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Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Hermiston's Jazlyn Romero (22) faces a Sunnyside defender during Saturday's game at the Dawg House.

Hermiston scores two league wins before Christmas

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Sometimes, even your best is not enough.

Jordan Thomas scored 23 points and the Hermiston girls put forth one of their best efforts Saturday night, but Sunnyside held onto beat the Bulldogs 51-46 in a nonleague game at the Dawg House.

"Sunnyside is really good," Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez said. "I was pleased, to say the least. I was pleased with our defensive effort. That is the best we have played against a really good team."

In the fourth, the Bulldogs got 3-pointers from Jazlyn Romero and Jayden Ray to trim the Grizzlies' lead to 47-43, and a free throw from Thomas cut the lead to three points.

Down 49-46, Thomas and Romero missed back-to-back shots off the glass with 25 seconds remaining. A turnover with 9 seconds left, and two free throws by Ashlee Maldonado with 5 seconds left on the clock, took away any hope of a win for the Bulldogs.

"We lost to a good team, and other than that last minute of the second quarter, we controlled the game," Rodriguez said. "We played our tempo. We had chances to win."

Romero added 10 points for the Bulldogs, while Ray had seven.

The loss put the brakes on a three-game winning streak for Hermiston.

Hanford found out Friday that it didn't not have the players to stop Thomas, who poured in 26 points — 15 in the second half — to lead the Bulldogs to a 61-33 MCC road win over the Falcons.

"Jordan is back in the groove and the young girls are learning to get her the

ball," Hermiston coach Rodriguez said. "I challenged Jordan at halftime. I told her these girls should not be able to guard you. She was able to stay on the court. She didn't get tired or get in foul trouble."

It was all Hermiston in the second half.

The Bulldogs went on a 20-4 tear in the third quarter, getting 3-pointers from Jazlyn Romero, Kaylee Young and Katelyn Heide-man, and nine points from Thomas.

On Tuesday, Dec. 18, the Hermiston girls picked up their first Mid-Columbia Conference win.

The Bulldogs used a 41-17 run in the second half to pull away and beat Southridge 67-35 at the Dawg House.

The Bulldogs trailed 10-6 after the first quarter, but got their act together in the second behind six points from Jayden Ray and five from Jazlyn Romero for a 26-17 lead at the half.

Kendall Dowdy scored seven of her nine points in the second half, and Ray had six as Hermiston got scoring from all but one player on the night.

"We need our role players to do these things," Rodriguez said. "Teams are going to take away Jordan (Thomas) and Jaz away. They need to know what to do."

Of Hermiston's 19 points in the third quarter, nine came off 3-pointers from Dowdy, Sydney Seavert and Heide-man.

BOX SCORE

Sunnyside 10 20 13 8 — 51
Hermiston 13 10 11 12 — 46

SUNNYSIDE — Weets 2, Newhouse 14, Ash.Maldonado 14, Garcia 9, Rodriguez 12.

HERMISTON — Young 2, Ray 7, Stefanie 2, Dowdy 2, Romero 10, Thomas 23.

BULLDOGS SURVIVE IN OT



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Hermiston's Adrian Mendez (34) goes to the hoop as Alexis Espinosa of Sunnyside defends during Saturday's game at the Dawg House.

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

A last-second 3-pointer by Ryne Andreason sent Saturday's game into overtime, and the 6-foot-3 senior added eight points in the extra session as Hermiston eked out a 75-71 nonleague win over Sunnyside at the Dawg House.

"I felt like we were wearing ugly Christmas sweaters there for a while," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "We didn't have the best start, but it's nice to get a win going into the break."

Andreason finished with a game-high 29 points, while Cesar Ortiz added 23, including three 3-pointers.

"We were pretty tired from Hanford (on Friday), but we came out on top," Ortiz said. "We have a lot to work on. Richland is up next, and they are pretty good."

Trailing the entire game since leading 2-0, Hermiston (8-1, 4-1 MCC) took a 52-50 lead with 35 seconds left in the third quarter on a basket by Andrew James, and Ortiz drained a 3-pointer from the top of the key for a 55-50 lead.

James scored nine of his 15 points in the third, and Ortiz also had nine as the Bulldogs went on a 24-11 run to get back in the game.

A bucket by Jordan Ramirez to open the fourth quarter extended Hermiston's lead to 57-50, but the Grizzlies were relentless.

Sunnyside (2-7) went on an 8-1 run to tie the score at 58-58, then jumped out to a 64-58 lead on a basket by Alex Lopez with 1:03 left in regulation.

