Former Hermiston star sets strikeout record

R.J. Robles gets 17 strikeouts to set a school record for Missouri Western

By ANNIE FOWLER
SPORTS EDITOR

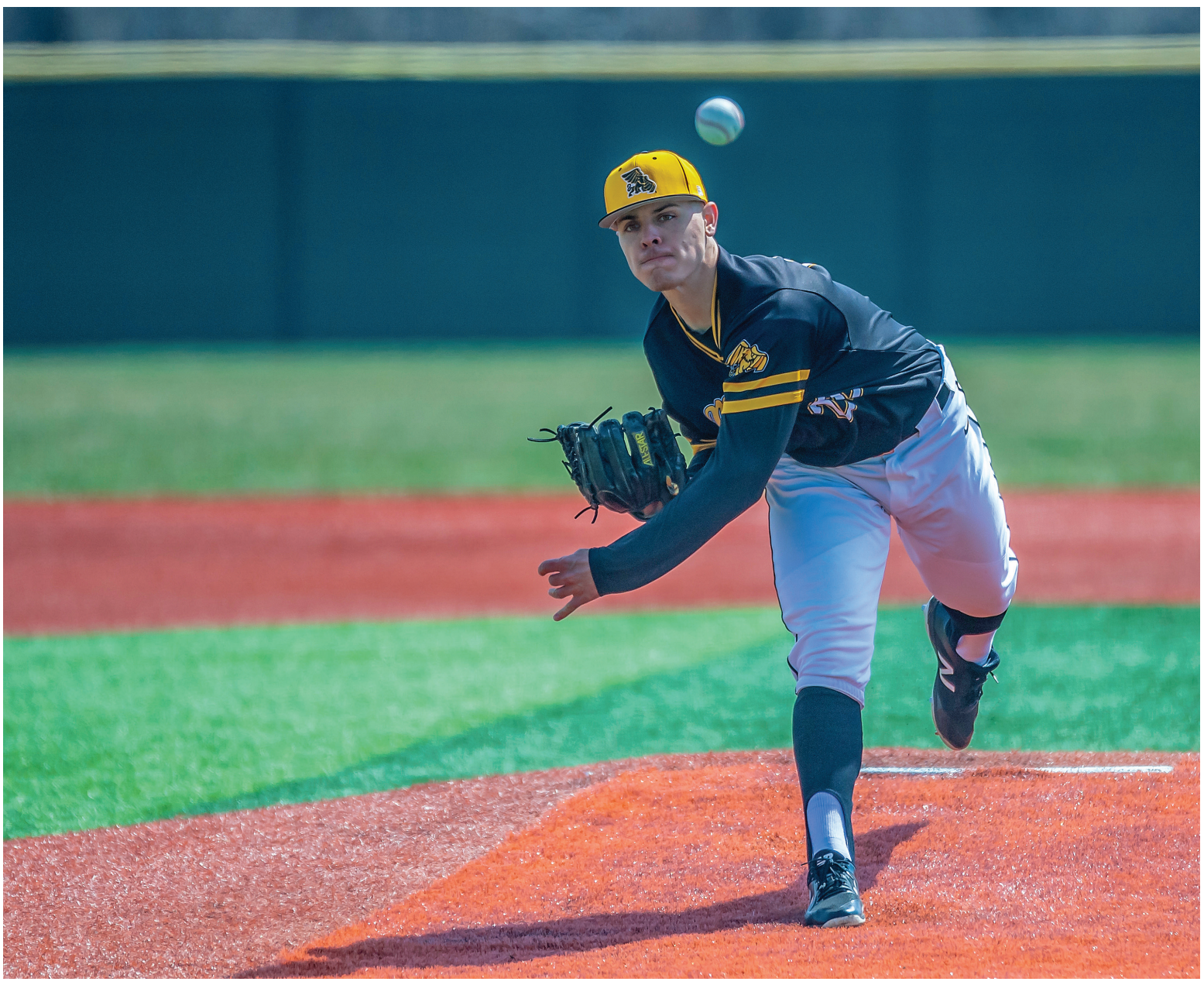

Photo courtesy of Missouri Western State University

R.J. Robles, a 2016 Hermiston graduate, set a single-game record for strikeouts with 17 for Missouri Western State University on Jan. 31, in a 5-3 win over Oklahoma Baptist.

