



Herrera shoots 6-for-6 in FLC debut Tigers' early roar mutes Bobcats

By Joel Priest
Special to the Drum

With enthusiasm first brewed in a Bobcat jersey, then allowed to simmer during a year of practicing and adjusting to the college game, Ignacio High School grad Alex Herrera hit the NCAA hardwood running.

And hit every shot he took after running into the offenses set by Fort Lewis coach Bob Hofman.

In addition to snaring six rebounds and swatting three enemy shots, the 6-foot-9 Herrera (now a redshirt freshman) canned six attempts from the floor, totaling 12 points in helping his new team reach a total the Cats — still envied by those victimized — did frequently his senior season: a triple-digit total.

Dominating NAIA Division II program Northern New Mexico College (Española, N.M.) from buzzer to buzzer, FLC rolled to a 100-68 win on Wednesday, Oct. 26 inside Whalen Gymnasium, aided heavily by another ex-San Juan Basin Leaguer, Telluride's Mike Matthews, who hit five-of-seven and chipped in 14.

The Skyhawks outrebounded the Eagles 43-22, and shot 69 percent (40 of 58) overall in the game.

Having reached the NCAA Division II Tournament's Sweet 16 last season, FLC's 2011-12 opener comes against a Division I opponent many believed should have made the most famous "Big Dance" in sports — then proved it by making the NIT's Final Four — ending their 2010-11 schedule.

On Friday, Nov. 11, the Hawks battle the Buffaloes at Colorado's Coors Events/Conference Center in Boulder, with tipoff set for 8 p.m. Seeking his 400th collegiate win, Hofman was a CU assistant coach under Tom Apke from 1981-83, as well as a point guard



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Former Bobcat big man Alex Herrera launches into the lane against Wiggins during the 2010 Class 2A State Tournament in Pueblo. Herrera recently netted a dozen points in his college debut for Fort Lewis College in the NCAA Division II ranks.

from 1970-74 under CECC court namesake Russell "Sox" Walseth (who, ironically, was guiding the CU women to a 77-21 record from 1980-83).

FLC's home opener will come at the Nov. 18-19 George B. Boedecker Classic. The Skyhawks' first opponent will be Northeastern State (Tahlequah, Okla.) on Saturday, Nov. 19 at 7:30 p.m. Eastern New Mexico (Portales, N.M.) will have tipped the Classic off against the RiverHawks on Friday, Nov. 18 at 5:30; ENMU will then meet

NNMC prior to Fort Lewis' official Whalen unveiling.

Northeastern State will have also gauged itself against a NCAA Division I power — Oklahoma Sooners, Nov. 1 in Norman — before facing FLC. But those Hawks probably won't be intimidated; NSU's Larry Gipson is one of two head coaches with national titles (NJCAA Division I in 1989 with Miami, Okla.-based Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, NCAA D-II in 2003 with NSU) on different collegiate levels.

Tigers' early roar mutes Bobcats

Four-score gap ends grid season

By Joel Priest
Special to the Drum

Chastised by a Del Norte assistant for needless horseplay some 80 minutes before kickoff on Friday, Oct. 28, lineman Stone Tighe nearly made perfect amends.

And in Ignacio the Tigers made sure not to repeat whatever resulted from those now-infamous pre-game shenanigans, which preceded a 35-13 loss in Leadville to the non-league Panthers in Week 3.

Though denied an apparent fumble recovery — the officials ruled Ignacio quarterback Adison Jones' arm was in motion — late in the second quarter, Tighe and team were already sitting on a 20-point cushion, and DNHS bid goodbye to Tighe and seven more seniors with a 46-20 rout of IHS and its eleven.

The visitors' start couldn't have been more sizzling. Sophomore Josiah Simmons dropped Jones for a four-yard loss on the game's first offensive play, Ignacio senior Teagan Overturf lost two more on second down, and Jones threw incomplete to Isaac Peña on third.

Bobcat senior Alex Peña was summoned to punt, but DN freshman Steven Simpson barged through to swat the ball backwards, and junior Kollin Mellott made a short recovery and stumble into the end zone. Junior Colin Trujillo blew the point-after kick, but — like Tighe — made plenty amends over the next 36:20 of Week 9 clock time.

With 1:16 left in the first quarter Trujillo (13-162, 2 rush TD) capped a nine-play, 66-yard march with a 14-yard run (and successful PAT) on the Tigers' first full possession; Ignacio's second series reached the DN 17 before center Christian Knoll's snap shot past Jones and ended up a 17-yard loss. Two incomplete passes later, the Tigers took over on downs.

Overturf, who eventually ended his two-year Ignacio Football career with a two-game yardage total surpassed by few, or maybe none, in IHS history, had a 68-yard non-scoring run wiped out by penalty in the Bobcats' next drive, and Peña punted down to the DN 35 with 10:09 left before halftime.

Ignacio stopped Del Norte on downs at the Bobcat 40 after six plays, and Overturf scored three plays later on a 45-yard scamper with 7:51 left. Peña's PAT failed, and after DN's Brennan Pacheco took the kickoff back 25 yards to the Tiger 44, quarterback Preston Pacheco — a freshman, like



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio senior wide receiver Xavier Watts is received by family during halftime ceremonies at the Bobcats' season finale on Friday, Oct. 28. Watts was one of nearly a dozen Cats playing their last game at the high-school level as they faced the Del Norte Tigers at IHS Field.

