



GRANT M. HALLER/PI

O'Dea High's Nakean Wickliff gets sandwiched by teammates celebrating one of his two touchdowns in O'Dea's 14-12 victory over Puyallup — extending the Irish's regular-season win streak to 47 games.

O'Dea keeps streak intact

By DAN HIESTAND
SPECIAL TO THE PI

Prior to last night's game between the O'Dea Fighting Irish and the Puyallup Vikings, O'Dea wide receiver coach Larry Jackson said the matchup featuring the two football powerhouses would be a good early season test.

A failing grade on the test would mean the end of a 46-game regular-season winning streak, while a passing grade would give the 3A school its second victory in two weeks against 4A schools, as well as early season confidence.

The Irish probably didn't get a high mark for delivery, but they scored an 'A' for effort, edging the Vikings 14-12 in front of a home-opener crowd at West Seattle Stadium.

"We were confident, and we really stepped it up," said O'Dea junior running back Ty Eriks, who ran for 135 yards on 20 carries. "We've had a heck of a couple of

games."

Last week, the Irish defeated Gig Harbor 20-16, when Eriks had 16 carries for 139 yards in that matchup.

"(The win against Puyallup) gives us a lot of confidence," added Eriks. "But we have to keep playing."

While O'Dea came away with the victory, Puyallup squandered plenty of chances.

The Vikings took the lead early on after a nine-play drive culminated in a 5-yard scoring run for senior running back Brandon Sutton at the 8:25 mark of the first quarter. Sutton finished the game with 19 carries for 135 yards. Unfortunately for Puyallup, senior kicker Kevin Hughes' extra point attempt was off, and the Vikings held a 6-0 lead.

O'Dea's first score came with just 30 seconds left in the first half, when senior running back Nakean Wickliff busted through his blocking to tie the game at 6-6. Nick Gonzalez converted the extra point to give the Irish their first lead at 7-6.

O'Dea opened up their advantage when Wickliff scored again, this time on a 51-yard burst down the sideline for 13-6 advantage. Wickliff finished the game with 22 carries and 137 yards. He also intercepted a ball in the end zone on defense.

The Vikings came back when senior quarterback Bobby Miller connected with senior tailback Jon Lang for a 42-yard touchéown strike with 2:51 remaining in the third quarter that cut the lead to 14-12. But the Viking's two-point conversion was snubbed, and O'Dea was able to keep Puyallup out of the end zone the rest of the way.

While he hoped for a win, Puyallup head coach Jeff Gardner said he was happy with the way his team performed, and hopes the rivalry between the two schools will continue to grow.

"I was really pleased with the way our kids played," Gardner said. "We just have to work on a few things. Hopefully we can keep this tradition going."

Bothell prevails in 2OT thriller

Redmond falls short in Kingco 4A tourney

By DAN HIESTAND
SPECIAL TO THE PI

If at first you don't succeed, try again.

Or in the case of the Bothell Cougars, again. And again.

It took two overtimes, but the Cougars eventually succeeded against the Redmond Mustangs, earning a hard-fought 57-54 win at Franklin High School last night in the Kingco 4A boys' basketball tournament.

The win not only avenged a hefty loss to Redmond earlier this season, it also helped to erase some of the memories of Bothell's last-second loss to Woodinville last season in the Cougars' first playoff game.

"It's real nice to be the winner in this type of situation," said Bothell guard Taylor Evans, who scored 11 points. "We expected to win this game. Our goal is to win the Kingco championship and to make it to state. We need to keep focused on that, and we took our first step tonight."

Said Cougar forward Joel Jorgensen, who also had 11 points, "We played good defense, and that was the key to our victory."

While defense was an integral component of the win, intangibles, such as hustle, also played a part.

An example of that hustle came with just under 16 seconds left in the final overtime, when Jorgensen found himself in a foot race with Redmond's Michael Brandt to track down a loose ball at halfcourt after a missed shot by the Mustangs.

Jorgensen was able to gain position, and quickly gathered the ball. In a burst of speed, the bulky forward took it the rest of the floor and was fouled hard by Brandt to earn a trip to the free-throw line.

His first free throw bounced in to give Bothell a 55-51 lead, and his second rattled through to the delight of the raucous Cougar fans.

"We had a feeling that we were quicker than they were, and that we could pressure them," said Evans, who helped to create several turnovers in the second half.

However, Redmond was able to respond with pressure of its own.

The resilient Mustangs came back from a 10-point halftime deficit, and recovered from a four-point difference with 32 seconds left in regulation to force overtime.

After inching their way back in the fourth quarter, forward Andy Sisco muscled in a missed shot to put Redmond in front 40-39 with 2:11

remaining regulation.

That was the Mustangs' first advantage since a 2-0 lead.

The Mustangs sent the game to overtime when guard Peter Lindquist sent a 3-pointer screaming through the net with 1:18 left to force a 43-43 tie.

