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Bulldogs grind out victory



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Hermiston shortstop Sydney Stefani puts out Ridgeview's Lorena Vasquez during last week's game at Rocky Height Elementary School.

Hermiston comes back in the fifth to retake control of the game, holds on for the win

By ALEXIS MANSANAREZ
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — Last year, the mostly-freshman Hermiston softball squad was nervous when they took the diamond for the first time. The Bulldogs were up against a tough senior cast in Ridgeview and dropped the game 14-3.

This year, the now-seasoned Bulldogs' team entered its season opener with newfound confidence and were looking for revenge against the defending Intermountain Conference champions.

"Last year we went in nervous and the girls kind of took it personal this year like, 'Wow that really happened,' and this time they came out ready to fight," head coach Kate Greenough said.

The 5-3 win over Ridgeview on March 13 was thanks in part to the defensive efforts of Sydney Stefani and the pitching of the Almaguer sisters, senior Julissa and sophomore Janelle.

In the top of the sixth, Janelle Almaguer replaced Julissa Almaguer in the cir-

cle. Ridgeview scored all three of their runs in the top of the previous inning to take a 3-2 advantage, but Hermiston's offense brought in a pair of its own to retake the lead for good.

Julissa Almaguer hit an RBI double to left-center field to bring home Amanda Barron and when the next batter took the plate, the starting pitcher advanced to third on a wild pitch.

Kylie Green hit a sacrifice fly that allowed Julissa Almaguer to score and put the Bulldogs (1-0 overall) up 4-3.

In the middle of that tough fifth inning when the Ravens (0-1) made their comeback, Greenough had a simple yet inspiring message.

"Well, I just told the kids that you can't get comfortable and you have to play for each other," she said. "As soon as you make it a personal testimony for one of your teammates they really rise to the occasion, and I think that was kind of that message where they realized they need to fight for each other and they could."

And now, it was Janelle Almaguer's turn to fight.

"I was really nervous but then everyone was pumping me up like, 'You can do this, you can do this,'" she said. "So, then I was really excited to go in."

In the final two innings, the righty's nerves were almost undetectable. Janelle

Almaguer allowed only three base hits and struck out two batters to close out the game.

It's the kind of work Greenough wants to see their first time around.

"It's great to come out and get the win," she said. "The girls worked hard all seven innings. In this first game that's kind of what you're looking for, who is going to push, who is going to fight. We definitely had our share of mishaps but the kids rebounded well and just kept fighting throughout the whole thing."

Hermiston opened the game with two quick runs in the first inning.

Stefani hit a line drive to center field that brought in Julissa Almaguer for her first trip around the bases and catcher Bailee Noland sent a pop up to the same spot that allowed Stefani to tag home.

For the insurance run in the sixth, Janelle Almaguer reached base on a fielder's choice but as the Ravens' offense was trying to stop another Bulldog from scoring, Almaguer reached third and eventually home on a wild pitch.

Hermiston will play again Friday at St. Helens. The first pitch is scheduled for 4 p.m.

	R	H	E
RHS000 020 0 — 2 10 1			
HHS200 021 0 — 5 7 3			

RIDGEVIEW — N. Hill, A. Frost (5) — Lorena Vasquez
HERMISTON — Ju. Almaguer, Ja. Almaguer (5) — Bailee Noland

Hermiston earns win in season opener

HERMISTON HERALD

HERMISTON — After getting rained out last Tuesday, the Hermiston baseball team was finally able to play its season-opener Saturday afternoon when it hosted La Salle Prep.

And it was worth the wait as Hermiston won 6-5 at Armand Larive Middle School.

After the Falcons took a 3-0 lead in the top of the third, the Bulldogs (1-0) quickly answered in the bottom half of the inning with two runs as Lukas Tolan scored from third on a balk and then Landon Jones' double to left brought home Wyatt Noland to make it 3-2.

Then trailing 4-2 in the sixth, a double by Joey Gutierrez and a single by Jordan Ramirez set the Bulldogs up for some runs. Gutierrez scored from third on an error and then Joel Mendez's single brought home Ramirez to tie the game at 4-4.

Three batters later, Caden Schwirer hit a two-run single to left field to put the Bulldogs up 6-4.

In the seventh, La Salle Prep scored one run on a bases-loaded walk from Ramirez and had the bases loaded with two outs before Ramirez worked a three-pitch strikeout to end the game.

Ramirez got the win on the mound with two innings of relief, and also had a standout day at the plate going 3-for-3 with a run scored. Tolan started on the mound and struck out six over five innings while giving up five hits, three runs and three walks.

Hermiston's next game will be Friday, when the Bulldogs host Lakeridge at 3 p.m.

	R	H	E
LSP 003001 1 — 5 6 2			
HHS 002004 X — 6 9 4			

(L) M. Evans, J. Owens (4) and J. Jensen. (H) L. Tolan, J. Ramirez (6) and W. Noland. (W) — J. Ramirez, L. — M. Evans.
2B — M. Evans, N. Grogan (2) (LSP); L. Jones, J. Gutierrez (HHS).

Tigers handed two losses, each in a different fashion

PASCO — The Stanfield Tigers played their first doubleheader of the season Saturday and dropped both games to Tri-Cities Prep by scores of 4-3 and 15-10.

