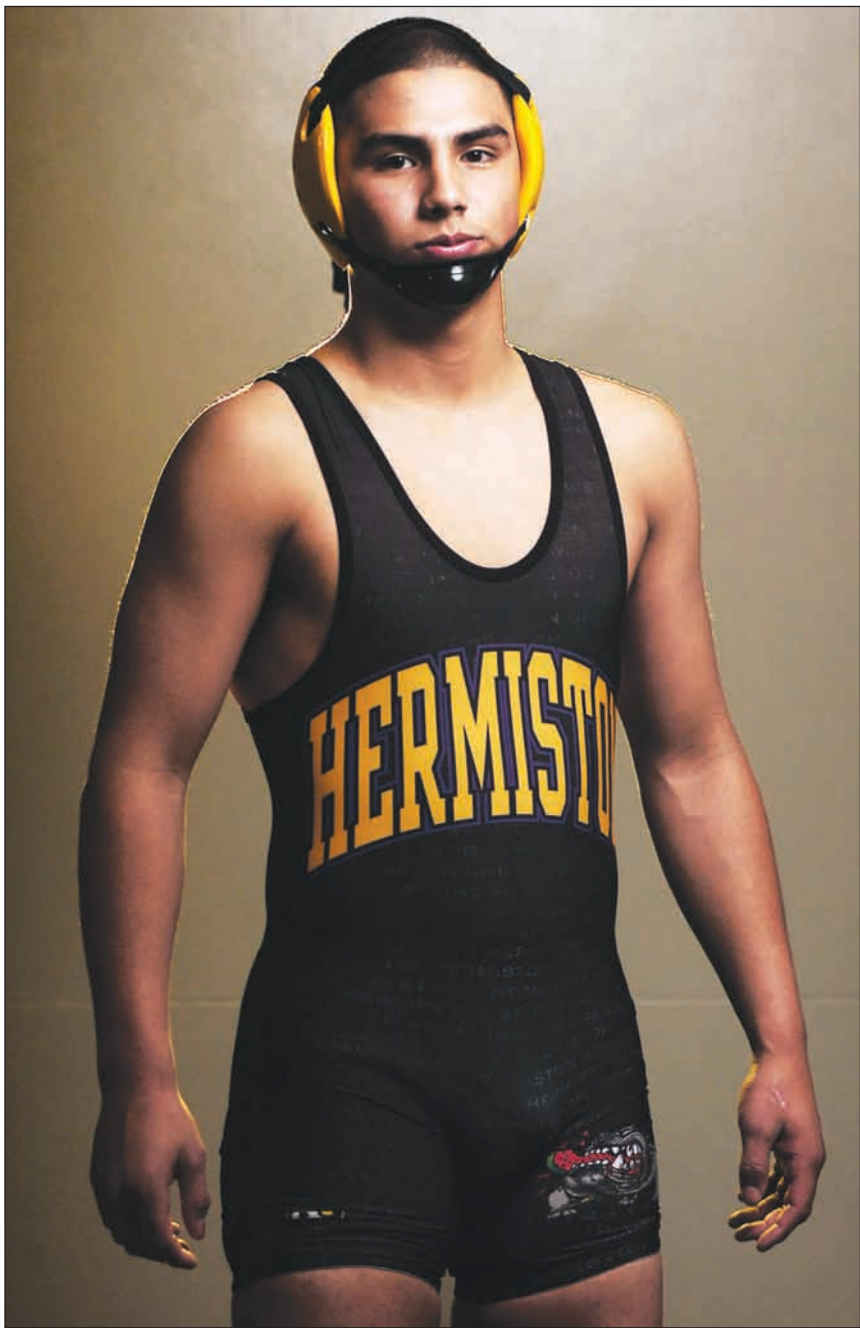


# Chasing a championship



Friday and Saturday, Liberty High School, Hillsboro  
24 OSAA programs, including Bulldogs and Bucks



## A bite to match his bark

Hermiston junior gets fierce in return from injury

**By AJ MAZZOLINI**  
*East Oregonian*

HERMISTON — Abraham Rodriguez is a 152-pound rabid dynamo of energy on the mat. The young man across from him — a wrestler by definition but an enemy by circumstances — must be taken out. Destroyed, even.