"I've never been in a game like that where we have it, and then we'd give it back (the advantage), and then we'd get it back again," said Bothell coach Ron Bollinger. "It was one of those games."

Brandt led the Mustangs in scoring with 18 points, and Sisco added nine points.

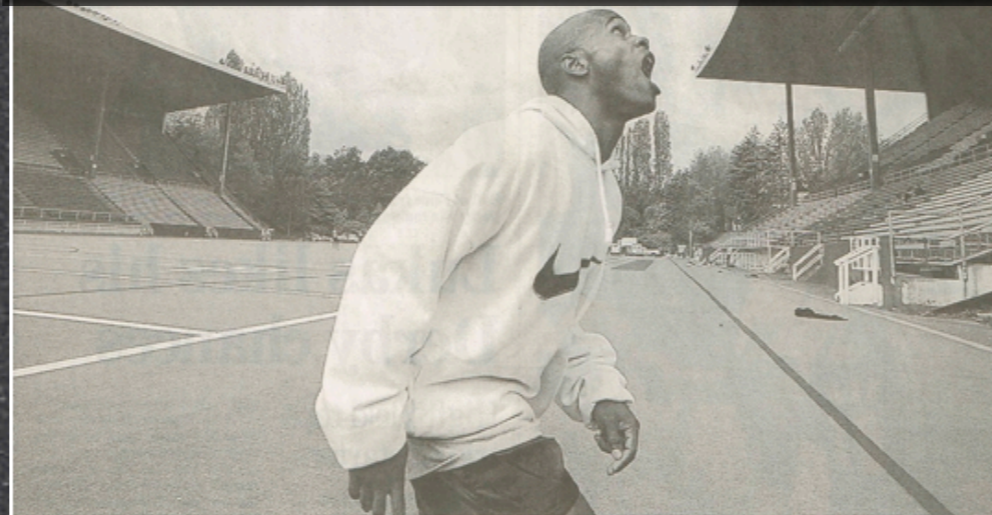
"The first half, we took control, but we knew that Redmond was going to come back because they are a quality team," said Bollinger.

FRANKLIN 62, EASTLAKE 46: In the nightcap on the Kingco tourney, the homestanding Quakerstook care of business against the Wolves.

Antjuan Davis led Franklin with 18 points, Alvin Snow added 15 points and Anthony Grant chipped in with 13 points.

Chase Griffin led Eastlake with 17 points in a losing effort.

On Friday, Franklin will stay home to play Bothell and Eastlake will meet Redmond in a loser-out contest.



Craig Tomlinson, one of several new Sounders players, keeps warm during practice at Seattle Memorial Stadium, once again the team's home field. DAN ENLONG / PI

Sounders boast a younger look

Home-and-home with Vancouver kicks off season

By DAN HIESTAND
SPECIAL TO THE PI

Perhaps the one sure thing Neil Megson knows about his Seattle Sounders soccer team is that he doesn't know what will happen when the Sounders start the A-League season tomorrow at 7 p.m. in British Columbia against the Vancouver 86ers.

After an off-season of extensive housekeeping — including the arrival of eight players who played with different clubs last season — Megson is both optimistic and realistic.

"Every year we have a few players coming in, so we stay pretty strong," said Megson, entering his fifth year as Sounders head coach. "But this year, we basically got a brand-new team. Our realistic goal is to go .500, and make the playoffs. And then with a real young team, try to do some damage in the playoffs."

Although many players are new, the team returns to a familiar and favorable site for its home matches — Seattle's Memorial Stadium, where the Sounders won A-League championships in 1995 and 1996. The Sounders played in Renton Memorial Stadium last year.

Seattle's home opener is Sunday at 5 p.m., also against the 86ers.

With the new faces, several familiar names are gone from last year as the team shifts focus toward developing younger players with, Megson said, the fringe benefit of winning.

Part of that new direction involved losing key players such as Ian Russell, Seattle's 1999 MVP and second leading scorer, drafted by the San Jose Earthquakes in the Major League Soccer draft; forward Mark Baena, 1998 A-League MVP and the Sounders' leading goal scorer in 1999, traded to San Diego; and defender Jason Anniccherio, also traded to San Diego.

To compensate, Seattle has brought in young players with solid backgrounds to join several veterans from a team that finished third in the Pacific Division and advanced to the Western Conference semifinals last season.

Among the newcomers is Federal Way native Darren Sawatzky, who brings plenty of MLS experience to the team.

