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TEAM CHEMISTRY 101



Hermiston seniors Ryne Andreason, Adrian Mendez, Andrew James, Jordan Ramirez, Cole Smith and Cesar Ortiz have been playing basketball together on the same team for the past six years.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston boys basketball team likely has never heard of the late Don Meyer, but it is practicing what he preached.

The six seniors on the Hermiston roster have grown up playing basketball together — three of them since the second grade.

They are brothers in a sense. They argue, tease, disagree over the silliest things and drive their coach crazy, but that's what makes them who they are.

"They stick together when times are tough," Hermiston coach Casey Arstein said. "They know each other's role. They know who the shooters are, who the scorers are and they have good chemistry on and off the court. They drive me crazy at times, but

"TO BE A TEAM, YOU MUST BE A FAMILY."

— DON MEYER,
Northern State basketball coach

I love them all."

The group of Ryne Andreason, Andrew James, Cole Smith, Cesar Ortiz, Adrian Mendez and Jordan Ramirez have helped the Bulldogs (14-6) secure the No. 1 seed in the 3A portion of the MCC/GSL District 8 tournament. They will host Kennewick at 7 p.m. Friday.

"They have spent a lot of time in the game," Arstein said. "They have a high basketball IQ, and that time on the court helps when you play teams bigger than you. They

all bring something different to the game. That is a good thing. When times get tough, they know how to turn it on."

In the beginning

Andreason and James started playing basketball together through the Hermiston Parks and Rec Department in the first grade.

In the second grade, they joined an AAU team coached by current Hermiston athletic director Larry Usher. It's on that team they met Smith.

Fast forward to the sixth grade, that's when Mendez joined the team.

"I got in trouble in the sixth grade and had to see Mr. Usher," Mendez said. "He asked if I wanted to play. I had never played basketball before."

But he was tall (at the time), something the team had lacked from the onset.

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GIRLS HOOPS

North Central tops Hermiston in overtime

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston girls basketball team saw a five-point lead melt away in the fourth quarter, then fell short last Tuesday night in their 3A District 8 opener against North Central in Spokane.

Quincy McDeid hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer in overtime to lead the Indians to a 51-48 victory over the Bulldogs.

"It was really heartbreaking," Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez said. "We were up in the fourth quarter and didn't execute properly. They came down and hit two free throws with a second left to send it to overtime."

The Bulldogs (8-14) are off until Thursday, when they will play the loser of Wednesday's Mt. Spokane-Kennewick game.

Mt. Spokane, the GSL's No. 1 seed, had a first-round bye, while Kennewick beat visiting Shadle Park 90-29.

In overtime, the Indians (12-9) quickly went up by five, but the Bulldogs clawed their way back into the game and tied the score at 48-48 before McDeid hit the game-winning shot.

"It really just comes down to not making mistakes at the end of the game," Rodriguez said.

Hermiston trailed 20-15 at the half, but went on a 10-6 run in the third to pull within 26-25 entering the fourth quarter.

Jordan Thomas, the Bulldogs' 6-foot-4 post, finished with 14 points, but did not score in the first half. Jazlyn Romero chipped in 13 points, and Paige Palzinski came off the bench to score six.

McDeid led the Indians with 17 points, while Adria Blocker added 11.

Hermiston 5 10 10 13 10 — 48
North Central 5 15 6 12 13 — 51
HERMISTON — Ray 4, Bryd 2, Stefani 4, Palzinski 6, Dowdy 2, Hernandez 3, Romero 14, Thomas 14.
NORTH CENTRAL — Blocker 11, Crockett 8, Chastain 6, McDeid 17, Sayers 6.

BOYS HOOPS

Inclement weather strikes again

Third times a charm: Kennewick at Hermiston scheduled for today, 7 p.m.

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Blame Mother Nature or Old Man Winter.

Either way, the Hermiston-Kennewick boys 3A District 8 tournament basketball game has been moved once again.

The teams will play at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Hermiston High School.

The Bulldogs originally were scheduled to host Kennewick on Friday night, but poor weather conditions pushed the game to Tuesday.

"As it is now, there will be games played Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday to see who goes to Tacoma," Hermiston athletic director Larry Usher said. "We cancel any more games, we might have to petition the WIAA to play

two games a day."

The Bulldogs (14-6) earned the Mid-Columbia Conference's top seed to the tournament, and had a bye the opening round.

Kennewick (11-10) beat North Central 61-50 in the first round to stay in the winner's half of the bracket.

It will be the third meeting between the Bulldogs and Lions this season.

Hermiston won the first meeting 72-64, and the second 64-63.

Admission prices, set by the WIAA, are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students.

Usher said Hermiston Athletics will cover the admission cost for students who want to attend the game.

With Tuesday's games being pushed to Wednesday, the Hermiston girls game, which was scheduled for Wednesday, was moved to Thursday.

The Bulldogs will play at the loser of Wednesday's Kennewick-Mt. Spokane game.