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Hermiston rolls to big win over Southridge



Hermiston's Jazlyn Romero (22) muscles her way past Southridge's Peyton Santos during Saturday's game in Kennewick. Romero finished with a game-high 16 points.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

'Ugly win' puts Bulldogs in regional tournament

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Jazlyn Romero scored a game-high 16 points, and Hermiston secured a spot in the 3A regional tournament with a 54-23 Mid-Columbia Conference road victory Saturday over Southridge.

"It was ugly," Bulldogs coach Juan Rodriguez said. "We didn't play overwhelmingly well, but we got a win. We missed some easy baskets and had too many turnovers."

The Bulldogs (6-10 overall, 4-8 MCC) led 10-5 after the first quarter, then went on an 18-7 run in the second quarter for a 28-12 lead at the half.

Romero scored 11 of her points in the first half, while Jordan Thomas scored six of her 15 points before halftime.

A 12-2 run by the Bulldogs in the third extended their lead to 40-14.

The Suns scored nine points in the fourth quarter — all at the free throw line. Southridge went 13-for-24 from the line to score more than half of their points.

While the win was nice, Rodriguez said he told his team they would be keeping track of two stats Saturday

BOX SCORE

Hermiston	10	18	12	14	—54
Southridge	5	7	2	9	—23

HERMISTON — Romero 16, Thomas 15, Hernandez 8, Dowdy 2, Palzinski 2, Stefani 2, Byrd 2, Ray 5, Young 2.
SOUTHRIDGE — Ball 3, Brisbois 6, Connors 1, Mendez 5, Suito 1, Martin 2, Crum 1, Santos 4.

night — offensive rebounds and deflections.

"We had 17 offensive rebounds and seven deflections. When you have that many offensive rebounds, it gives you more possessions," Rodriguez said. "I'm glad they responded to that."

Freshman Mia Hernandez, who transferred from Sunnyside right before Christmas, added eight points, all in the middle quarters.

"Mia came out of her shell a little bit," Rodriguez said. "I know she can play. She can be a little timid. I'm pleased with her performance today."

The Suns (5-11, 1-11) got six points from Bailie Brisbois, and five from Abril Mendez.

Hermiston at Pasco

Hermiston got off to a slow start Jan. 15, and never was able to get any momentum as host Pasco rolled to a 67-52 Mid-Columbia Conference victory.

"We didn't play very well," said Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez, whose team shot 35 percent from the floor. "It was disappointing all the way around. We had a good practice yesterday, and

I thought we would be motivated to play hard. They hit some big shots that deflated us."

Hermiston led 4-2 early on with baskets by Jordan Thomas and Sydney Stefani, but Pasco went on a 14-7 run the last 3:42 of the quarter to take a 21-12 lead.

Pasco hit five 3-pointers in the first, with Aniyah Heavens hitting two. Heavens finished the game with a team-high 22 points.

Pasco stretched its lead to 14 points in the second quarter, but six consecutive points by Hermiston trimmed the deficit to eight — 28-20. Pasco led 32-22 at the half.

Hermiston got as close as 60-51 in the final quarter, but could not climb out of the hole.

"We could just never get stops, and we never got them to be uncomfortable," Rodriguez said. "They did a good job of creating on their own."

Hermiston playmaker Jazlyn Romero, who was held scoreless in the first half, scored nine points in the fourth quarter and finished with 15 points, eight rebounds and four assists.

"She struggled a bit tonight," Rodriguez said. "She and Jordan were out of synch, and when that happens, it's hard for us to score."

Kaylee Young added 15 points, including three 3-pointers, and five rebounds. Thomas chipped in 11 points and five rebounds.

Big plays lift Dawgs past Southridge in overtime

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Big-time players make clutch plays when their teams need them most.

Jordan Ramirez hit two free throws with 10.7 seconds left on the clock, and Adrian Mendez stole the ball with 4 seconds remaining to lead Hermiston to a 62-61 Mid-Columbia Conference road victory on Saturday over Southridge.

"The game was crazy," said Ramirez, who finished with 11 points. "Those (free throws) were must makes. That first one, I thought I air-balled it. The second one, I was like 'OK, this is easy, we are tied.'"

