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Osprey

Continued

pulled the O's to 5-3. Richards lasted 4 1/3 innings. The first round pick from Oklahoma gave up two runs and six hits, while striking out six.

Missoula added another run in the sixth via an RBI single by Adonys Canelo, who went 3-for-4 at the plate. But 5-4 was as close as Missoula would get.

Bass hit a two-out RBI double off the newest Osprey, righty Jake Hale, to seal the victory. Hale was just sent down from Class A Yakima.

Orem reliever Jonathan Garrett earned the victory by pitching a perfect seventh and eighth inning before giving way to Carson Andrew. Andrew was equally flawless in the ninth in earning the save.

PIONEER LEAGUE STANDINGS

North Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Missoula (D-backs)	6	4	.600	—
G. Falls (White Sox)	5	5	.500	1
Billings (Reds)	3	5	.375	2
Helena (Brewers)	3	6	.333	2½

South Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Orem (Angels)	8	2	.800	—
Idaho Falls (Royals)	5	4	.556	2½
Ogden (Dodgers)	5	5	.500	3
Casper (Rockies)	3	7	.300	5

Thursday's Games
Ogden 10, Helena 1
Orem 6, Missoula 4
Great Falls 6, Casper 3, 10 innings
Idaho Falls 6, Billings 4

Friday's Games
■ Orem at Helena, 9:05 p.m.
■ Ogden at Missoula, 9:05 p.m.
■ Billings at Casper, 9:05 p.m.
■ Great Falls at Idaho Falls, 9:15 p.m.

Saturday's Games
Orem at Helena, 9:05 p.m.
Ogden at Missoula, 9:05 p.m.
Billings at Casper, 9:05 p.m.
Great Falls at Idaho Falls, 9:15 p.m.

Sunday's Games
Great Falls at Idaho Falls, 6 p.m.
Orem at Helena, 6:05 p.m.
Ogden at Missoula, 7 p.m.
Billings at Casper, 7:05 p.m.

"Tonight it was that one inning," Stone said. "We gave up a few hits, then we had two or three errors and

it kind of snowballed from there. We battled back, but we didn't have enough."

Both teams finished the evening with 11 hits. Missoula pitchers issued five free passes, whereas Orem's hurlers allowed no walks. Stone applauded the Owlz's pitching staff, a collection that includes the Anaheim Angels' top three draft picks from this year's draft.

"Their pitchers are really good, really good stuff," Stone said. "You can't make mistakes. You gotta make plays, capitalize on opportunities, and we weren't able to do that tonight."

The loss drops Missoula to 5-5 in the second half, 26-22 overall. They are still tied for first in the Northern Division with Great Falls.

Thursday's win might not be a blueprint to work

from for the rest of the season, but Kotchman said a win is a win, regardless of how it comes about.

"It wasn't a pretty win, but we will take it, they all count," Kotchman said.

OREM					MISSOULA				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Ramos 2b	3	1	0	0	Canelo ss	4	1	3	1
Cates rf	4	1	2	1	Narodowski ss	1	0	0	0
Ramirez c	4	2	2	1	Nick 2b	5	1	2	2
Baird 1b	5	0	2	1	Stone rf	4	0	2	0
Wing ss	5	0	2	0	Goldshmit 1b	3	0	1	1
Haerther 3b	5	0	0	0	Castillo dh	4	0	0	0
Bass lf	4	1	1	1	Broxton cf	4	0	1	0
Sumi dh	4	0	0	0	Gomez 3b	4	1	0	0
Witherspn cf	1	0	0	0	Hernberger c	3	0	0	0
					Santiago lf	4	1	2	0
					Hollinger c	1	0	0	0

Totals					Totals				
	3B	611	4	Totals	37	4114			
Orem	100	400	001	—	6				
Missoula	000	031	000	—	4				

Orem					Missoula				
	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO			
Richards	4.1	6	2	2	0	6			
Berg	1.2	5	2	2	0	1			
Garrett W, 2-0	2.0	0	0	0	0	1			
Andrew S, 1	1.0	0	0	0	0	1			

Gridders

Continued

Around town, Hellgate is the first of the three Class AA football teams to open camp on Friday. The Knights are set to begin practice at 7 a.m. and go until noon with a scheduled break in the middle for each position, said athletic director Lynn Farmer. Hellgate, which opted to go with just a single practice, has been holding mini-camps all summer to help jump start the familiarization process for first-year coach R.L. Boyles, who takes over a team that went winless last autumn.

Big Sky and Sentinel are both holding two-a-days to start their fall camps. The Spartans' first session goes from 7:30-9:30 a.m. and again from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Sentinel, which just missed the playoffs after a 5-5 campaign a year ago, will practice just once on Saturday from 7:30-11 a.m.

