

## BOYS HOOPS

# Dawgs go 2-1 in busy week of MCC action

## Hermiston rallies past Kennewick 64-63 for key league win

By ANNIE FOWLER  
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston boys basketball team likes to keep its fans on the edge of their seats.

Friday night was no different as the Bulldogs trailed most of the game and needed a last-second shot by Ryne Andreason to slip past Kennewick 64-63 in Mid-Columbia Conference action at the Dawg House.

"I wouldn't mind a game where we came out, established a lead and I could get some other guys in," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "A win is a win. You have to protect your house. This league is tough."

The victory gave the Bulldogs (10-3, 6-3 MCC) two wins over the Lions (7-6, 3-6) this season, which is key for seeding to the 3A regionals. Hermiston has one game left against Southridge and Kamiakin. Both are must-wins if the Bulldogs hope to secure the top seed.

Hermiston trailed 51-50 heading into the fourth quarter, but a basket and two free throws by Andreason gave the Bulldogs their first lead of the game at 58-55.

The Lions would come back to tie the score at 58-58, and led 63-60 on a 3-pointer by Blaine Chavez and a basket by Kobe Simmons-Dumo with 41 seconds remaining.



Cesar Ortiz (3), of Hermiston, battles for a rebound during Tuesday's game against Walla Walla at the Dawg House.

Andreason scored to pull his team within 63-62, and the Lions had a chance to extend their lead with 13 seconds left as Ayoni Benavides went to the free-throw line for a one-and-one opportunity.

Benavidez missed the front end, and the Bulldogs got the rebound.

With less than 10 seconds on the clock, Hermiston brought the ball down the court and passed the ball around. Anderson ended up with the ball, and he drove into the key.

He looked for an open teammate, but when he found no one open, he used an underhand scoop and put the ball in the basket with 1.6 seconds remaining.

The Lions were able to inbound the ball, but could

not get off a shot.

"I got lucky," said Andreason, who finished with 20 points. "These conference games, we have to make sure we win these ones. They punched us in the mouth the first two quarters and we beat them in the third. It was a good second half for us."

With time running out, Arstein said there was no use calling a timeout to set up a play.

"He did a good job not throwing the ball away," Arstein said of Andreason. "He is a very smart kid. These guys trust each other, and that goes a long way."

Lions coach Bradyn Leyde gave credit to the Bulldogs.

"It definitely was coming down to who had the ball at the end," he said. "Ryne

Andreason is a good player and he hit a tough shot in traffic. Credit to him. This was a good high school basketball game."

The Lions came out in the first quarter and took a 19-12 lead. Benavidez scored eight of his 13 points in the first, and Chavez added seven of his game-high 22.

Kennewick extended its lead to 26-15 in the second quarter before the Bulldogs staged a comeback.

Jordan Ramirez nailed a 3-pointer; Andrew James hit a pair of free throws; Cesar Ortiz added one free throw; and Ramirez stole the ball and laid it off the glass to pull the Bulldogs within 26-23.

Chavez would hit a pair of 3s, and the teams traded baskets before the half as the

Lions led 36-31.

Ramirez added 15 points for the Bulldogs, while Ortiz chipped in 11 and James eight.

### Hermiston at Chiawana

Hermiston held Chiawana's 6-foot-8 Matthew Kroner to just six points and three rebounds, but the rest of the Riverhawks picked up the slack Saturday night in a 68-56 Mid-Columbia Conference win over the Bulldogs in Pasco.

"We did a good job on Kroner, but forgot about everyone else," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "Blake (Davis) and Adrian (Mendez) did a good job on Kroner, but we didn't defend the perimeter. We let guys set up shots and beat us off the dribble. It was a lackluster effort."

In a game that featured three ties and six lead changes, the Bulldogs (10-4 overall, 6-4 MCC) led 16-15 after the first quarter, but went into a shooting slump in the second as the Riverhawks (10-3, 7-2) went on a 19-9 run to take a 34-25 lead at the half.

Hermiston made a run of its own in the third to make the score 43-40 heading into the fourth.

Chiawana exploded for 25 points in the final quarter to hold on for the win.

Cesar Ortiz was a bright spot for the Bulldogs, scoring a game-high 19 points, including a 5-for-6 performance from the 3-point line.

Ryne Andreason added 15 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, while Jordan Ramirez chipped in 11 points with six rebounds.

Taylor Perez and Jayden Martinez each had 16 points for Chiawana.

### Hermiston vs. Walla Walla

Cesar Ortiz has struggled shooting the deep ball the past few games, but Tuesday night the Hermiston senior was back on target.

Ortiz scored a game-high 25 points, including five 3-pointers, as the Bulldogs posted a 71-57 Mid-Columbia Conference victory over Walla Walla at the Dawg House.

"He did a good job of picking his shots," said Hermiston coach Casey Arstein, whose team ended a two-game skid. "He was passing the ball, but when he was open guys found him and he knocked down his shots. Everyone is going to have their night."

