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Noland earns conference MVP honor

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston infielder Bailee Noland earned Player of the Year honors for Mid-Columbia Conference slow pitch softball.

Bulldogs coach Kate Greenough, who led her team to a second-place finish at the 3A/2A state tournament and an 18-3 record, was named the MCC Coach of the Year.

Noland hit .562 on the season, including 41 hits, seven home runs and 58 RBIs as the Bulldogs won the MCC title with a 6-0 record.

"I am so proud of this group of kids, with how they played, how they acted, and how they represented the community of Hermiston," Greenough said.



Noland



Greenough

"They showed up and worked hard every single day, and their work ethic transferred onto the field. They fought hard and deserved their

great season."

Joining Noland on the first team were teammates Grace Studer (infield), Hailey South (infield),

Sam Atilano (outfield), Janelle Almaguer (outfield), Abby Findley (pitcher) and Macey Tovar (utility).

"Grace and Abby were also huge parts of the puzzle this year," Greenough said. "Abby winning a majority of the games in the circle, and Grace hitting six home runs. Janelle and Sam were consistent contributing factors on the field throughout the season with their leadership, skill and drive."

MID-COLUMBIA CONFERENCE
Player of the Year: Bailee Noland, sr., Hermiston
Coach of the Year: Kate Greenough, Hermiston
FIRST TEAM
Infield — Bailee Noland, sr., Hermiston; Grace Studer, jr., Hermiston; Hailey South, so., Hermiston; Cristina McHie, sr., Walla Walla; Kaisha White, sr., Chiawana.
Outfield — Sam Atilano, sr., Hermiston; Brianne Bunker, so., Chiawana; Janelle Almaguer, sr., Hermiston; Jessica Smith sr., Chiawana; Aceyona Gamino, jr., Pasco.
Pitcher — Abby Findley, jr., Hermiston.
Utility — Macey Tovar, fr., Hermiston.
SECOND TEAM
Infield — Kylie Kemp, so., Walla Walla; Aracely Carrillo, jr., Pasco; Katelyn Tuthill, sr., Chiawana; Destiny Moreno, so., Pasco; Marissa Valdez-Martinez, fr., Chiawana.
Outfield — Eliza Rodriguez, so., Hermiston; Maliyah Twitty, so., Chiawana; Lily Vela, so., Chiawana; Lanae Ruska, jr., Pasco.
Pitchers — Samantha Aguayo, sr., Chiawana; Jazmin Ojeda, so., Pasco.
Utility — Vivian Pimentel, fr., Pasco.



Staff photo by Brett Kane

Hermiston juniors Georgia Stevenson (left) and Abigail Sharon pose for a portrait after practice on Nov. 12. The two swimmers competed in the WIAA state finals last weekend in Federal Way, Wash.

Hermiston swimmers Stevenson, Sharon first to experience WIAA 3A meet

By BRETT KANE
STAFF WRITER

When Hermiston swimmer Georgia Stevenson first competed in the state meet as a freshman, she could sum up the experience in one word: "Epic."

Since then, it's been two years since the Bulldogs swim team sent an athlete to state. Stevenson was the only Hermiston girl to earn a trip to the meet.

"It was a great experience," Stevenson said of her 2017 showing. "I got to hang out with more experienced swimmers. They helped me become a better athlete."

This weekend, Stevenson got another chance to show her skills in the water at state.

She and fellow junior Abigail Sharon were the first two Oregon swimmers to compete in a Washington girls swimming state meet. Stevenson placed 22nd in the 100-yard backstroke prelims at 1:09.53, and Sharon placed 25th in the 100 butterfly prelims at 1:07.94 on Friday.

Neither of the swimmers were able to advance to the WIAA 3A girls state swimming finals on Saturday.