"We're looking forward to it," said

QUESTIONNAIRES REQUESTED

The Missoulian is seeking fall sports questionnaires from area high schools in western Montana. The sports staff sent out questionnaires for football, soccer and volleyball to the schools at the start of the week. We are asking that they be returned as soon as possible.

Questionnaires, schedules and rosters for all 2009 fall sports should be sent to sportsdesk@missoulian.com or faxed to (406) 523-5226, or they can be sent through the mail to the Missoulian sports department.

If you have any questions about the questionnaires or what it is we're seeking, please contact sports writer Nick Lockridge at (406) 523-5298 or nick.lockridge@lee.net.

head coach Pete Joseph, who begins his fifth season with the Spartans. "We should be pretty salty."

The Eagles' first session begins at

8 a.m. for the upperclassmen (sophomores through varsity) followed by an afternoon practice at 3 p.m., though the teams won't actually be on the field until more like 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., said veteran Big Sky coach Gary Ekegren, who's beginning his 20th season with the Eagles, who made the postseason for a second consecutive year in 2008.

Big Sky will hold weekend practices as well, and all three teams said they'd keep roughly the same practice schedule for the following week. The high schools begin full contact drills on Tuesday, with intrasquad scrimmages scheduled for later in the week.

Most freshmen teams begin practice on Monday, but Sentinel starts its workouts on Wednesday. Big Sky's frosh start up at 9 a.m. Monday, while Hellgate did not say a time.

"That's when they'll get their gear and do their paperwork," Ekegren said. "Heck, we might even get a practice in. It's the beginning of it all."

Mercer

Continued

the 24-7 loss to Richmond in the Football Championship Subdivision title game, but surgery was on the horizon.

"The knee was an ongoing thing, but it really happened at JMU," said the 235-pounder. "I still played in the championship, but that late in the season I was pretty beat up."

"I didn't do spring ball at all ... but I'm good to go, now. I'm looking forward to being real healthy this season."

That would be a boost for Montana's defensive line, which lost Mike Stadnyk (52 tackles, 7.5 sacks) to the CFL. Mercer, who had 16 tackles and a sack in 12 games last fall, is one of six ends competing for playing time.

"The group looks good," he said. "Jace (Palmer, who had 8.5 sacks last fall) is coming back, and that's good. Everybody's weights are up, we're a lot stronger, and we're looking for a lot

of guys to contribute."

Stadnyk is the latest pair of shoes to fill. Montana lost Buck

Buchanan Award winner Kroy Biermann to the NFL in 2008, and kept collapsing pass pockets. Before that the Griz had to replace the likes of Mike Murphy and Dustin Dlouhy, Cliche Pitcher and Tim Bush. The list goes on.

"That's kind of the story of the D-line; you've got to have guys ready to fill in spots," said Palmer.

Aside from Palmer and Mercer, the main candidates are sophomore Ryan Fetherston, junior college transfer Bobby Alt, redshirt freshman Josh Harris and junior Severin Campbell.

That Mercer was a walk-on who figured to try his hand at receiver is in itself remarkable.

"There are a couple notable guys who've walked on here and he's one of them," seventh-year coach Bobby Hauck said. "We didn't really know about him until he walked into our winter program in January a few years back."

He made an impression,

but it wasn't at his preferred position, wide receiver. He was switched to defense early.

"He didn't know what to think of that," said Hauck. "He'd never had a hand on the ground; he'd always been a skill guy. But ... we try to project where people will be, and it's worked out pretty well."

"At first, the move was hard," Mercer said. "I called my parents, and my dad was just silent on the phone. Now we call it 'The Dark Side.' I'd rather stay on the Dark Side than the receivers' side. Defense always wins the games."

It's won a few, including that last Griz-Cat game. A Montana goal-line stand started it; Mercer's TD ended it.

"Obviously he's made some plays in his career that are pretty remarkable," said Hauck. "The most notable probably the interception for a touchdown in the rivalry game."

Palmer had a good seat to watch it, since Mercer had just subbed for him. "I came out the play

right before," said Palmer. "I just remember looking up and seeing him play it (the screen) pretty well."

Not that Palmer wishes it had been him.

"I've never been the guy who would say, 'Oh that should've been me.' I was happy for him," he said. "It's a big man's dream, to get one in the end zone. It's something I haven't done, but for him to do that was pretty cool."

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PGA

Continued

targets and usually hit them. Only two of his birdie putts were inside 12 feet, on par 5s that he was able to reach in two. He made no bogeys, only the third time he has done that in the first round of a major.

Mostly, he had no complaints.

Not since Carnoustie two years ago has Woods managed to break 70 in the opening round of a major. Not since St.

Andrews four years ago has he had the lead to himself after the first round.

