we tried to hurry and we weren't sure of where to go because we haven't had much time to work on that yet."

Jada Burns scored 17 to lead the Knights (3-0) and following her were Taylor Davis with 10 and Alyia Munoz with eight. For the TigerScots Katie Vescio led with 17 points and Chelsea Quaempts had 14.

The Knights followed up the win Saturday at the Bonanza with a 49-36 over Enterprise.

BOYS: Keith Fleming scored 12 points and the trio of Johnny Phillips, Eric Carillo and Adrian Roa each had 10 to lead the Irrigon Knights past the Weston-McEwen Tiger-

Scots 66-43 on Friday night at the Ione Basketball Bonanza.

Weston-McEwen (0-2) had just four players reach the score column, though senior Brett Speed went off for 32 points in the loss.

"We played a good game ... and our scoring was pretty balanced tonight," Irrigon coach Davie Salas said. "Speed had a good game for them, we had a tough time staying in front of him but we adjusted."

Irrigon stayed undefeated Saturday with a 59-49 win over Enterprise.