"State was quite the experience," Hermiston coach Sara Sargent said. "Although the girls didn't make it to finals, they had fun. Georgia and Abigail have their sights on state next year. I expect they'll condition during the off season and swim over the summer, coming back stronger and faster. Throughout the season, the goal is always to strive to be the best, and that's what we'll continue to do, year after year, increasing in quality and numbers."

Before the meet, they said they weren't concerned about the pressure.

"There's never been a lot of pressure," said Stevenson, 16. "I've always been focused on how I'm doing, especially at such a big meet like this."

Like Stevenson, Sharon, 16, shared the enthusiasm for testing the waters at a Washington state competition.

"I'm not nervous," she said. "It's something I've never done before. I'm excited."

Sharon earned her trip to state with her third-place finish in the 100-meter butterfly two weeks ago at the 3A districts meet in Kelso, Washington. Stevenson was Hermiston's only other state qualifier with her second-place finish in the 100

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VOLLEYBALL

Dawgs fall short against Lions

Kennewick wins District 8 loser-out match in 4 sets

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston pushed Kennewick to the brink, but could not get past the Lions in an MCC/GSL District 8 loser-out game Thursday night at the Lions Den.

Kennewick escaped with a 25-19, 26-24, 22-25, 25-13 victory over the Bulldogs, earning a loser-out match Saturday against Kamiakin for a berth to state.

"They were digging everything, serving tough and capitalizing on our errors," Kennewick coach Brandy Sonderland said of

the Bulldogs. "They gave us a fight, for sure."

After dropping the first two sets, Hermiston came out and took the lead for good in the third at 10-9.

The Bulldogs had set point at 24-18, but a couple of unforced errors extended play. Emma Combes sealed the win with a kill.

"They didn't quit," Hermiston coach Amy Dyck said of her team. "They have a lot of fight in them. Everyone who has seen us play, knows we don't quit. We have players like Halee (Stubbs), who sacrifices herself until it's over."

In the fourth set, the Lions got strong play at the net from 6-foot middle Grace Morby (eight kills, six

blocks) and 6-3 outside hitter Autumn Larson (13 kills, three blocks).

"I'm jealous of the size they have," Dyck said. "It's always fun to play Kennewick. They have great hitters and they don't let anything touch the ground. Tonight, it went their way."

Hermiston had the lead late in the second set at 23-22, but could not hold on. Hailey Dreier served the last two points of the set, with Morby putting down a kill for the win.

The Bulldogs (7-11) got 28 digs from Stubbs, and 18 assists, 13 digs and nine kills from Kendall Dowdy in the loss.

"(Stubbs) is fun to watch, and is a defensive threat,"

Sonderland said. "They came out and were ready to compete and gave us a run for our money."

Grace Vertrees added 14 kills and 10 digs for the Bulldogs, while Courtnee West had 19 assists. Combes had 10 kills and nine digs, and Kambree Baker five blocks and three kills.

For Kennewick (9-8), M'Kaylah Mangum led the way with 14 kills and 16 digs, while Dreier had 11 kills and two blocks. Maddie Gabers handed out 41 assists.

Sonderland said on Thursday that the Lions would have to clean up their game before Saturday, including their 16 service errors.

Goalie Gomez earns second-team honors

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston goalie Lanie Gomez earned Mid-Columbia Conference second-team honors for her play this season.

Gomez, a senior, had two shutouts and allowed an average of two goals per game.

Gomez, a three-year starter, was the lone Hermiston player to earn all-conference honors.

"She was an important player for our team," Hermiston coach Freddy Guizar said. "You can't replace someone who

played for one coach, then another, moved to a new league and only got better. She did a great job."

Hermiston went 2-12 in MCC play, and lost four one-goal games.

Guizar said Gomez has gotten interest from several NWAC schools, but she has not yet made a decision.

Chiawana senior midfielder Ruthie Edrington, who will play college soccer at Lee University (Tennessee), was named the MCC Player of the Year.

Walla Walla's Dana Evans was named Coach of the Year.



Gomez