More telling was a scorecard without a blemish.

It was the only the third time that Woods has opened a major with a bogey-free round – the other two were at the U.S. Open and British Open in 2000, which he won by a combined 23 shots.

Harrington, who lost a three-shot lead to Woods last week at Firestone, stayed with him through the steamy, breezy morning until a bunker shot on the par-5 seventh was too strong and he had to settle for par.

"He doesn't look like he couldn't break 70 out there today," Harrington said. "Years ago, he had probably more flair in his game. His game is very solid now. Not that he hit all the shots, but I think he's put a little bit of conservatism on his game. It's nice, and he's very much in control of it."

The intensity from the final round at Firestone was missing. Both are experienced enough to know that Thursday at a major is all about position, and they chatted frequently during their five hours at Hazeltine.

Even so, Harrington took notice.

"There's a factor that Tiger is 5-under par and looks like he's playing well, and looks like he could move away," Harrington said. "And key will be, obviously is he's moving away, to make sure I'm moving with him. It was tough on Sunday with me getting a three-shot start. I don't want to give him a three-shot start."

Phil Mickelson struggled off the tee and with his short putts in his round of 74.

In the traditional group of major champions this year, Lucas Glover was the only one to break par with a 71. Masters champion Angel Cabrera had a 76, while British Open winner Stewart Cink had two double bogeys in his round of 73.

Woods and Harrington, the winners of the last three PGAs, played in the morning when the greens were relatively smooth and the wind had only just begun to swirl through these tree-lined fairways.

Equally impressive was a pair of other past PGA champions – Vijay Singh and David Toms – who were at 69 while playing in the afternoon, and should get the best conditions in the second round. Singh hit his best shot around the trees and into the sun, not seeing that it spun back an inch or two from the hole at No. 16.

Others who had a 69 from the morning batch were Quiros and Robert Allenby.

Woods missed only two fairways – he hit driver on six holes – and three greens. He only twice came close to making bogey, on the 18th and first holes, and saved par with 6-foot putts.

He looked nothing like the guy who was slamming clubs and looking for a lost ball at Turnberry last month in the British Open, when he missed the cut in a major for only the second time in his career. Woods had a chance to expand his lead with birdie putts of 12 and 15 feet on the last two holes that burned the lip.

Woods atop the leaderboard can be daunting going into Sunday, not so much after one round.

His record with at least a share of the lead through 18 holes is only 13-11 on the PGA Tour, including 4-2 in the majors. Even so, he has won the last four majors from this positions.

That was only a bonus.

"Something I've always believed in is just keep yourself around," Woods said. "You don't have to be eight ahead after the first round. Just got to keep plodding along. Major championship are set up so they're difficult. They beat you into making mistakes. And the whole idea is not to make many mistakes."



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Stampede

Continued

\$40,000 in added prize money up for grabs. Advance tickets range from \$10-\$16 for Friday and Saturday night performances at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 for Saturday's 2 p.m. matinee. There is also slack on Friday at 1 p.m. and it is free to the public. Advance sale tickets may be purchased at the fair office or online at: westernmontanafair.com.

"We strongly encourage the community to purchase their tickets online because it saves you the gate admission price and you can print the ticket at home," said Scot Meader, fair manager.

The team roping competition will feature three of the top five headers in the PRCA standings. The list

includes No. 2 Kelsey Parchman of Tennessee, No. 3 Brazile and No. 4 Travis Tryan of Billings. Brazile is also the all-around PRCA points leader with \$182,926 in prize money in 2009.

Equally impressive is the list of rough stock competitors scheduled to appear. Jesse Bail, of Camp Crook, S.D., ranks No. 8 in the PRCA bullriding standings. He'll be challenged by the likes of Missoula's Jenkins brothers, Dustin and Travis, on Saturday. Dustin brought home a college national championship for Montana in 2008.

"Virtually every performance in every event will have current or past world champions competing," said Stensrud, the fair's rodeo committee chairman. "I don't think we could ever say that before."

Joining Sears on the list of cowgirls slated to

compete in barrel racing is former NFR qualifier Rachael Myllymaki of Arlee. Both will appear Saturday afternoon.

Oregon's Bobby Mote, who ranks No. 2 in the PRCA standings in bareback riding, is scheduled to compete Saturday night. Fellow Oregonian Shawn Greenfield, who ranks No. 7 in the PRCA in steer wrestling, is also slated to appear Saturday night.

"Rodeo in Missoula, Montana, is alive and well," Mytty said, "and if we don't fill the seats with this kind of lineup I don't know what else to try."

Notes: Friday night is "Tough enough to wear pink" night. Fans are encouraged to wear pink to show their support of breast cancer awareness. Friday's preshow begins at 6:30 p.m.

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