

Herald Sports



Dawgs go to holiday break with win

HERMISTON HERALD

DALLAS — The Hermiston boys basketball team headed into Christmas break on a positive note as it ended a two-game losing streak with a 72-52 victory on the road against Dallas on Friday night.

"It was a real good win for

us going into break," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "The kids played very hard and well on defense in the second half ... and on offense we got in a groove and got a lot of easy buckets off of our half-court defense."

The Bulldogs (4-4) had only two scorers in double figures, but had a

very balanced night as the second half cushion allowed Arstein to empty his bench quite a bit. Ryne Andreason led the Bulldogs with 14 points which include three made 3-pointers, while Jordan Ramirez followed with 11 points. Three Bulldogs finished with eight points including Andrew James, who

played more minutes after getting full clearance from a back injury he had suffered during the football state championship game.

"It was a great team effort, not just from the top five guys," Arstein said. "We're finally getting healthy and getting into a groove."

UP NEXT: Hermiston hosts Sil-

verton on Thursday at 7 p.m.

GIRLS: At West Valley, the Hermiston Bulldogs' losing streak extended to four games on Friday with a 54-31 non-league loss to West Valley. The Bulldogs next play on Wednesday against Oregon City in the Lake Oswego Tournament.

CLUTCH CRANSTON HELPS VIKINGS

Nixyaawii goes cold as Umatilla earns comeback

By ERIC SINGER
STAFF WRITER

MISSION — For the first three quarters on Friday night, the Nixyaawii Golden Eagles couldn't miss a shot, hitting on 60 percent of their attempts.

That success gave the Golden Eagles a 54-46 lead heading into the final eight minutes against the red-hot Umatilla Vikings. But in that final quarter, Nixyaawii suddenly went ice cold. Close-range lay-ins didn't fall in, and wide-open looks always rimmed out. The Golden Eagles were 0 for their first nine from the floor, which allowed the Umatilla Vikings to come back and steal a 61-57 win.

"We had some good looks but I think our youth and some fatigue we just came up a little bit short," Nixyaawii coach Shane Rivera said. "We had about three or four shots that probably go in most days, and would've made a big difference in the game I think."

The Golden Eagles (7-2) led for the entire third quarter and most of the fourth quarter until Umatilla's Seth Cranston swished a mid-range jumper from the left baseline to put the Vikings on top 55-54 with just two minutes left to play. It was the first lead for the Vikings (9-1) since a 28-27 advantage at the 1:10 mark of the second quarter.

"It was a relief," Cranston recalled of his go-ahead shot. "We feel like we should've done a lot better than we did, but I'm glad we were able to scratch it out. We had to come together and pull our heads out of our butts after that first half."

Cranston was a clutch performer for the Vikings in the game, leading the team with 17 points on 8-of-13 shooting with five rebounds, three assists and three steals. He utilized his quickness on several occasions to dribble around defenders and drive towards the basket for easy close-range shots, which made up the bulk of his attempts. Cranston played a lot of minutes on last year's team, but was known more for his defense than a scoring ability, something that Umatilla coach Scott Bow has had to pry out of his senior wing this season.

"He's a motor, man," Umatilla coach Scott Bow said of Cranston. "His ability to keep going is special. He didn't want to be a scorer (tonight), he wanted to play good defense and I told him I'm not going to play him in the second half if he's not going to step up and shoot the



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Umatilla's Trent Durfey shoot the ball over Nixyaawii's Magi Moses in the Vikings' 61-57 win against the Golden Eagles on Friday in Mission.



Umatilla's Sebastian Garcia drives past Nixyaawii's Tyasin Burns in the Vikings' 61-57 win against the Golden Eagles on Friday in Mission.

shots your supposed to shoot ... He came in the second half and decided to take the shots and he did it really well."

Umatilla finished with four players in double figures including Cranston, followed by Trent Durfey with 15 points, Kaden Webb with 12 points, and Uriel Garcia with 11 points. Durfey led the team with eight rebounds and Garcia had six, while Webb led with five assists.

GIRLS: For most prep basketball teams, the non-league portion of the schedule is for teams to learn how to come together to be at their best come time for league play and the postseason. However, the Nixyaawii girls basketball team has proved there is no early-season learning curve as the defending 1A state champs have cruised to eight straight wins to start the season.

Friday night cruise control was still in effect for Nixyaawii, as they used a smothering defense and fast-paced offense to thump the Umatilla Vikings 78-29 to remain undefeated. Nixyaawii has now scored at least 63 points in all nine games this season, and are averaging 71.3 points per game, a testament to the talent and experience of the group.

Nixyaawii's big three of Mary Stewart, Milan Schimmel and Kaitlynn Melton were excellent again on Friday as they combined for 57 of the team's 78 points.

The game was all Golden Eagles (9-0) as they led 24-5 after the first eight minutes were played. Nixyaawii used a 2-2-1 full-court press for most of the first quarter, helping force 10 Umatilla (3-7) turnovers before falling off into a match-up 2-3 zone for the remainder of the game. Overall, Nixyaawii forced 30 Umatilla turnovers and turned a numerous amount of those into points.

