

Herald Sports



Vikings get their revenge in The Pit

Umatilla hands Irrigon first loss of season in thrilling fashion

By ERIC SINGER
STAFF WRITER

The last time the Umatilla Vikings and Irrigon Knights met back on Feb. 17, 2017, at The Pit at Umatilla High School, the Vikings used some late magic to knock off the Knights to capture the district title.

The two teams met for the first time in 2018 on Friday night back at The Pit and the game nearly followed the same exact script, right down to the end result.

The Vikings erased a six-point deficit in the final three minutes of play to stun the Knights 42-39, handing the Knights their first loss of the season and extending their win streak over their league rival to four straight.

“Oh man this feels great,” said Umatilla junior Trent Durfey after the win, smiling from ear-to-ear. “We just wanted to come in and play our game and hopefully get the win and that’s what we did. We wanted to start off league 1-0.”

The Vikings (13-3 overall, 1-0 Eastern Oregon League) led for the entire third quarter and seemed in control until the Knights (13-1, 2-1) made a run early in the fourth, tying the game at 31-31 and running out to a 39-33 lead with three minutes left.

It forced Umatilla to call a timeout and regroup to make one last push, where head coach Scott Bow said he used a familiar message to spark his team to the finish line.

“Whether it’s a coincidence or not, it’s the same message we gave a few weeks ago at Nixyaawii when we were down to start the fourth quarter there,” Bow said. “I told the kids our defense has got to do its thing. They (Irrigon) have 39 and we have to keep them below 41 to win this game. We can score more than 40, but we won’t be able to win this if they score more than 41 and sure enough, we held them scoreless the rest of the way.”

A 3-pointer by Uriel Garcia and a fast-break lay-in by Seth Crans-ton off an Irrigon turnover had the Vikings back in it, trailing 39-38 with 1:30 left. After another Irrigon turnover, Kaden Webb’s floater with 45 seconds left gave the Vikings a 40-39 lead. And then, off another Knights missed shot and another turnover, Umatilla quickly moved the ball down the court to Durfey for a lay-in while drawing a foul for a 42-39 lead with eight seconds left, sending the home crowd into a frenzy.



Umatilla's Kaden Webb passes the ball surrounded by Irrigon defenders in the Vikings 42-39 win against the Knights on Friday in Umatilla. Below, Umatilla's Uriel Garcia drives past Irrigon's Johnny Phillips on his way to the basket.

“I was just thinking, ‘Hey, I’m wide open. Get me the ball and see what I can do with it,’” Durfey recalled thinking. “All I could think then was hopefully I make it, that’s all I wanted to do was just make it. When it went in, I was pumped.”

“I’ve been to a lot of high school games around here, but when we have standing room-only for the league opener here at The Pit is awesome,” Bow said. “I can’t wait to see what the game at Irrigon looks like in a few weeks.”

Both schools will host league opponents with Burns traveling to Irrigon for a 7:30 p.m. tipoff on Friday and Umatilla will welcome Nyssa at 7:30 p.m. Friday.



Bulldogs stumble in 2018 home debut

Dawgs get toppled by strong second half performance from the Apollos

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ
STAFF WRITER

It was a homecoming of sorts for the Hermiston boys basketball team Friday.

The Bulldogs had not played a game in the Dawg House since Dec. 12, because of their extensive travel schedule and cancellations due to inclement weather.

With the return home came an outcome that was less than favorable.

Hermiston entered the matchup with the Class 6A Metro League Sunset Apollos losing four of its last five games — which includes three consecutive losses — and after a 76-61 loss at the hands of the Apollos, Hermiston’s skid increases to four straight losses.

“I wasn’t disappointed in the effort,” head coach Casey Arstein said. “I know kids played hard, a lot better than what I saw on the road the last few games, I’m just disappointed in the loss at home.”

With the home court advantage, the Bulldogs battled back in the first half to overcome a small deficit.

Sunset had a narrow lead after the first quarter and was up 19-15. Hermiston answered with a 22-point second-quarter performance that put the Bulldogs (4-8) up 37-32 going into halftime.

The Apollos (5-9) shot well all night long, and started the game hitting three 3-pointers in the first quarter — Sunset finished with six total threes on the night.

Sunset was going to stretch its lead to 19-12 after the first eight minutes of play, but Hermiston junior Cesar Ortiz knocked down his first three of the night to cut the deficit to only two possessions — Ortiz was responsible for all three of the team’s shots from behind the arc.

In a game of runs, Sunset took back the lead at the start of the second quarter, but again Ortiz hit a 3-pointer off the corner to knot the score at 24 points apiece.

The crowd quickly fell silent as sophomore Braeden Sato traded threes with Ortiz. Sato finished with a game-high 25 points for Sunset.

But yet again, Ortiz’s three is good and after one more lead change, the Bulldogs managed to hold on to the five point lead at the break.