Ramirez hit the front end of a one-and-one, and Andreason followed with a pair of free throws to pull the Bulldogs within 64-61 with 28 seconds left.

Hermiston then pressured the Grizzlies when they inbounded the ball, and got a 10-second violation called against Sunnyside to get possession of the ball.

Andreason drained a 3 from the top of the key with 2.6 seconds remaining to knot the score at 64-64.

"We have a couple of sets that give us multiple options," Arstein said. "We executed decent, and Ryno hit a nice shot."

Andreason and James sealed the win when James

put his quarterback skills to work with a three-quarter court pass to Andreason, who finished with an easy layup.

"We executed in the end, and our intensity was up," Arstein said. "I was proud our kids kept their heads up. We saw what we need to work on the next 13 days — offense, defense and rebounding."

The thriller followed a letdown on Friday, as Hermiston fell 74-62 to Hanford for its first MCC loss.

Connor Woodward scored a game-high 31 points as the Falcons knocked the Bulldogs from the unbeaten ranks.

"Hanford punched us in the mouth," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "We didn't play very well defensively. I thought Hanford did a good job picking their spots. We never made the real run you need."

Woodward, who averages 25.5 points per game, had a season-high 45 points against Sunnyside two weeks ago. Friday, his point total included three 3's, and an 11-of-12 performance from the free-throw line.

"Jordan (Ramirez) did

a pretty good job on him until he got in foul trouble," Arstein said. "But he is going to hit his shots. We are going to be fine. We just have to fix some stuff."

On Tuesday, Dec. 18, Southridge gave Hermiston a bit of a scare, but the Bulldogs put together a solid fourth quarter to win the league game.

Andreason scored 21 points, and Jordan Ramirez added 14 as the Bulldogs went on a 19-12 run in the fourth quarter for a 61-54 Mid-Columbia Conference victory over the Suns at the Dawg House.

"That is one of the slopiest games we have played in two years," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "That has to be fixed. They hit some shots that put us in a tight spot, but somehow we came out with the W."

BOX SCORE

Sunnyside 20 19 11 14 6 — 71
Hermiston 14 17 24 9 11 — 75

SUNNYSIDE — Copeland 27, Lopez 8, Oswalt 2, Escamilla 8, Singleterry 23, Rodriguez 3.

HERMISTON — Andreason 29, Ortiz 23, James 15, Smith 2, Ramirez 4, Mendez 2.

Madi Wilson signs to run track at EWU

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

The first time Hermiston track coach Emilee Strot saw Madi Wilson run, she knew the girl had a future in the sport.

Wednesday, Wilson proved her coach right, signing a letter of intent to run track at Eastern Washington University.

"She is a really special kid," Strot said. "This is a big deal. High school athletes want to go D-I, and they have a high level of competition and a great team."

For Wilson, she said Eastern was a great fit for her when she went for her official visit.

"My first instinct was,

this is amazing," she said. "I felt at home. I loved it."

Wilson said her scholarship will cover tuition and books. If she shows marked improvement over the years, the scholarship will increase.

At EWU, Wilson will put her talents to use in the heptathlon. She did a couple this past summer, and knows she needs to improve in the shot put and javelin.

Wilson, who runs the 100 and 300 hurdle events, and legs on the 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams, started running track in elementary school.

"The high school kids put on a meet for kids 4 years old through fifth grade," she said. "I did that for as long as I can remember. The 400 was my baby. Running track

was my sport."

She also got a boost from her parents. Her dad BJ played football and was a decathlete at Central Washington University, while her mom, Crystal, played basketball at Lower Columbia Community College, then continued at CWU, where she also competed in track.

Strot got her first look at Wilson when she was a freshman. With basketball season running long, Wilson only had a couple of practices before she hit the track.

"I didn't know who she was, and she missed the first couple of weeks of training," Strot said. "We brought her to a meet and my jaw dropped. We put her in a JV race and she crushed

it. I knew she would do great things."

And she has. She has gone to state every year since she was a freshman, picking up her first medal in the 4x400 relay, where the Bulldogs placed eighth. She also went in the 100 hurdles, but did not place.

As a sophomore, she was second at state in the 100 hurdles, sixth in the 300 hurdles, and the 4x400 relay team finished second.

Last year, she was second at state in the 100 hurdles in a time of 14.98 seconds. She was fifth in the 300 hurdles (46.70), the 4x100 relay was second (49.05), and the 4x400 team was sixth (4:07.70).



Staff photo by Annie Fowler

Hermiston's Madi Wilson signed a letter of intent Wednesday to run track at Eastern Washington University.