Umatilla's best quarter came in the second when they scored 14 points on 6-of-15 shooting to make it a 45-19 game at the break. But in the second half, the Golden Eagles' defense kept the Vikings from getting many good looks at the basket and by the time they did, the rhythm was gone and shots couldn't seem to fall. Umatilla shot just 4-of-22 from the floor in the second half.

Lauryn Journot led the Vikings with nine points, Charlene Alvarez had eight points and Katelyn Lorence added five points.

Both teams now get a few days off for Christmas break before getting back into the swing of things next week.

NEXT UP: Umatilla will head to Salem to play in the Salem Academy Tournament, first against Western Mennonite on Thursday.

SCOREBOARD

Local slate

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Thursday
Ione vs. Echo (at Helix), 1:30 p.m.
Riverside at Stevenson (WA), 5 p.m.
Silverton at Hermiston, 7 p.m.
Waitsburg (WA) at Irrigon, 7:30 p.m.
Umatilla vs. TBD (at Salem Academy), TBD

Friday
Echo vs. Trout Lake (WA) (at Helix), 1:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Irrigon, 6 p.m.
Hermiston at Crescent Valley, 7:30 p.m.
Umatilla vs. TBD (at Salem Academy), TBD

Saturday
Hermiston vs. Central (at Crescent Valley), 2:30 p.m.
South Wasco at Echo, 4:30 p.m.
Umatilla vs. TBD (at Salem Academy), TBD

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Wednesday
Hermiston vs. Oregon City (at Lake Oswego), 7 p.m.

Thursday
Ione vs. Echo (at Helix), Noon
Riverside at Stevenson (WA), 3:30 p.m.
Waitsburg (WA) at Irrigon, 6 p.m.
Umatilla vs. Western Mennonite (at Salem Academy), 8 p.m.
Hermiston at Lake Oswego Nike Shootout, TBD

Friday
Trout Lake (WA) vs. Echo (at Helix), Noon
Pilot Rock at Irrigon, 6 p.m.
Hermiston at Lake Oswego Nike Shootout, TBD
Umatilla at Salem Academy Tournament, TBD

Saturday
South Wasco at Echo, 3 p.m.
Hermiston at Lake Oswego Nike Shootout, TBD
Umatilla at Salem Academy Tournament, TBD

Knights defeat Tigers to stay perfect

IRRIGON — Irrigon seniors Eric Carillo and Johnny Phillips and junior Keith Fleming all netted 15 points apiece on Thursday to down the Stanfield Tigers 74-49, keeping the Knights unbeaten on the season.

"We had a really good first half, played good defense," head coach Davie Salas said.

But after the break, Stanfield made some adjustments and opened with a 23-point performance in the third quarter.

Irrigon was able to maintain its lead and hold off the Tigers (6-6) to remain a perfect 9-0 on the season.

Leading Stanfield was senior Brody Woods with 12 points.

Stanfield won't take the court again until the new year when it

travels to Umatilla on Jan. 4. Riverside will have some time off as well before it joins a handful of other local teams in the Irrigon Invite beginning Thursday.

GIRLS: Kylie Wyant and Ana Zacarias each scored a game-high 16 points to lead the Irrigon Knights 52-18 over the Stanfield Tigers on Thursday night.

Wyant scored all 16 points in the second half and added six rebounds for the Knights (10-1), while Ana Zacarias added 10 steals with her points. Jessica Wallace led the Tigers (1-11) with 10 points and made a pair of 3-pointers.

Irrigon's win did come with some bad news, though, as senior guard Alyia Munoz suffered a bro-

ken collarbone in the first quarter and will likely miss the remainder of the season. Star senior guard Jada Burns also missed Thursday's game due to illness.

Irrigon hosts Waitsburg (WA) on Thursday. Stanfield heads to Umatilla on Jan. 4.

Horizon Christian sinks Echo

ECHO — Horizon Christian shot 47 percent from the floor and hit eight 3-pointers to help sink the Echo Cougars 64-44 on Thursday.

Morgan Marcum led the Cougars (3-6) with 15 points on 7-of-12 shooting, while Devan Craig and Ty Mulder each had 11. Derek Johnston led the Hawks with 23 points and 11 rebounds and Caleb Lingel

added 20 points.

Echo plays Ione on Dec. 28 at the Bouncin' Cancer fundraiser in Helix.

GIRLS: The Cougars were handed another tough loss this week, this time at the hands of Horizon Christian.

The Hawks' 44-25 win was thanks to a strong second half performance. Senior Alexis Ruiz led the charge with a game-high 18 points.

The Cougars (3-5) weren't about to get into double digits, and their top scorer was junior Lexie Cox with eight points.

Echo will try to snap its skid next week at the Bouncin' Cancer basketball event at Helix.