At La Grande, the Hermiston Bulldogs’ lost their fifth straight game with a 10-point defeat at the hands of the La Grande Tigers.

Turnovers and missed opportunities hurt Hermiston’s chance at a comeback. In the first half alone, the Bulldogs committed 12 turnovers which led to a 27-18 halftime advantage

were up by as many as eight points. But Sunset began chipping away at its deficit, caught up and then passed the Bulldogs to enter the fourth quarter up 51-50.

“Things were going a little smooth there,” Arstein said of the third-quarter performance. “We were kind of getting anything we wanted on offense as long as we took care of the ball, and then Jordan (Ramirez) goes out and then (we) pick up some stupid fouls — they go to the free throw line, they back door us a couple of times, (it’s) a game of runs and they definitely had more runs in the second half.”

Despite the loss, Arstein saw some things he liked. One was the effort of junior Adrian Mendez.

Mendez played a key roll in Hermiston’s comeback attempt at the end, as he scored 16 of his 22 points in the second half.

Hermiston had a quick turnaround and traveled to La Grande the following day.



Hermiston's Thomas McCullough grabs a rebound over Sunset's Colby King (11) and Mitchell Scanlan in the Bulldogs' 76-61 loss to the Apollos Friday in Hermiston.

for the Tigers. Hermiston (4-9) battled back, behind a 16-point performance from junior Andrew James, and came out of the break to outscore the Tigers 16-11 in the third quarter.

However, La Grande (10-6) ran away with it at

the end thanks to the efforts of juniors Hunter Youngblood and Braden Bell, who led the team with 16 and 11 points, respectively.

The Bulldogs played La Grande in Hermiston at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, and results weren’t available by press time.

Dawgs finish top 8 at Oregon Classic

HERMISTON HERALD

REDMOND — A handful of local schools made the trip to Redmond for the Oregon Classic, a two-day wrestling tournament that features more than 80 schools from across the state.

Held at First Interstate Bank Fair & Expo Center, the tournament is still up into brackets by class and then into four separate pools.

Hermiston competed in the 5A Pool 4 bracket and was pitted against Rex Putnam and Bend. The Bulldogs went on to defeat both by scores of 70-11 and 57-24, respectively.

In their final match, the Bulldogs defeated Wilsonville 46-26.

A handful of wrestlers finished 3-0, in part due to a win by forfeit in one of the three rounds. The trio of Silas Smith (138), Joey Gutierrez (195) and Sean Stewart (220) were among some of the top finishers.

In the final day of competition, the Hermiston and Riverside teams claimed a podium finish in their respective brackets.

In the Class 5A championship bracket, the Bulldogs finished in eighth place, while the Pirates edged out Harrisburg for seventh place in the Class 3A bracket.

Hermiston was handily defeated by Dallas, 57-9, in the quarterfinals. The loss put Hermiston in the consolation bracket where it faced defending state champion Crater and again lost, 61-18 and again only three wrestlers were able to defeat their opponents.

Hermiston was then pitted against Silverton in the seventh-place match. It was the Bulldogs’ best performance of the day, but they still fell short by a 47-31 score. Adrian Delgado (106) won by forfeit, while Gutierrez was finally able to take the mat and pinned his opponent in 1:34. Adrian Tuia (145) won his bout by a 7-1 decision. Kirkpatrick finished the day 2-1 after winning by fall in 1:20 in his final bout of the day. Stewart didn’t need more than a minute to pin his Silverton foe, and ended his bout in 0:55. Blake was the most successful Bulldog of the day and finished a perfect 3-0 after winning his last bout by fall in 2:22.

SCOREBOARD

Local slate

BOYS BASKETBALL	
Friday	The Dalles at Hermiston, 7 p.m. Nyssa at Umatilla, 7:30 p.m. Vale at Riverside, 7:30 p.m. Burns at Irrigon, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday	Vale at Umatilla, 3 p.m. Weston-McEwen at Stanfield, 4 p.m. Nyssa at Irrigon, 4:30 p.m. Burns at Riverside, 4:30 p.m.
GIRLS BASKETBALL	
Friday	Burns at Irrigon, 6 p.m. Vale at Riverside, 6 p.m. Nyssa at Umatilla, 6 p.m.
Saturday	Nyssa at Irrigon, 3 p.m. Burns at Riverside, 3 p.m. Vale at Umatilla, 4:30 p.m. Weston-McEwen at Stanfield, 5:30 p.m.

WRESTLING	
Wednesday	Hermiston at The Dalles, TBD
Friday	Heppner at Grant Union Tournament Echo at Padilla Invite (ID) Hermiston at Liberty Invitational
Saturday	Mac-Hi, Riverside, Irrigon, Echo at Heppner Tournament Hermiston at Liberty Invitational

SWIMMING	
Saturday	Pendleton, Hermiston at Hood River Valley