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BULLDOGS BEAT BUCKAROOS

Girls: Bulldogs battle Bucks for 5-3 victory

By **ERIC SINGER**
STAFF WRITER

PENDLETON — Hermiston coach Jason Sivey and Pendleton coach Rocky Dillenburg were both in constant movement around the West Hills tennis courts just north of Pendleton High School on Wednesday afternoon, watching their teams go head-to-head in a final tuneup for the district tournament.

And after the match was completed with a 5-3 Hermiston victory, both coaches came away with plenty of positives but also numerous things to work on.

“Today wasn’t our best match,” Sivey said, “but we haven’t been beaten in conference (play). So that’s definitely an accomplishment.”

The last time the two teams met back on April 17 in Hermiston, the Bulldogs shut out the Buckaroos in an 8-0 victory. However, the Buckaroos came out with a greater intensity and put some pressure on the Bulldogs to make it an entertaining day.

For the Bulldogs, their top players continued their strong play. Top doubles pairing Breana Wadekamper and Reed Middleton took down Pendleton’s Maggie Scanlin and Denisa Senkerikova 6-4, 6-2. The No. 2 doubles team of Breckyn Mecham and Alyssa Perkins held off Becca Walker and Larissa Chambers 6-4, 6-5. And Mackenzie Hill breezed past Pendleton’s Abby Williams 6-0, 6-0 in singles action.

“I’m proud of how well all the girls keep battling, and I expect us to do well at the district tournament,” Sivey said. “The No. 1 and 2 singles and doubles are playing very strong in the second half of the season.”

Rounding out the action Wednesday was Hermiston’s Olivia Thomas defeating Gabby Cuthbert 6-4, 6-2 in No. 4 singles and Ashlyn Hofbauer and Violet Mitchell pulling out a 6-2, 3-6 (11-9) win over Sylvie Heriza and Claire Durant at No. 4 doubles.

“I think we have a good shot at sending a few girls to state this year,” Sivey said as the team now prepares for districts in Bend. “But it’s going to take some hard work. We will be working hard on fine-tuning our game this following week in practice.”



Above: Hermiston’s Breana Wadekamper returns a volley during a doubles match with partner Reed Middleton against Pendleton’s Maggie Scanlin and Denisa Senkerikova in the Bulldogs’ matchup against the Bucks on Wednesday.
STAFF PHOTO BY E. J. HARRIS

Left: Hermiston’s No. 1 doubles pair of Thomas McCullough (left) and Patrick Wicks (right) shake hands with Pendleton’s top pair after winning the match 6-0, 6-0 in the Bulldogs’ final home dual of the regular season.
STAFF PHOTO BY ALEXIS MANSANAREZ

Boys: sweep Bucks to end regular season

By **ALEXIS MANSANAREZ**
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — Hermiston’s Patrick Wicks admitted Wednesday that four years ago, he wasn’t the dominant player he is today on the court. In fact, Wicks — one half of the Bulldogs’ No. 1 duo — wasn’t all that good in singles.

Luckily, his tennis partner and lifelong friend, Thomas McCullough, shared the same struggle.

“We both weren’t really good at singles our freshman year,” Wicks said. “So, we started doing doubles, and then we kept getting better, and this is where we are now.”

After being two of three seniors honored on Senior Day, the pair took the court to face rival Pendleton and handed the Bucks a 6-0, 6-0 defeat to get Hermiston’s day going.

“I’m feeling pretty good about that game,” Wicks said.

The two didn’t give up a set against Elton Harrison and Noah Butler and played much more sound tennis than they have in the past.

“That’s going back to the simplification of the stroke,” head coach Shann West said. “Big macho men want to smash the ball hard, and really just putting the ball where it needs to go when it needs to get there has been a struggle for them, but I thought they looked really good today — playing a crisp game mostly.”

Also showing a valiant effort was No. 1 singles player Jason Morris.

He faced Silas Johnson, who kept Morris on his toes by stealing three sets from the only other senior on the Bulldogs’ roster.

In the first set, Morris was building a lead and up 4-1 before Johnson won another game, but Morris held on to win 6-2, and then won the match after taking the second set 6-1.

“I feel really great,” Morris said. “He (Johnson) puts a lot of effort in. I was playing okay today, I don’t think I played my best out there, but it was still a great game for both of us.”

To complete the sweep, the No. 2 doubles pair of Trent Pitney and Matt Eckhardt defeated Grady Phelan and Dean Schiller (6-2, 6-0), Jaiden Ruloph won at No. 3 singles against Stanton Schmitz (6-0, 6-2), and Hayden Cissna finished the day with a 6-0, 6-2 victory against Eaton Phelan.