Jones — flipped a short screen pass left to Trujillo, who stretched it into a 56-yard TD with 7:30 remaining.

Starting on their own 17 with 7:23 left after the kickoff — losing sophomore Adam Herrera for the bulk of the contest on the play — the Cats went three-and-out and Peña's punt netted 19 yards out to the 41. From there, Del Norte's first-year head coach Fuzzy Holmes wasted no time attacking Ignacio's jugular.

Preston Pacheco threw sideways, almost parallel to the line, to Brennan Pacheco. With multiple defenders closing in, Pacheco then fired downfield and found junior Austin McDonald for the score on first down. Trujillo tacked on the PAT, and with 5:35

left Del Norte had the lead they'd hold into halftime.

A slew of injuries pulled further down the locals' frowns, as seniors Colton Wyatt, Jeff Herrera, Peña, and Jones' top target Xavier Watts all were slowed.

Starting linemen Jesse Vigil and Shane Richmond, reserves Sonny Sanchez, Dusty Mangus and Leander Eckiwaudah, as well as sidelined Cuauhtemoc Torres, also played their final red-and-black downs.

Ignacio finished 4-5 overall in 2011, taking fourth in the Southern Peaks Conference at 2-3. Avenging 2010's blowout loss at Speiser Field, Del Norte also ended 4-5 and took third (3-2) in the SPC.

SJBL's best spike Volleycats season

By Joel Priest
Special to the Drum

Maybe the time to beat them passed earlier in the season.

Maybe the time of the matches came too early in the day.

Maybe the time for the Ignacio Volleycats just wasn't this time.

First facing a streaking Mancos Lady Jays squad, then challenging a top-end Telluride side wasn't a schedule designed for success gained sleepwalking, and Ignacio High School's 2011 season came to an end in straight sets at the Class 2A-District 3 Tournament on Saturday, Oct. 29 in Dolores.

Junior Michelle Simmons was held to 12 total kills, and senior Rylie Jefferson to 19 assists as the Cats fell to MHS 14-25, 17-25, 13-25. Senior setter Erica Blackburn booked an all-around effort with four kills, ten digs, and 25 assists, while classmate Aimee Johnson inked a 13-kill, 20-dig, 4-total block line.

Freshmen Courtney Colyer and Andie Paschal totaled nine more kills as MHS hit .198 all told in improving to 17-4 overall (including a sweep of Ridgway and four-set win over THS for the title).

Telluride, also advancing to regionals and packing a 20-2 mark, stopped Ignacio by counts of 25-15, 25-15, and 25-20 — indicating the Volleycats' performance was better, but not enough to spring an upset.

Emily Langley and Emy Ludwig, the Lady Miners' senior inside-outside duo, combined for 21 kills in the win, with Ludwig also spreading around 23 assists. Libero Sarah Wontroski totaled 18 digs.

Destinee Lucero, by compari-



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio's Angel Paul retracts a ball back into play against Nucla this season during Volleycat JV action. Ignacio's junior varsity, under new coach Thad Cano, finished 2011 with a 4-10 overall record, but a much-closer 4-7 mark versus the 2A/1A San Juan Basin League. Their campaign concluded with a four-set loss to Norwood and a three-setter to Dove Creek at a SJBL triangular on Saturday, Oct. 15 at DCHS.

son, led IHS with a total of seven digs in the losses.

Mancos and THS will represent the San Juan Basin League's 2A side at the Region C Tournament on Saturday, Nov. 5 at Palisade High School, where they will do battle with District 5 winners Meeker and runners-up Rangely. In the 1A ranks, Norwood (20-3) conquered

District 1 and advanced — along with runners-up Vail Christian of Edwards — to Region A, where they will test D-6 champs Mountain Valley (Saguache) and runners-up Sierra Grande (Blanca).

Ignacio ends with a 7-11 overall record, but went 7-6 against the SJBL during the regular season.

Football Frenzy!

Class 1A Southern Peaks Conference
Final standings

Team	OVERALL			SPC		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Us/Them
Monte Vista	7	2	.778	5	0	317/107
Sargent	5	4	.555	4	1	181/196
Del Norte	4	5	.444	3	2	214/273
IGNACIO	4	5	.444	2	3	188/256
Dolores	3	6	.333	1	4	138/252
Center	2	7	.222	0	5	129/250

Week 10 (1A State Tournament, 1st Round – Nov. 5) matchups:

#10 Resurrection Christian (Loveland) at #7 Monte Vista; #15 Sargent at #2 Hotchkiss; #14 Hayden at #3 Lutheran (Parker); #16 John Mall (Walsenburg) at #1 Burlington; #13 Peyton at #4 Lyons; #9 Crowley County (Ordway) at #8 Wray; #13 Byers at #5 Akron; #11 Wiggins at #6 Limon.

— compiled by Joel Priest

The banner bunch



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

In case you haven't noticed, there's a new sheet of red-and-white hanging from the Ignacio High School gymnasium's rafters. Many of the names have begun their post-IHS lives, but some — including guard Xavier Watts and forward Shane Richmond — can return for one final season of Bobcat Basketball. The first official day of practice is next Friday, 11/11/11!