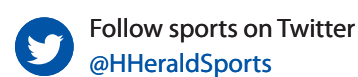


# HeraldSports



## DAWGS SURVIVE THRILLER

Hermiston rallies to defeat Bombers in MCC contest

By **BRETT KANE**  
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston girls know how to come together when it counts the most.

On Saturday, the Bulldogs trailed for two quarters before clinching a tie at the free-throw line at the end of the third. In the final eight minutes, they took advantage of two technical fouls and put together an eight-point run to escape the Richland Bombers 38-34 in Mid-Columbia Conference action at the Dawg House.

The Bulldogs had just clinched a last-second victory the previous night, which senior point guard Jazlyn Romero said gave them the confidence they needed to survive the Bombers on Saturday.

"Last night definitely helped us," she said. "It was also neck and neck. We have confidence in each other. We've built a relationship where we can come together and help each other in situations like this. It's difficult for us to get down on each other."

Richland strung together a 5-1 run to give themselves a 30-26 lead in the early minutes of the fourth quarter, but Hernandez came back with a trey, and two free throws after the Bombers were whistled for the first of two technical fouls.

Romero went to the line to tie the score again before the Bulldogs took off on their game-sealing, eight-point streak.

Romero added two more points at the line in the run, which came after Richland was hit its second technical foul.

"They're aggressive," Romero said of Richland. "They're very physical. They're crafty. We just have to finish those baskets. We have to jump on them early. We have to finish them all the way through."

By the end of the run, Hermiston led 38-32. Richland freshman guard Lexi Hay got a buzzer-beating layup, but the Dawgs had already gained too much distance.

"We like to keep things interesting, for sure," Hermiston coach Maloree Moss said. "I like that we're able to finish at the end. It's super exciting. We definitely have some youth on our team. It's the perfect time for us to keep going up. There are no steps back."

The Bulldogs trailed 23-22 midway through the third quarter following a tie-breaking free throw from Richland sophomore forward Danica Lerch. Hermiston's Mia Hernandez answered with a layup with 1:25 remaining for the Bulldogs' first lead of the quarter at 24-23.

Richland's Megan Holm scored a basket to briefly reclaim the lead, but Bulldogs sophomore Bailey Young tied the score at 25-25 with a free throw in the final eight seconds.

The Bulldogs held an early 4-2 lead in the first quarter before a six-point Bombers' streak kept things out of reach for the remainder of the half.

Young and sophomore point guard Sydney Seavert combined for four unanswered points to open quarter two, but Richland was quick to take over again with a six-point run in response that kept them ahead going into the half.

"Our shooting just was not working for us," Moss said, "and we had to lock down defensively a little more. That's what it came down to, ultimately."

Young led Hermiston (11-7, 8-6 MCC) with a career-high 14 points. Romero, Hernandez, and Dowdy followed with six points each.

#### BOX SCORE

HERMISTON — 5 13 7 13 — 38  
RICHLAND — 9 10 6 9 — 34  
HERMISTON — Young 14, Romero 6, Hernandez 6, Dowdy 6, Ray 4, Seavert 2  
RICHLAND — Smith 11, Clark 7, Fox 7, Holm 4, Lerch 3, Hay 2



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
**Hermiston's Mia Hernandez (21) works the ball downcourt as Lexi Hay (22), of Richland, defends during Saturday's game at the Dawg House.**



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
**Hermiston's Jayden Ray (10) plays defense during Saturday's game against the Richland Bombers at the Dawg House.**



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
**Hermiston's Katelyn Heideman (1) prepares to shoot as Kylee Fox (30), of Richland, reaches for the ball.**



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
**Hermiston's Katelyn Heideman comes off the bench during the exciting finish to Saturday's game against the Richland Bombers.**

## Hermiston beats Hanford on a last-second shot by Hernandez

By **ANNIE FOWLER**  
SPORTS EDITOR

Nothing like a little drama to start your weekend.

With just two seconds left on the clock, and Hermiston trailing Hanford 49-48, Kaylee Young went to the free-throw line for two.

Young missed the first shot, then the second, but Mia Hernandez grabbed the rebound and threw the ball toward the basket. The ball went through the rim as the buzzer sounded, giving the Bulldogs a 50-49 Mid-Columbia Conference victory Friday night over the host Falcons.