Sawatzky, 26, is a 5-foot-10, 160-pound midfielder who graduated from Jefferson High School in 1991 and the University of Portland in 1995. His MLS experience includes the New England Revolution in 1996



SOUNDERS 2000

MAY		JUNE		JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER	
*6 at Vancouver	7:00	2 at Bay Area	7:30	1 Montreal	7:00	4 at San Diego	7:35	2 at Bay Area	7:30
7 Vancouver	5:00	4 at Orange Co.	5:00	8 Rochester	7:00	6 San Diego	5:00	*4 at Vancouver	7:00
19 at San Diego	7:35	6 at El Paso	7:35	15 Pro-40 Select	7:00	12 Tennessee	7:00		
21 at Bay Area	5:00	16 San Diego	7:00	21 at Vancouver	7:30	18 Orange County	7:00		
27 Bay Area	7:00	18 Vancouver	5:00	22 Vancouver	7:00	26 El Paso	7:00		
		21 at Minnesota	7:35	29 Bay Area	7:00				
		*23 at Rochester	7:35	30 at Vancouver	7:00				
		25 at Montreal	4:05						
		28 Bay Area	7:00						

All times local and p.m.
*Game broadcast on KING-TV/6.16

ROSTER					
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Hometown	1999 Team
3 Kieran Barton	Def	5-10	165	Snoqualmie	Sounders
23 Preston Burpo	GK	6-3	195	Chicago, IL	Sounders
8 Andrew Gregor	Mid	5-11	160	Beaverton, OR	Columbus (MLS)
17 Sean Henderson	Mid	5-10	160	Everett	Sounders
11 Greg Howes	Fwd	5-11	185	Tacoma	Oregon State
7 Bernie James	Def	6-1	215	Seattle	Sounders
2 Scott Jenkins	Def	6-2	170	Redmond	Sounders
24 Kei Kinoshita	Mid	5-10	160	Sekaiminato, Japan	Sounders
1 Bill May	GK	6-3	195	Berkeley, CA	Sounders
6 Dick McCormick	Mid	5-9	170	Seattle	Florida (NPSL)
19 Neil Megson	Def	6-1	195	Tacoma	Sounders
12 Viet Nguyen	Fwd	5-7	145	Tacoma	Sounders
22 Erik Storkson	Fwd	6-2	200	Renton	Sounders
13 Darren Sawatzky	Mid	5-10	160	Auburn	Colorado Rapids (MLS)
9 Craig Tomlinson	Fwd	5-9	160	Kingston, Jamaica	Wichita (NPSL)
20 Ali John Utush	Def	6-0	170	Roseville, CA	Bay Area (A)
*10 Rashid Utush	Mid	5-10	160	Roseville, CA	Hatert (Holland)
16 Craig Waibel	Def	6-1	200	Spokane	Sounders
5 Brian Wood	Mid	5-10	165	Temecula, CA	Minnesota (A)

and 1997, the Dallas Burn in 1998 and the Colorado Rapids in 1999. He also played for the U.S. Olympic Team in 1994.

"If you look at the names on the team and their resumes, it's a pretty experienced team," said Sawatzky, who came back to Seattle to be with friends and family. "Even the younger players have had a lot of experience. A team like this has a chance to do really well. It's just getting the chemistry right."

Erik Storkson, a forward who has been with the Sounders full time since 1997, said this group is as deep as any Seattle team he has played on.

"We can put anybody anywhere. We have a lot of depth," Storkson said. "I feel confident with our team going in. I (just) think it's going to take a little bit for the team chemistry and the right combinations before we can get it down."

The team also added Andrew Gregor, a midfielder who recently

played with the Columbus Crew (MLS); Craig Tomlinson, a speedy, high-scoring forward on loan from the Wichita Wings (NPSL); midfielder Brian Wood, who played last season with the A-League champion Minnesota Thunder; the Utush brothers, defender Ali John of the Bay Area Seals (A-League) and midfielder Rashid from Hatert, a professional club in Holland; forward Greg Howes out of Oregon State; and midfielder Kei Kinoshita, who returns to the Sounders after a year's absence.

Also joining the team is midfielder Dick McCormick, 31, a Seattle native who enters his fifth season for the Sounders, previously playing in 1994-96 and '98 seasons. McCormick, who also will be an assistant coach, played an important role in the Sounders' 1995 and 1996 titles.

Defensively, the side brings back the goalkeeping duo of Bill May and Preston Burpo, who gave the Sounders strong play in front of the net last

year. The Sounders' back line is solid with defenders Craig Waibel, Scott Jenkins, Kieran Barton and Bernie James, starting season No. 21 in professional soccer.

Up front, Seattle returns Sean Henderson, who will play his first full season for Seattle as a midfielder after joining the team from MLS. Speedster Viet Nguyen and Storkson shore up the forward slots.

Though the team is strong and deep at forward and midfield, defense is a concern, Megson said.

"We do have an abundance of forward-minded midfielders, but we don't have an abundance of defensive-minded midfielders," he said. "I don't think we are going to have a problem scoring goals, but I think we'll have more problems keeping the ball out of the back of our net than we have had in the past."

How the team initially responds to all these changes will be on display tomorrow night in Vancouver.