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Suns too hot for Dawgs to handle

HERMISTON HERALD

Hermiston senior Jordan Ramirez said he's never faced a left-handed pitcher in high school baseball.

That goes for the rest of the Bulldogs, and it was quite apparent when they went to the plate April 9 against Southridge lefty Steven Englert.

Englert gave up just two hits and struck out eight as the Suns took the opener of the Mid-Columbia Conference doubleheader 14-0 in Hermiston.

"He is a quality pitcher," Hermiston coach Kevin Moore said. "One of the better quality ones we will see in this conference. With left-handers, the ball tends to tail away from the hitter. Not only that, he had command of three pitches and we couldn't make adjustments at the plate."

The Suns, who won the 3A state title last spring, made a clean sweep of things, taking the second game 12-2 to improve to 8-0 in MCC play and 10-0 overall.

"They have been around the program and they think it is their turn," Southridge coach Tim Sanders said of his team's solid play. "They have the confidence to be the next guy."

Hermiston (1-7 MCC) starter Seth Prewitt was able to hold the Suns to two runs on four hits through two innings, but midway through the third, when he had reached 58 pitches and allowed two more runs, his day was finished.

The Suns would add four more runs to their total in the inning to take an 8-0 lead.

Hermiston went through three pitchers in the opener, but none could shut down the Suns, who finished with 11 hits, and only had two batters strike out.

"Their first guy had a knuckleball, which was interesting," Sanders said. "They had trouble finding the zone and we were able to execute."

Leadoff hitter Aidan Morrison went 2-for-3 with a double and three RBIs for the Suns, while Wesley Hickman was 2-for-4 with a triple and two RBIs.

Englert faced the minimum of batters the first two innings, recording six strikeouts. He gave up a single to Rustin Edmiston in the third and another to Ethin Randolph in the fourth, but he kept the Bulldogs off bal-



Hermiston pitcher Rustin Edmiston throws from the mound in the Bulldogs' 14-0 loss to Southridge in the first game of a doubleheader April 9 in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

ance, and the Suns' defense never let a Hermiston runner get past second base.

"He has been in the zone

a lot this year, and he lets the defense work for him," Sanders said of Englert. "And, he had a couple of

quality at-bats."

In the second game, the Bulldogs were able to put the bat on the ball to the tune of

eight hits, but managed just two runs.

Southridge continued to pound the ball, getting seven

runs in the first inning, and five more in the second for a 12-0 lead.

Kody Bruton earned the win for the Suns, striking out two and walking one.

Nick Grade went 3-for-4 for Southridge—all doubles.

Jordan Ramirez started for Hermiston, but struggled with control. He lasted one-third of an inning, scattering five hits and allowing seven runs.

Spencer Juul led the Bulldogs at the plate, going 2-for-3 with a double. Edmiston also hit a double.

"This league is a little different," Moore said. "Not taking anything away from the Oregon teams, but Tri-City baseball has been pretty dominant for a quite some time. We have seen some pretty good pitchers, and that's what carries teams."

WALLA WALLA 3-4, HERMISTON 2-3 — The Bulldogs dropped two MCC game at Walla Walla on Saturday.

Hermiston dropped both games by just one run — 3-2 and 4-3.

The Blue Devils got a head start when Taylor Hamada singled and drove in a run in the bottom of the first inning. Hermiston knotted the score at 2-2 on an error in the top of the fourth, but Walla Walla ran in one more at the bottom of the fifth. They outlasted the Dawgs for the final two innings to stay on top.

Trevor Wagner led the Bulldogs' offense, going 1-for-3 with a run scored. Gavin Hunter scored Hermiston's second and final run of the game.

Seth Prewitt sat down just two Blue Devils batters, and surrendered three runs on seven hits over six innings of work.

Game two was off to a slow start as 4½ scoreless innings went by until Walla Walla scored three times in the bottom of the third. Hermiston would even the score at 3-3 in the top of the sixth when Wagner, Landon Jones, and Wyatt Noland all scored.

But it was Ryan Watilo who clinched the second win for the Blue Devils, who scored one final run in the bottom of the sixth.

Spencer Juul allowed three of Walla Walla's four runs, which were scored off eight hits. Juul also walked five Blue Devils. Landon Jones pitched an inning of relief, allowing two hits and one run

Hermiston Dawgs brave Kamiakin

By BRETT KANE
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston's softball team left their home field Friday with two more wins, thanks in part to Grace Studer.

While the Bulldogs cruised to an 11-5 win against the Kamiakin Braves in the first of two games, a fourth-inning stumble in the nightcap threatened a split. Studer's grand slam at the bottom of the seventh inning propelled the Dawgs to a last-minute 12-10 win to end the day.

"When she came up to that last at-bat, she had a plan," coach Kate Greenough said of Studer. "She centered her hit and extended the ball. Hitting-wise, this was her best performance so far this season."

And Studer wasn't the only Dawg to bring the firepower on Friday. Sydney Stefani led off with a home run that sparked a six-run first inning. Bailey Noland would knock away a two-run homer two at-bats later,

and Studer posted a two-RBI single. The Bulldogs would send 11 batters to the plate by the end of the inning.

"Sydney is just a leader," Greenough said. "She's a trend-setter. The kids try to play like she does. She holds herself to a high standard."

The Bulldogs ran in five more in the second inning, with Noland and Studer both collecting another RBI each.

It took two Kamiakin pitchers to contain the Bulldogs in the first two innings. Hannah Jablonski gave up 10 hits, 11 runs, eight errors, and three walks across 1½ innings on the mound. Emma Wood relieved the last 4½, but only managed four strikeouts.

The Braves scattered just three runs across the following two innings in response to Hermiston's first two offensive showings.

"Our core group is the same as it was last year, with a few new freshmen and sophomores," Stefani said. "We've struggled building our chemistry all season,

but today was an indicator of our progress. In that first game, we played with a lot of heart. We let it loose in the second game."

Stefani, Samantha Atilano and Ashley Cameron all posted a single and a run apiece to open game two, and Stefani saw fit to slug away another home run at the bottom of the second.

At the bottom of the third, Daisy Maddox hit the Bulldogs' fourth home run for the day, but their game started to falter in the fourth inning.

Despite their five-run deficit, the Braves scored eight runs in two innings, including seven in the top of the fourth, capped off by Jablonski's home run in the fifth. By the bottom of the seventh, Hermiston trailed 10-6.

"There was just a lack of focus," Stefani said of the Kamiakin rally. "There was some lackadaisical playing on our part."

The Dawgs loaded the bases twice for their final

at-bat. Maddox drove Cameron in on a single, and Studer's walk-off grand slam on a 1-1 count and no outs sealed the rally in dramatic fashion.

"I felt like I was struggling at the plate all day," Studer said. "When I got up there, I was just looking to score. It feels good to win this one for my team. Kamiakin came ready to fight. I'm glad we stuck it out."

Maddox led Hermiston in game two, batting 2 for 3 with two runs and four RBIs. Studer's grand slam helped her to a 1 for 4 performance at the plate with one run and four RBIs.

Wood allowed 10 runs off 16 hits, along with 10 errors and just one strikeout for the Braves.

The back-to-back wins pushed Hermiston (7-1, 5-1 MCC) to the top of the Mid-Columbia Conference standings. On Tuesday, they'll hit the road to challenge the No. 4 Kennewick Lions for more league action.



Hermiston's Janelle Almaguer winds up for a pitch Friday during the first game of two against Kamiakin.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney