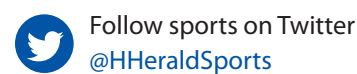


# HeraldSports



## DAWGS POST HUGE WINS

By ANNIE FOWLER  
STAFF WRITER

When there's something you want, you have to go out and get it.

The Hermiston boys did just that on Jan. 29, knocking off Kamiakin 67-64 in Mid-Columbia Conference action to keep pace with the Braves for the top seed to the regional tournament.

"Coming off two straight losses, it was senior night and we have been playing together for so many years," Ryne Andreason said of the urgency to win. "This is the biggest win this season."

The Bulldogs (13-6 overall) also had their hands full Tuesday with Kamiakin, who handed Hermiston a 67-51 loss the first time around.

Cole Smith, in his first start this season, scored 10 of his 13 points in the third quarter as the Bulldogs held a 50-47 lead going into the fourth.

"He can play," Arstein said of Smith. "He picked his spots. He was very crafty."

In the fourth, the Braves tied the score quickly at 50-50, and the teams were tied at 58-all with less than 2 minutes to play.

Jordan Ramirez hit a big 3-pointer with 1:39 to play to give the Bulldogs a 61-58 lead.

"That 3 was huge," said Ramirez, who finished with a career-high 19 points. "I told them I was feeling it. Andrew (James) drove it in, kicked it out, and bam. We had a good practice on Monday and the crowd got into it for us."

Andreason, who scored 15 points, hit a bucket with 40 seconds left for a 63-58 lead, only to see Messiah Jones convert a three-point play at the other end to make it 63-61.

Andreason made two free throws with 23 seconds remaining, and two more with 13 seconds left to put the game out of reach, 67-61.

"I was a little nervous, but I was confident," Andreason said of the free throws. "You have to block everything out — just you and the hoop."

Trey Arland drained a 3-pointer from the left baseline with 6 seconds left, but the Braves ran out of time.

"It was a game of runs and mismatches," said Arstein, whose team could not match the height of the Braves. "They are huge and



Hermiston's Cole Smith draws contact from Kamiakin's Kyson Rose in the Bulldogs' 67-64 win against the Braves on Jan. 29 in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

we are small. We knew they were going to try and pound it inside. We handled the game well. We pushed the tempo. Eight guys played hard together and never gave up on

plays. They stuck together."

The Braves got 11 points from 6-foot-8 Kyson Rose in the first half, and the 6-6 Jones chipped in 19 points on the night as Kami-

akin was able to get some easy baskets inside. Rose finished with 18 points.

Jones scored six of his points in the first quarter as the Braves led

20-15. Of Hermiston's 15 points, 10 belonged to James, who finished the game with 12.

Ramirez had 10 of his points in the second quarter as the teams were tied at 35-35 at the half.

Steven Westermeyer hit two threes in the second quarter for Kamiakin and finished with 14 points.

### Hermiston at Walla Walla

Jordan Ramirez made a layup in the waning seconds to lead Hermiston to a 66-64 Mid-Columbia Conference road win Friday over Walla Walla.

The victory gave the Bulldogs (14-6 overall, 10-6 MCC) the top seed to the 3A district playoffs, and will host the winner of Tuesday's Kennewick-North Central game at 7 p.m. Friday.

"We will take the No. 1 seed any day of the week," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said.

Ramirez scored eight of his career-high 26 points in the fourth quarter as the Bulldogs went on an 18-12 run to pull even with the Blue Devils, and eventually pull out the win.

"Tonight was Jordan's night," Arstein said. "The guys were able to make some big plays on the defensive end. It was a solid team effort."

Ryne Andreason hit a 3-pointer at 5:55 of the fourth quarter to tie the score at 54-54. The Bulldogs had a 64-62 lead with 22.3 seconds remaining, but Dylan Sullivan hit a pair of free throws with 12.5 seconds left to even things up.

Ramirez then converted the game-winning layup and was fouled, but he missed the free throw.