"I did not think she would miss that last one," Hernandez said of Young. "She's a good free-throw shooter. I grabbed the ball and threw it up. I didn't think it was good, but it was. It was great."

Hermiston coach Maloree Moss said Hernandez was

the right person to take that last shot.

"She was the perfect person to shoot that ball," Moss said. "She is fearless when it comes to that stuff."

With the win, the Bulldogs (10-7, 7-6 MCC) secured the MCC's No. 2 seed to the District 8 playoffs. Kennewick is No. 1, while Kamiakin is No. 3.

Hermiston trailed Hanford (4-14, 3-11 MCC) 48-42 with 1:48 left in the game.

Jazlyn Romero and Jayden Ray each sank a pair from the charity stripe to pull within 48-46, but Hanford's Iliana Moran added a free throw for a 49-46 game with 36 seconds remaining.

Romero, who was fouled hard by Moran, added two more free throws to pull the Bulldogs within 49-48 with 34 seconds left.

The game looked to be all but over when Hanford's Peyton Kaiser went to the

line with five seconds left on the clock.

Kaiser missed both shots, Young rebounded the ball and was fouled by Kaiser with two seconds left.

"That just shows hard work is rewarded," Moss said. "They never gave up when everything was against them. We battled through adversity and got rewarded."

The Falcons opened the game with a 9-1 run, but baskets by Romero and Kendall Dowdy made it 9-5 at the end of the first quarter.

Hermiston tied the score at 17-17 last in the second quarter on a pair of free throws by Hernandez, but a 3-pointer by Olivia Davis, and a basket by Moran gave Hanford a 22-17 lead at the half.

Moran scored the first basket of the third quarter, but the Falcons would not score again for more than five minutes as the Bulldogs went on a scoring spree.

Hermiston outscored Hanford 21-10 in the third to take a 38-32 lead, getting two 3s from Romero and one each from Katelyn Heideman and one from Ray.

The Bulldogs had a seemingly comfortable 38-26 lead with 1:34 to go in the quarter, but Moran and Alexis Fulton each drained 3s to cut the lead to six. Moran finished with a game-high 22 points.

Hermiston kept a slight lead over the Falcons in the fourth quarter until a basket by Abby Robinson gave Hanford the lead.

"I am so proud of them," Moss said of her team. "They didn't let the refs get in their head. They settled down and got it done."

Romero led the Bulldogs with 15 points and nine rebounds, while Ray added 12 points and six rebounds. Dowdy finished with a game-high 15 rebounds.

#### MCC boys basketball

**HANFORD 71, HERMISTON 62** — The Bulldogs had a five-point lead going into the fourth quarter, but a 22-8 run by the host Falcons in the fourth handed Hermiston its 13th consecutive loss.

"When we were up five, I thought we were going to win the game," Hermiston coach Drew Preuninger said. "We were down two or three in the fourth and I called a timeout. I could see in their faces we had already lost. Our lack of experience was the difference. They were making plays and we weren't."

The Falcons were up by 12 in the second quarter, but the Bulldogs rallied back to cut the deficit to 35-32 at the half.

"They (Hudson Shupe and Turner Clayton) hit a bunch of 3s," Preuninger said. "Our kids battled back. We played a pretty good

third quarter, and we were playing with a lot of confidence. They got a run on us in the fourth, and we melted from there. I was proud of them, they battled and played hard."

Trent Pitney led the Bulldogs (2-15, 1-12 MCC) with 20 points, while AJ Ramos-Barron added 14 and Ivan Rangel 10. Pitney scored all but four of his points in the first half.

Shupe led the Falcons with a game-high 24 points.

#### GIRLS BOX SCORE

Hermiston 5 12 21 12 — 50  
Hanford 9 13 10 17 — 49  
HERMISTON — Heideman 8, Young 4, Ray 12, Dowdy 2, Hernandez 9, Romero 15, Jay, Ramirez 5.  
HANFORD — Moran 22, E.Doward 4, Robinson 4, Davis 3, Kaiser 6, Burt 4, Fulton 6.

#### BOYS BOX SCORE

Hermiston 14 18 22 8 — 62  
Hanford 19 16 14 22 — 71  
HERMISTON — Pitney 20, Lin 2, Elliott 8, Ramos-Barron 14, Rangle 10, Moreno 3, Jay, Ramirez 5.  
HANFORD — Clayton 13, Walker 1, Nighswonger 18, Shupe 24, McDowell 9, Cramer 6.