

Bulldogs host Eagles, split doubleheader

After giving up 22 runs in Game 1, Hermiston powered through Game 2

By **ALEXIS MANSANAREZ**
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — In the Hermiston softball team's league opener, all signs pointed to a Game 1 victory.

The Bulldogs had chipped away at an early deficit and momentum was on their side after going up 5-1 in the second inning.

But a solid fourth inning from Hood River Valley, and another big fifth inning from the visiting Eagles put them up for good.

Hood River added nine runs in the sixth to take the first game 15-7, but Hermiston wasn't done yet. The Bulldogs came back in the second game to split the day after defeating the Eagles 8-6.

To open the day, Janelle Almaguer was in the circle. She got into trouble early with a bases-loaded walk to give Hood River its first run of the day, but Almaguer followed up the first inning by surrendering only two hits while striking out two.

Offensively, the Bulldogs (8-4 overall, 1-1 Columbia River Conference) responded to the Eagles' lone run with five of their own. A two-RBI single off the bat of Sydney Stefani put Hermiston up 2-1 in the bottom of the second.

In the same inning, Sam Atilano added a two-RBI double of her own and Bailee Noland knocked one into right field for an RBI single to put the Bulldogs ahead 5-1.

The Eagles (13-1, 1-1) began to chip away at their deficit, and were within one run after four innings. Then came the dreaded fifth inning and with the 10-run lead, Hood River was in a position to end the game in the sixth inning.

But the Bulldogs lived to play a full game after Stefani hit a two-RBI double to push the score to 15-7.

Fortunately for Hermiston, the Eagles' bats settled down a bit in Game 2 and the Bulldogs were able to come away with a win, which broke Hood River's 13-game win streak.

Hood River again got out to an early lead, and Hermiston wasn't able to catch up until the bottom of the sixth inning.

The Eagles jumped out to a 3-0 advantage after the first three innings with Bailee Noland pitching, but in the bottom of the third the Bulldogs were able to cut their deficit with a Stefani RBI double and a pop up that then gave Stefani enough time to reach home plate after tagging up on third. Her double was one of three in Game 2.

Hood River's lead soon increased when the Eagles scored three more runs in the following inning highlighted by an RBI single off the bat of Haylee Baker. That would end their scoring for the day with their run total at six.

Hermiston came back with a lone run in the fifth on a ground out that scored Kalei Smith, and then in the sixth got its bats going to take the lead for good.

Four different batters contributed to the five-run affair. Another Stefani double brought in two runs, both Smith and Atilano hit RBI singles and Janelle Almaguer was the one to get things started with a sacrifice fly.

Noland took the win after going the distance. She gave up six runs on 12 hits, struck out three and walked three.

Hood River's Lauren Decker was given the loss after 5 1/3 innings of work surrendering all eight runs on 13 Hermiston hits. She struck out two and walked one.



Hermiston pitcher Janelle Almaguer winds up Saturday against Hood River Valley.

STAFF PHOTOS BY KATHY ANEY



Hermiston's Sydney Stefani attempts to tag runner Haylee Baker, of Hood River Valley, during Saturday's league game in Hermiston.



Box scores

Game 1		R	H	E	
HRV	100329	0	15	22	0
HHS	050002	0	7	9	0

(HRV) K. McNeney, (H) Ja. Almaguer, P. Duflath (6), Ja. Almaguer (6), W — McNeney, L — Almaguer.

Game 2		R	H	E	
HRV	201300	0	6	13	1
HHS	002015	X	8	14	0

(HRV) L. Decker, K. McNeney (6), (H) B. Noland, W — Noland, L — Decker.

Hermiston batter Bailee Noland watches a high ball go by Saturday against Hood River Valley.

PREPS

Continued from Page A9

duo of (Violet) Mitchell and (Ashlyn) Hofbauer are showing big improvements (and) as a team we are coming out more constantly in the right mindset and showing a higher level of confidence in our play."

The only other loss for Hermiston came in doubles when Emery

Snyder and Katie Bradshaw fell, 6-4, 7-6 (7-3). But the No. 1, 3 and 4 duos all came out victorious allowing, at most, only four set points from the Eisenhower matchups.

Reed Middleton and Brenea Wadekamper led the way with a 6-0, 6-1 victory over Dayja Sanchez and Eyleen Hurtado. Alyssa Perkins and Breckyn Mecham won their match, 6-3, 6-1, and the freshman pair took their match 6-4, 6-1.

On the boys side, the Bulldogs

were close to their first sweep of the season and finished 7-1 over Eisenhower.

"All the guys showed up to play and compete," head coach Sharr West said. "We changed our roster a little bit and we might have found our strongest lineup."

At No. 2 doubles, Trent Pitney and Matt Ekhardt were paired together and won their match 6-1, 6-2. The unchanged No. 1 duo of Patrick Wicks and Thomas

McCullough mirrored that score to also win 6-2, 6-1.

Max Spencer and Miguel Salvador moved to the No. 3 spot on Saturday and handily won their match, 6-0, 6-2.

Hermiston's Ivan Zepeda and Eli Munez competed the doubles sweep with a 6-2, 6-0 win against their opponents.

But the highlight of the day, West said, was in singles.

"All of my singles guys played

the best tennis I have seen them play," he said.

The only loss came from No. 3 singles player Austin Garcia, who fell to his opponent, 5-7, 6-4 (10-6). But after stepping out of doubles play and taking the court solo, West was happy with the grit Garcia showed.

Jason Morris, at the No. 1 spot, won his match, 3-6, 6-4 (10-8), and both Hayden Cissna (7-5, 6-2) and Jaiden Ruloph (6-1, 6-0) picked up wins.