R.J. Robles wasn't quite sure why the bullpen was so excited, but it turns out they were celebrating the fact their teammate had just set the Missouri Western State University school record for strikeouts in a single game.

"It was cool to hear," Robles said. "I wasn't really paying attention when I was pitching. I got my 15th, and the bullpen went crazy — they were screaming."

A 2016 graduate of Hermiston High School, Robles held the Missouri Western record of 14 strikeouts (Feb. 8, 2019), along with Anthony Castasneda (twice in 2019) and A.J. Huttenlocker (2009).

By the time Robles got through six innings against Oklahoma Baptist on Jan. 31, the lefthander had rung up 17 strikeouts as the Griffons held on for a 5-3 road win.

The 6-foot, 195-pound Robles scattered two hits, walked five and gave up one run on his way to history.

"It was really nice to be able to share that with the guys and coaches," Robles said. "We got back to the hotel and had some good food. We have to earn it."

Robles, who is majoring in computer technology with a minor in business, is a senior for the Griffons.

Last year, Robles appeared in 12 games, with seven starts. He had an 0-2 record with a 6.09 ERA. He gave up 32 hits, along with 37 walks and 44 strikeouts.

"The level here is pretty good," said Robles, who played two years at Treasure Valley Community College right out of high school. "When I first got to Missouri, it was hard to get used to the humidity and the bugs. I do like the west side (of the United States) more."

Great adventures

Robles, 22, grew up playing youth football, basketball and even wrestled before he got to high school. Once he put on the Hermiston purple and gold, it was baseball only.

His senior year at Hermiston, he was named the Columbia River Conference Pitcher of the Year. He had a 1.40 ERA with 40 strikeouts and 21 walks over 25 innings. He also earned first-team CRC honors as an outfielder.

On April 8, 2016, he threw a perfect game on the road against Parkrose — a 12-0 win that saw Robles strike out 13.

"I've told them I could hit and play in the outfield, but the college coaches just want me to focus on pitching," Robles said.

After his stint at TVCC, where he had a 3.06 ERA and 67 strikeouts in 64⅔ innings his sophomore year, Missouri Western found Robles on FieldLevel, an app that helps connect players and coaches.

Through the app, Robles had interest from Montana State Billings, Northwest Nazarene University, Bellevue University and Missouri Western.

The summer between TVCC and Missouri Western, Robles played for the Bend Elks of the West Coast League, a summer college wood bat league that competes against teams like the Walla Walla Sweets and Portland Pickles.

"I really liked that league," Robles said.

Last summer, baseball took Robles across the country to New York, where he played for the Mohawk Valley Diamond Dawgs in the Perfect Game Collegiate Baseball League.

He finished the summer with a 3-2 record with four saves and a 2.10 ERA. He struck out 22 in 21⅓ innings of work.

"It was in upstate New York (Little Falls)," he said. "It was an experience. At first, it was really tough. We were in a town the size of Irrigon, and I barely had cell service. I lived with a billet family, and I'm glad I did. It was an awesome experience."

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R.J. Robles, a 2016 Hermiston High School graduate, on setting a single-game college record for strikeouts with 17

Photo contributed by Cody Bettencourt

Julie Hull, center, is moving on to the regional contest of the Elks Hoop Shoot after scoring 18 of 25 during the Northeast District contest held Feb. 8 in Silverton. She is pictured with Nick Bettencourt, vice president, and Corey Sweeney, Hoop Shoot chairman, both of the Oregon State Elks Association Northeast District.

Hoop Shoot winner punches ticket to regional competition

HERMISTON HERALD

Julie Hull (representing The Dalles Elks Lodge #303) is the lone representative from the Elks Northeast District — which also includes Baker Lodge #338, Condon Lodge #1869, Enterprise Lodge #1829, Heppner Lodge #358, Hermiston Lodge #1845, Hood River Lodge #1507 and Milton-Freewater Lodge #2146 — to advance to the regional competition of the Elks Hoop Shoot Contest.

Competing in the girls 12-13 bracket, Hull shot 18 of 25 during the Elks State Hoop Shoot contest held Feb. 8 in Silverton. According to a written statement from Cody Bettencourt, in Hull's last year of eligibility, this will be her second time competing at the regional level. She's also participated four times each at the district and state levels.