Game 1 was a pitchers duel as Stanfield (1-2) ace Brody Woods and TCP ace Logan Mercado were both lights out on the mound and kept the offenses quiet. Woods threw 81 pitches in four innings, allowing only a

See BASEBALL, A10

SCHEDULE

Local slate

PREP BASEBALL
Wednesday
Stanfield at White Salmon (WA), 4 p.m.
Friday
Umatilla vs. Bonanza (at John Day), 12 p.m.
Union at Heppner (DH), 1 p.m.
Lakeridge at Hermiston, 3 p.m.
Irrigon at Tri Cities Prep (WA), 3 p.m.
Saturday
Riverside at White Salmon (WA), 4 p.m.
Stanfield at Weston-McEwen (DH), 11 a.m.
Umatilla vs. Lost River (at John Day), 11 a.m.
Kennewick (WA) at Hermiston, 4 p.m.

PREP SOFTBALL
Wednesday
Hermiston at Bend, 4 p.m.
Thursday
Heppner at Irrigon (DH), 10 p.m.
Friday
Tri Cities Prep (WA) at Irrigon, 3 p.m.
Pasco (WA) at Hermiston, 4 p.m.
Riverside at Stevenson (WA), 4 p.m.

PREP TRACK AND FIELD
Thursday
Pendleton, Hermiston, Mac-Hi, Umatilla, Riverside, Heppner, Weston-McEwen, Stanfield, Helix at Buck Track Classic (Pendleton), 11 a.m.

PREP TENNIS
Tuesday
Stanfield at Weston-McEwen, 3:30 p.m.
Riverside at Mac-Hi, 4 p.m.
Friday
Pasco (WA) at Hermiston, 3:30 p.m.
Helix at Riverside, 3:30 p.m.
Umatilla at Stanfield, 3:30 p.m.
Saturday
Hermiston (boys) at Kamiakin (WA), 12 p.m.
Kamiakin (WA) at Hermiston (girls), 12 p.m.

PREP GOLF
Tuesday
Pendleton, Hermiston, Heppner (girls) at The Dalles Country Club, 10 a.m.
Mac-Hi at Wine Valley, 2:30 p.m.
Thursday
Pendleton, Hermiston at Big River Golf Course (Umatilla), 10 a.m.
Mac-Hi at Vets Memorial, 2:30 p.m.

PREP LACROSSE
Wednesday
Hermiston at Chiawana (WA), 7 p.m.
Saturday
Hermiston at Wenatchee (WA), 1 p.m.

Riverside opens season with big win

HERMISTON HERALD

BOARDMAN — Last Tuesday, the Riverside softball team brought the bats out in its season opener by piling up a whopping 29 runs to defeat Stevenson (WA).

Skyler Wightman had a big day with 12 strikeouts pitching, while going 2-for-2 at the plate with six RBI. Megan Hegar went 4-for-4 batting with five RBI, while Abby Hernandez and Lily Rockwell each scored four runs apiece.

The Pirates (1-0) returned to play Tuesday on the road in Washington. Results of the game were not available at press time.

	R	H	E
SHS 000 10 — 1 1 1			
RHS 997 4X — 29 11 1			

W — S. Wightman, L — Pennie S.

After dropping season opener, Heppner answers with two wins

HEPPNER — In the season opener for both teams, the Mac-Hi Pioneers slugged 14 hits for 13 runs to defeat the Heppner Mustangs on March 13.

Rachael Lyon led the Pioneers with three hits from the leadoff spot while adding four RBI. Graci Bullock and Ashlyn Marly each smacked home runs for the Pioneers, too.

In the pitching circle, Sydney Earls and McKenna Stallings combined for 14 strikeouts

and only three hits allowed in seven innings.

For the Mustangs, all of their offense came off the bat of Maggie Flynn, who went 3-for-3 with two doubles and a home run.

At home again Friday, the Mustangs gutted out two big wins over the Enterprise Outlaws with scores of 8-5 and 6-3 in a doubleheader.

Dakota Durfey pitched two complete games for the Mustangs (2-1), digging deep to battle a tough Enterprise lineup and a steady rain that fell for most of the second game. In Game 2, she gave up a three-run home run to Lexi Gasset in the first inning, but shut out the Outlaws for the rest of the game.

Maggie Flynn, Morgan Orem and Kacie Gray each picked up doubles for the Mustangs' offense, and freshman Eva Martin had a clutch two-RBI single in the fourth inning of Game 2 that gave Heppner a 4-3 lead it wouldn't relinquish.

Umatilla struggles early on the road

In Umatilla's first games of the season March 13, the Vikings spent it on the road and dropped both games of their doubleheader in Washington. The first was a 33-4 defeat and the second, a 15-5 loss.

Three days later, Umatilla fell again in a doubleheader to open the first week of the season 0-4.

The Vikings continued play on the road

and faced Portland Christian, which won both games 15-5 and 12-8.

Charlene Alvarez led the Vikings (0-3) with two hits and Lauryn Journot added a double. Paige Pickard and Journot each pitched for the Vikings.

The two teams were supposed to play a doubleheader, however the second game was called in the fourth inning due to darkness. The Vikings trailed 12-9 at the time, scoring six runs in the fourth inning.

"It was good to see the kids battle back," Umatilla coach Kylie Lete said.

They'll have a little over two weeks off before their next matchup, a game at Echo on April 5.

Irrigon grinds out a win that's sandwiched between two losses

The Irrigon Knights were scheduled for a doubleheader March 13 against the Pendleton freshman softball team. But inclement weather cut the day short, and both teams only played one game. The Bucks ran away with a 13-3 win to hand the Knights their first loss of the season.

Back at home Saturday, Irrigon split a doubleheader with the Pilot Rock Rockets. Irrigon won the opener 6-4 and then the Rockets (1-1) thumped the Knights (1-2) 14-4 in Game 2.

Irrigon will next host Heppner for a doubleheader Thursday starting at 2 p.m.