The Bulldogs trailed 12-3 early in the opening quarter, and 23-13 at the end. Hermiston cut into Walla Walla's lead in the second with a 23-16 run to trail 39-36 at the half.

"We didn't help ourselves out in the first quarter," Arstein said. "We made up for it by playing hard and attacking the rim."

Andreason had 10 of his 17 points in the second quarter, while Ramirez had nine.

### BOX SCORE

Kamiakin 20 15 12 17 — 64  
Hermiston 15 20 15 17 — 67  
KAMIKIN — Westermeyer 14, Jones 19, Nichols 4, Arland 9, Rose 18.  
HERMISTON — Andreason 15, Ortiz 3, James 12, Smith 13, Davis 2, Madrigal 2, Ramirez 19, Mendez 1.

## Kamiakin fends off feisty Bulldogs

By ANNIE FOWLER  
STAFF WRITER

The first time Hermiston played Kamiakin in Mid-Columbia Conference play, the Braves ran away with a 62-26 victory.

The Bulldogs were not going to let that happen again.

Jordan Thomas had 20 points, and Jazlyn Romero 11 as Hermiston hung tough with Kamiakin the entire game Tuesday before falling 47-41.

"They didn't play a great game, but that helped us a little," Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez said of Kamiakin. "A lot of things I wanted to see us improve on, we did. Where we struggled was turning the ball over and they got some shots."

The Braves, behind nine points from Alexa Hazel, took a 17-11 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The Bulldogs turned to

Thomas in the second. She scored eight of her game-high 20 points in the quarter as the Bulldogs went on a 12-4 run to enjoy a 23-21 lead at the half.

"We came out and executed our game plan," Rodriguez said. "We did a good job of establishing Jordan in the first half."

While the 6-foot-4 Thomas was a threat on offense, she also created problems for the Braves on defense.

It was Kamiakin with a 10-4 run in the third quarter as the Braves retook the lead 31-27 heading into the fourth.

The Braves led by 11 points with 4:32 to play in the game as Oumou Toure grabbed an offensive rebound and put the ball in the basket.

Hermiston climbed back into the game with five consecutive free throws to pull within 40-34, and a three-point play by Thomas had the

Bulldogs within 43-39 with 28 seconds to play.

Kamiakin made 4 of 6 free throws the final 26 seconds of game to hold on for the win.

"In the second half, they did not fold," Schumacher said of Hermiston. "They were always just a couple of possessions away. Hats off to them, they battled all night."

Hazel led the Braves with 17 points, while Symone Brown added 12 and Toure 11.

### Hermiston at Walla Walla

Hermiston held Walla Walla to three points in the second half — all free throws — to rally for a 50-32 victory Friday over the host Blue Devils.

"I think the plan for us was to play well going into the playoffs," Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez said. "They came out and played good defense in the second

half."

The Bulldogs (8-12 overall, 6-10 MCC) played at North Central Tuesday night in the first round of the District 8 playoffs.

Walla Walla took a 13-11 lead after the first quarter, and led 29-25 at the half. Mia Huxoll scored six of her team-high seven points in the first quarter.

Jordan Thomas scored 10 of her game-high 26 points in the second quarter for the Bulldogs, while Jayden Ray led the charge in the third with eight of her 11 points.

"Honestly, it was a quiet 26 points," Rodriguez said of the 6-foot-4 Thomas. "They would double her, but she found different ways to score. I was pleased with that."

### Box Score

Kamiakin 17 4 10 17 — 47  
Hermiston 11 12 4 14 — 41  
KAMIKIN — Brown 12, Reg.Clark 7, Ry. Clark 1, Hazel 17, Toure 11.  
HERMISTON — Ray 4, Byrd 2, Stefani 1, Hernandez 3, Romero 11, Thomas 20



Hermiston's Jayden Ray shoots the ball over Kamiakin's Rylia Clark in the Bulldogs' 47-41 loss to the Braves on Jan. 29 in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

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