Hermiston jumped out to a 25-13 lead after the first quarter, getting eight points from Ortiz and six from Andrew James.

The Bulldogs extended their lead to 37-24 at the half, then had a lull in the third quarter, getting outscored 18-13 as the Blue Devils pulled within 50-42.

"In the first half, we had energy," Arstein said. "In the third, they made a run and got within one, but we stayed calm and executed. It took us a bit in the fourth to get going."

With 5:37 to play in the game, Hermiston's lead was 52-47, but a 19-10 burst to end the game sealed the win.

James added 15 points for the Bulldogs, including seven in the fourth quarter. Ryne Andreason, Jordan Ramirez and Adrian Mendez all chipped in nine points.

Taylor Hamada led the Blue Devils with 18 points.

## GIRLS HOOPS

# Hermiston pushes top teams, but falls short

## Bulldogs drop games to Kennewick and Chiawana, beat Walla Walla

By ANNIE FOWLER  
STAFF WRITER

The final score might not show it, but Hermiston made Kennewick earn its win Friday night.

The Bulldogs were within seven points of the Lions three times in the fourth quarter, but Kennewick scored the final 12 points of the game for a 58-39 Mid-Columbia Conference win at the Dawg House.

"My frustration all season, was I was waiting for that energy and excitement to play," Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez said of his team. "That atmosphere in that stretch is why you play high school basketball. I was happy with that aspect.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney/East Oregonian  
Sydney Stefani (12), of Hermiston, goes up for a shot during the Jan. 8 game against Walla Walla at the Dawg House.

We need to make sure we are playing 32 minutes that way."

The Lions (10-3 overall), who got a game-high 18 points from 6-foot-2 freshman Alexis Stein, improved to 7-2 in league play with the win.

After Hermiston's Jayden Ray opened the game with a basket, Kennewick's Meilani McBee hit back-to-back 3-pointers, and Reilyn Davis added another as the Lions

led 9-2 less than 3 minutes into the game.

The Bulldogs (5-8, 3-6) got a basket and two free throws from Mati Byrd to pull within 15-11, only to have Maya Thornton drain a 3 from the right baseline to extend the lead to 18-11 at the end of the quarter.

The Lions held the Bulldogs to six points in the second quarter, as they enjoyed a 29-17 lead at the half.

Kennewick's lead bal-

looned to 16 points in the third quarter, but the Bulldogs scored the final six points of the quarter — including five by Kendall Dowdy — to pull within 41-31 with one quarter to play.

Hermiston had cut the deficit to under 10 points with 5:12 to play, but point guard Jazlyn Romero fouled out. She was soon followed by 6-4 post player Jordan Thomas.

The Lions scored eight of their final points from the free-throw line, and Stein put an exclamation point on the win with a basket with 14 seconds left on the clock.

Romero and Sydney Stefani led the Bulldogs with seven points each.

### Hermiston vs. Chiawana

Hermiston played an even game against Chiawana on Saturday, except for the first quarter.

The Riverhawks outscored the Bulldogs 11-4 in the opening quarter, and then held on for a 50-41 Mid-Columbia Conference win in Pasco.

Each team scored 26 points in the second half, but the first quarter haunted the Bulldogs all game.

The Riverhawks also scored 20 points off turnovers, and scored 27 points from the 3-point line.

Hermiston (5-9 overall, 3-7 MCC) got 17 points from Jordan Thomas, and 10 points and 15 rebounds from Jazlyn Romero. Hermiston outrebounded Chiawana 43-28.

Chiawana (10-4, 9-1) was led by Macey Morales with 15 points, while Alyssa Agundis added 11 points.

### Hermiston vs. Walla Walla

After dropping its past three games, Hermiston got back on the winning track last Tuesday night.

Jordan Thomas scored a game-high 18 points, and Jazlyn Romero added 11 as the Bulldogs cruised past Walla Walla 41-28 in Mid-Columbia Conference action at the Dawg House.

"We are right in the middle of the season and any win is

an accomplishment," Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez said. "I thought the mentality was there to finish the game. When they made a run, we handled it and got a basket when we need it."

Romero hit a pair of 3-pointers as the Bulldogs (5-7 overall, 3-5 MCC) took a 13-4 lead.

The Blue Devils (3-8, 3-5), who have lost six games in a row, slowed Hermiston down in the second quarter, allowing just seven points. The Blue Devils then took off on a 14-11 run in the third quarter, keyed by a five points by Monica Miller and four by Mia Huxoll.

"They were undersized and we struggled to get the ball to Jordan at times, and that hurt us," Rodriguez said.

Hermiston outscored Wa-Hi 10-5 in the fourth to seal the win.

The Bulldogs did struggle at the free-throw line, making just 6 of 16 attempts (38 percent).

Peyton Bergevin led the Blue Devils with 10 points.

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