Rodriguez is fierce. He's focused. He's a breath away from just plain scary, said teammate Tyler Berger.

"He's the meanest wrestler I've ever been with. I mean he's a nice guy off the mat, but when you get in the room with him..." Berger said, finishing his thought not with words but with wide eyes and a slow shake of the head.

"He'll tear a guy's arm off and come off the mat laughing."

That may be hyperbole from Berger,

a sophomore one year behind Rodriguez in his Bulldog career, but the ferocity is all reality. It's real and it's been harnessed by Hermiston wrestling coach Curt Berger and put to good use.

Rodriguez brings the perfect combination of traits to the sport, coach Berger said, listing off competitiveness, natural athleticism and that raw mean streak on his fingers. The coach was forced to drop more than one "really" in accurately describing how mean Rodriguez can get.

"But that's good," he said. "When he puts a leg ride in, he's not afraid to hurt you. And that's the way you break a guy in a match mentally, emotionally."

It's hard to pinpoint where the vi-

See RODRIGUEZ/3B

## Hancock leaves his mark

Pendleton senior takes extra steps in final season

**By MATT ENTRUP**  
*East Oregonian*

PENDLETON — A wrestler since birth, things seemed to come easily to Trevor Hancock once he stepped inside the circle.

His natural ability and deep knowledge of the sport set him apart from others his age.

But instead of maximizing his potential, the Pendleton senior allowed himself to coast — settling for second rather than go the extra mile for first.

That is, until now.

Oddly enough it was a third-place finish that finally lit a fire under the second-generation Buckaroo wrestler.

At the 2010-11 OSAA state championships, Hancock beat Sherwood's Conner Clarke 5-4 for the bronze at 125

pounds. The No. 1-seeded Clarke had lost to state champion Tyler Berger of Hermiston 3-1 in overtime in the semifinals.

"He beat a kid he didn't think he could beat and that was kind of an 'aha' moment for him," said Pendleton coach Fred Phillips, who has worked with Hancock for 11 years.

"I felt like, 'I'm right there with the best, I've just got to train harder,'" said Hancock, who was 27-2 as a junior.

Inspired by his strong finish, Hancock said he began training a few months early this season. He also finally fixed his approach to weight management — eating healthy and working out rather than fasting to drop pounds.

His efforts have produced a leaner

See HANCOCK/3B

## Trail Blazers fall to Warriors, Curry's 32 points

Golden State wins another close game

**By ANTONIO GONZALEZ**  
*The Associated Press*

OAKLAND, Calif. — Mark Jackson looked up the scoreboard during a timeout late in the fourth quarter and couldn't be happier to find his team in another close game.

The final result had the rookie coach smiling even more.

Stephen Curry scored a season-high 32 points and added seven assists and six rebounds, and the Warriors extended their recent home dominance against Portland with a 101-93 victory Wednesday night to redeem a recent string of fourth-quarter collapses and last-second blunders.

"I think it's just what the doctor ordered," said Jackson,

whose Warriors are 6-11. "No sense in running away with a win. We need to learn how to win close games."

At least for a night, they finally did.

David Lee had 26 points and five rebounds, and Brandon Rush scored 14 points in relief to give Golden State its 12th win in the last 13 meetings at home against Portland. The Warriors also snapped a three-game losing streak and beat a Western Conference opponent for the first time this season after an 0-6 start.

"We weren't stressing about it," Curry said. "It wasn't like we were sitting around the last

See BLAZERS/2B



Portland Trail Blazers' Raymond Felton (5) looks for a way around Golden State Warriors' Andris Biedrins, right, and Stephen Curry, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday in Oakland, Calif.

### SPORTS COMMENT

## Hupp nabs third bulls title in PDX

PORTLAND — Jordon Hupp won his third career Professional Bull Rider's Built Ford Tough Series event title Sunday, turning in a four-round score of 343.25 points in Portland. The Cheyenne, Wyo., cowboy earned nearly \$39,000.

"Praise God. It worked out perfect for me," he said. "I



BUTCH THURMAN  
Rodeo

See RODEO/2B

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