The other age group participants from the Northeast District, their place at the Elks State Hoop Shoot and lodges represented: Boys 8-9: Cooper Stefani (seventh, Heppner); Girls 8-9: Ciciley Stefani (third, Heppner); Boys 10-11: Christian Sanchez-Lamas (fifth, Hermiston); Girls 10-11: Charlotte Hansell (fourth, Milton-Freewater); Boys 12-13: Jason Hull (fourth, The Dalles).

The regional contest will be held March 14 in Pasco. It includes first place free throw shooters from Alaska, Washington and Idaho, the other Elks Area 8 states. Regional winners will then complete at the national level in Chicago.

For more information about the Elks Hoop Shoot Contest, contact Bettencourt at nickcody97823@hotmail.com.

Wagner, Cadenas win district wrestling titles for Dawgs

Hermiston will send eight to regional tournament in Spokane

By ANNIE FOWLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Cadenas

Wagner

Hermiston had two district champions, qualified eight for regionals, and finished second in the team standings at the 3A District 8 wrestling tournament Saturday at Rogers High School.

Junior Trevor Wagner (160 pounds) and sophomore Sam Cadenas (220) won titles for the Bulldogs, who will compete at the 3A Region 4 Tournament on Saturday, back at Rogers High School.

The top four from district advance to regionals. The top four in each weight class from regionals will move on to the state tournament on Feb. 21-22 at the Tacoma Dome.

Mt. Spokane won the district team title with 397 points, while Hermiston was second with 285.5, and Southridge third with 273.

The Bulldogs shuffled a few of their middle and heavyweight wrestlers into different weight classes at district, with good results.

Wagner (28-7), who has wrestled 170 most of the season, dropped to 160, where he pinned all three of his opponents, including Southridge's Jacob Tobery in 18 seconds in the championship match.

Cadenas (32-7) stayed at his usual 220, posting two pins before earning an 11-4 decision over Tyler Dallas of Mt. Spokane in the title match.

Sophomore Jon Lee dropped from 220 to 195, where he placed second. He pinned his first opponent, posted a 5-3 decision over Jordan Searls of Rogers in the semifinals, then dropped a 2-0 decision to Kamiakin's Gilbert Marquez in the title bout.

Blake Betz, Hermiston's top guy at 195 all season, dropped to 182, where he placed third. He lost in the semis, then had to win two consolation matches to finish third. In his final match, he recorded a 6-4 win over Isaac Giddings of Mt. Spokane.

Hermiston will send two to regionals at 285 — Dustyn Coughlin and Jorge De La Torre, who finished third and fourth. Coughlin wrestled just one match over the weekend, a 47-second pin of Tibon Tibon of North Central to reach the third-place match. Coughlin picked up a bye and two forfeits.

At 132, Hunter Dyer made it to the semifinals before being sent to the consolation side of the bracket. In the third-place match, he beat Xavier Ruiz of Southridge 6-2.

Avant Ortiz picked up the final berth to regionals at 152. In his final match, he was pinned by Shawn Gegg of Southridge in 3:53.

Also placing for the Bulldogs, but missing out on regionals, were Aiden Favorite (6th, 106), Zayne Helfer (5th, 113), Adrian Delgado (5th, 120), Trevor Kirkpatrick (6th, 126), Jordan Franklin (5th, 138), Emmanuel Carrillo (5th, 145), Jaxson Gribskov (6th, 160) and Sean Stewart (5th, 220).

Girls district wrestling

Hermiston finished fourth in the team standings, and will send three to regionals from the District 7/8 sub-regional tournament Saturday at Liberty High School in Spangle, Washington.

Kennewick won the team title with 252 points, followed by Hanford (187), Pasco (182) and Hermiston (113). Thirty teams participated in the tournament.

At 135 pounds, Talia Borrego of Hermiston finished third. In her final match, she pinned Autumn Grove of Rogers in 1:23.

Jazmin Deike, who recently signed with Eastern Oregon University, finished third at 170. Deike finished the tournament with a 23-second pin of Hanford's Olivia Walton.

Macy Morgan also earned a trip to regionals, finishing third at 235. She pinned Chevy Kibbie of Newport in 2:07 in the third-place match.

Also placing for Hermiston were Marina Izaguirre Frasser (6th, 105) and Halle Thomas (6th, 140).

The regional tournament is Friday and Saturday in Othello, Wash.