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Hermiston's Jordan Ramirez, right, prepares for a defensive drill against teammate Andrew James, left, during Wednesday's practice at Hermiston High School.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC SINGER

A new era begins

Hermiston begins practices for inaugural season in WIAA

By ERIC SINGER
STAFF WRITER

A new era in Hermiston High School football officially began last week, as the Bulldogs began their first full-team practices as members of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association.

Last Wednesday marked the first day of sanctioned practices for WIAA members, and all kids on Hermiston's 2018 roster strapped on their helmets and stepped out on the Kennison Field turf for the first time in the morning for the first practice of the day. The Bulldogs met back on the field later in the afternoon, though that session ended indoors in the gymnasium as the smoke from Northwest wildfires made the air unsafe to continue outdoors.

But the Bulldogs did not let the change of scenery dampen their excitement to be back playing football as they begin preparation for their Week 1 meeting with Pasco in just 10 days.

"Any time you can get a group of young men that want to get better every day, it's an awesome thing," Hermiston coach David Faeteete said.

As Hermiston begins its journey into a new conference and a new state athletic association, the team will also have plenty of new faces on the field this fall. On offense, Hermiston returns only four starters overall with senior quarterback Andrew James, senior receiver Jordan Ramirez, senior offensive lineman Jacob Liebe and junior offensive tackle Chase Bradshaw. And while the coaches feel pretty confident with the new guys on the line, there are a lot of unknowns at the skill posi-



Hermiston head coach David Faeteete, center, instructs his players during a drill at Wednesday's practice at Hermiston High School.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC SINGER

tions still to be figured out in camp.

With the likes of Dayshawn Neal, Joey Gutierrez and Jonathan Hinkle lost to graduation, Hermiston must replace more than 2,000 receiving yards and 27 touchdowns as well as more than 2,000 rushing yards and 28 touchdowns.

"It's all changed," James said. "It's a whole new team, a lot of younger guys, but it's not going to stop us. We have the same coaches, the same mentality as last year and years before. We have no clue what's in front of us, but we're just going to try and do what we do best."

The Bulldogs have nearly just as much production to replace on the defensive side of the ball as well, though Faeteete is excited to see how his kids battle things out throughout these next few weeks in camp.

"We have tons of new faces," he said. "I think I'll know more once we finish up camp and get into that first game week, but right now we're just trying to teach fundamentals, trying to coach them up and knock the rust off after being out for a while. Right now it's setting our depth chart, finding out who our ones, twos,

threes are, and building depth that way."

As preparations for the season begin, the Bulldogs will have no easy games on the schedule against their Mid-Columbia Conference opponents; nearly every school brings a state championship pedigree to the field. Hermiston opens the season at home against the Pasco Bulldogs, a battle being dubbed the 'Battle of the Bulldogs,' but then hits the road in Week 2 to take on the defending 4A state champion Richland Bombers.

The Bulldogs then have home games against Kennewick (Sept. 14), Southridge (Sept. 28), Eisenhower (Oct. 12, non-league) and Kamiakin (Oct. 26), while traveling to Walla Walla (Sept. 21), Chiawana (Oct. 5) and Hanford (Oct. 19).

"We have to play a state championship-caliber team every week in our conference and that's just how it is for us now," Faeteete said. "And Tri-Cities schools are going to travel well. Hundreds of fans each week and one school maybe even a thousand, and it's going to be that kind of atmosphere every game at home, every game on the road, so we're pretty excited about it."

"That type of venue you don't always get in high school football, unless you're in the big city like West Linn versus Jesuit ... it's going to be a great atmosphere and we're super excited."

The Bulldogs will also have another change to its uniform this season, from a matte black helmets to a glossy white shell with purple facemask. This comes on the heels of changing the helmets from gold to black in 2016, and then introducing new purple and white jerseys last season.

Faeteete said it's just a coincidence the team has yet another new look for its first year in the WIAA.

"It's part of the rotation," he said. "We have to get our helmets refurbished every two years, and it costs the same to just paint a different color, so we tried to dabble a little bit, be a little flashy."

People are invited to discuss the upcoming season with Faeteete at the Hermiston Linebacker Club. The club will meet Thursday, Aug. 30 at noon at Desert Lanes, 1545 N. First St. Those planning to attend the no-host luncheon are asked to RSVP by Aug. 29 by calling 541-567-5215.