The win put the Bulldogs (12-4 overall) at 8-4 in MCC play, and third in the conference standings behind Richland (13-0) and Chiawana (9-3). They have clinched a trip to the 3A regional tournament.

"The guys never gave up," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "Sergio (Mendez) got a huge steal and basket, Jordan hits two free throws, and Adrian, who sat most of the second half, gets the biggest steal of the night. We will take a win on the road. Now, we are just battling for the No. 1 spot. We have to handle our games."

The Suns (3-14, 2-11) led 37-36 heading into the fourth quarter, and needed a 3-pointer by Donavyn Perry with 1:01 remaining in regulation to send the game into overtime with the score tied at 53-53.

Southridge jumped out to a 57-53 lead to open the

extra period, getting baskets by Kody Bruton and Tristan Smith.

Cesar Ortiz added a free throw for the Bulldogs, but Perry knocked down a pair from the line to extend the lead to 59-54 with 1:09 to play.

With 57 seconds left, Ortiz knocked down a 3-pointer to cut the deficit to 59-57.

After Perry missed two free throws — the only two he missed on the night — Ramirez added one free throw for the Bulldogs, and Madrigal stole the ball and converted the layup at the other end to give Hermiston a 60-59 lead with 23 seconds left.

Perry then made two free throws with 18 seconds remaining as the Suns went out front 61-60.

After Ramirez hit what would be the game-winning free throws, Mendez missed two after his steal with 2.9 seconds left on the clock.

The Suns attempted to inbound the ball, but the throw was too long, and the ball went to the Bulldogs.

"Southridge played tough tonight," Ramirez said.

The Suns led 15-11 after the first quarter, and 26-23 at the half. Cole Smith came off the bench in the second and scored all nine of his points in the quarter to keep the Bulldogs in the game.

The third quarter was a free throw contest, with the Suns hitting 9 of 12, and the Bulldogs 8 of 10. Southridge led 37-36 going into the fourth.

"I thought the first half we played good defense," Arstein said. "Offensively,

we didn't move the ball well against the matchup zone and we got into foul trouble. When we weren't in foul trouble and things were going well, we were in a groove."

Ortiz led the Bulldogs with 17 points, while Ryne Andreason added 11 — all in the second half.

Smith had 19 points to lead the Suns, while Perry added 18, with all but two points coming in the fourth quarter and overtime.

Hermiston at Pasco

It wasn't the prettiest win, but this late in the season, a win is a win in the Mid-Columbia Conference.

Cesar Ortiz poured in 21 points, and Ryne Andreason added 19 as Hermiston held off host Pasco 73-63 on Jan. 15.

"Our defense has to get better this last stretch of games," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "I'm pleased with the win, and I'm proud of the guys. I saw some good things offensively in the second half, but we just need to get better defensively."

Hermiston jumped out to a 10-0 lead to open the game, getting 3-pointers from Jordan Ramirez and Andrew James in the run, but Pasco came back to make it 16-13 with 22 seconds left in the quarters.

Andreason scored with one second remaining to stretch the lead to 18-13.

Both teams went through a scoring drought in the second, with Pasco posting a 9-8 edge to trail 26-22 at the half.

Ortiz came to life in the third, hitting three 3-point-



Hermiston's Jordan Ramirez dishes off to teammate Cole Smith during Saturday's game against Southridge in Kennewick.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

ers. Hermiston took a 40-29 lead with a 3 by James, but Pasco would not go away.

Four different players scored points as Pasco strung together nine consecutive points to pull within 40-38 with 3:18 left in the quarter.

A 3 by Ortiz gave Hermiston a 49-40 lead with 1:41 left, but Pasco went on a 6-2 run to end the quarter and cut the deficit to 51-46.

Andreason scored nine of his points in the fourth quarter, where Hermiston had leads of 61-53, 70-58 and

73-60 before Pasco's Xavier Perez drained a 3 for the final margin.

Ortiz added three assists and five rebounds to his total, while Ramirez added eight points, 10 rebounds and four assists, and James 11 points.

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