The win gives Hermiston momentum heading into districts Friday and Saturday, which will take place at both Hermiston High and Armand Larive Middle School.

Hermiston’s Solorio, Fuentes sign letters of intent

By **ALEXIS MANSANAREZ**
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — Seven years ago Melany Solorio didn’t play or compete in any sports, and as Heidi Fuentes was tallying up the years on the pitch she never thought she’d get a chance to play at the next level.

On Thursday, both Hermiston High athletes signed their National Letters of Intent to continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level.

Solorio will be running cross country and also become a member of Lane Community College’s track and field team next year, and Fuentes will join Blue Mountain Community College’s women’s soccer team.

“I didn’t think I would go this far,” Fuentes said with a smile.

For Fuentes, she made an account on NCSA’s athletic recruiting website — Next College Student Athlete — through middle and high school athletes with college coaches — and soon heard from former BMCC head coach Art Mota.

With the recent departure of Mota, Fuentes became nervous with the program in flux but she is



Melany Solorio (front middle) sits with Hermiston cross country head coach Troy Blackburn (left) and family and friends as she prepares to sign her Letter of Intent to Lane Community College.

now excited after meeting the new coach about the chance to play with some familiar faces and being close to home.

Fuentes will join Hermiston native Gabriela Hernandez, who just completed her first year with the program.

Solorio, who didn’t start running competitively until seventh grade, enjoyed Lane’s campus when she would run at the state cross country tournament held there. But her route to becoming a Titan was a little unorthodox.

“I reached out to them, I was interested in them,” she said. “So, I just called them and they said, ‘Good thing you reached us in time because we’re not going to recruit anyone else.’”

The phone call took place mid-April, just before Solorio returned to the track. She had suffered from a pulled muscle and as of Tuesday, she had only competed in two meets this season — recorded a season best in the 1,500 meters (5:15.65) in her final regular season home meet.

Solorio will now prepare for dis-



Heidi Fuentes (front middle) sits with former Hermiston girls soccer coach Danielle MacBride (right) and family as she signs her Letter of Intent to Blue Mountain Community College.

tricts, which will take place at Kenison Field on Wednesday-Thursday, while Fuentes will finish out the school year before joining her fellow Timberwolves on the field for the Fall of 2018 season.

On Monday, two more Bulldogs also signed their letters of intent to continue their athletic careers. FlorDeDalia Cadenas will join the women’s soccer team at Everett Community College and Emanuel Ibarra will be running track as a Saint at Mt. Hood Community College.

SCHEDULE

Local slate

PREP BASEBALL

Friday
Stanfield at Vale (DH), 1 p.m.
Irrigon at Riverside (DH), 1 p.m.
Pendleton at Hermiston, 4:30 p.m.
Saturday
Joseph at Umatilla (DH), 3 p.m.

PREP SOFTBALL

Thursday
Weston-McEwen at Echo (DH), 3 p.m.
Riverside at Hermiston JV, 4:30 p.m.
Friday
Irrigon at Umatilla (DH), 1 p.m.
Pendleton at Hermiston, 4:30 p.m.
Saturday
Grant Union at Echo, 11 a.m.

PREP TRACK & FIELD

Wednesday
Pendleton, Hermiston at CRC Districts (Hermiston), 4 p.m.
Thursday
Pendleton, Hermiston at CRC Districts (Hermiston), 4 p.m.
Friday
Weston-McEwen, Stanfield, Pilot Rock, Heppler at Districts (Athena), 11 a.m.
Umatilla, Irrigon, Riverside at EOL Districts (Umatilla)
Saturday
Helix, Echo, Arlington, Lone, Condon/Wheeler at Districts (Moro), 10:30 a.m.
Umatilla, Irrigon, Riverside at EOL Districts, TBD

PREP GOLF

Tuesday
Pendleton, Hermiston (girls) at Districts (Sunriver), all day
Pendleton, Hermiston (boys) at Districts (Emerald Valley GC), all day

PREP TENNIS

Friday
Hermiston, Pendleton (boys) at districts (Hermiston), 8 a.m.
Mac-Hi, Umatilla, Riverside, Weston-McEwen, Stanfield, Lone, Helix at districts (Kennewick), 9 a.m.
Hermiston, Pendleton (girls) at districts (Bend), 10 a.m.
Saturday
Hermiston, Pendleton (boys) at districts (Hermiston), 8 a.m.
Mac-Hi, Umatilla, Riverside, Weston-McEwen, Stanfield, Lone, Helix at districts (Kennewick), 9 a.m.
Hermiston, Pendleton (girls) at districts (Bend), 10 a.m.