GOLF

Ladies take the Umatilla championship



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY MEGAN OLSEN

Bev Miller was first net with 141 and Samantha Lindley first gross with a 166 during the 2018 Big River Ladies Club Championships. The event was held Aug. 18-19 at Big River Golf Course in Umatilla.



STAFF PHOTO BY BRETT KANE

Kaylynn Jeffery, 14, poses with her street stock racecar.

From Hometown Heroes to Young Guns

Hermiston Raceway celebrates drivers young and old

By BRETT KANE
STAFF WRITER

It was a celebration of generations young and old at the Hermiston Raceway on Saturday night.

The opening ceremonies included an homage to longtime Hermiston racer Ron Van Cleve, who died 13 years ago at the age of 73 after suffering a heart attack. Van Cleve's daughter Ronda, who took her name from her father, waved a checkered flag as she took a lap around the course.

Van Cleve also served as an official at the Tri-City Raceway.

"He was one of a kind," said promoter Greg Walden. "He enjoyed life and was always pleasant."

The heat races soon kicked off, led by the Banderolero division, which consists of kids between the ages of eight and 12 driving cars with 6.5 horsepower engines. Ryker Ohler — or as the announcers referred to him, the "Iceman" — swept the competition, taking first place in both the division's heat race and main event.

Ohler, 10, is from Prosser, Wash., and has only been racing for a couple of months. "I like driving, passing people, and going fast," he said.

Ohler wasn't the only young racer to steal the show: Yakima driver Kaylynn Jeffery, 14, was the only female in her street stock class, and has been racing since she was eight.

"I love the adrenaline rush," she said. "There's nothing better than driving fast and turning left."

Jeffery even purchased her current race car on her own when she was 11 — with \$2,000 of her own money, earned by selling her first car. She ended up taking third place in the street stock main event.

"With these kids, it's all business," Walden said. "They don't resemble a normal kid; they're racers."

The Raceway's main attraction for the night was the Columbia River Legends: a class that races strictly in older cars that run on motorcycle engines.

"They're hard cars to drive. There's a ton of horse power in those tiny, little cars," Walden said. "They're overpowered beasts."

Neena Kik of Hermiston took first place in the division's main event.

The Raceway's next event will be held on Saturday, Sept. 8 at 6 p.m.

HERMISTON RACEWAY RESULTS August 18th

HORNETS

- (777) Devin Taylor; 2. (77) David Knowles; 3. (18) Karin Pitzer; 4. (17) Kedric Preston; 5. (13) Ryan Rodabaugh; 6. (12) Kris Marlow; 7. (69) Cody McDonald; 8. (21) Owen Berglund; 9. (24) Justus Zamudio; 10. (11) Joe Dunn; 11. (7) Tracy "Snoopy" Howell; 12. (5) Andrew Decker; 13. (1) Rob "Ricky Bobby" Cassano; 14. (22) Caroline Barnes; 15. (09) Malorie Whitbeck.

BOMBERS

- (123) Shade Cole; 2. (17) Kedric Preston; 3. (55) Justin Gage; 4. (N21K) Carl Leggett; 5. (2) Brian Calley.

STREET STOCKS

- (46) Terry Osborn; 2. (68) Bart Hector Jr.; 3. (28) Kaylynn Jeffery; 4. (77) Jeff Stremcha; 5. (18) Adam Baker.

MINI STOCKS

- (49) Angel Oseguera; 2. (18) Jeff Mullins; 3. (29) Andy Pierce; 4. (36) Travis Bonney.

SUPER MINIS

- (11x) Patrick Mullins; 2. (11) Chris Kohler; 3. (27) Ron Wilbur.

LATE MODELS

- (9) Ken Bonney; 2. (15) Jeff Whitbeck; 3. (7) Tom Abercrombie; 4. (37) Charles McDonald.

BANDELEROS

- (13) Ryker Ohler; 2. (77) Jordan Mullins; 3. (5) Brock Genz; 4. (47) Meredith Thompson.

COLUMBIA RIVER LEGENDS

- (3) Neena Kik; 2. (66) Austin Snodgrass; 3. (54) Trace Thompson; 4. (24) Jose Zamudio; 5. (43) Bill Kik; 6. (13) Donnie Rabbitt; 7. (2) Jeff Mueller; 8. (01) Brock McDonough; 9. (10) Lloyd Bigler.

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