

EOU men add a center

Observer staff

Eastern Oregon University men's basketball coach Carlito Labarda Jr. is continuing to go the transfer route to load the roster for the upcoming season. Labarda announced Thursday the signing of Treasure Valley Community College transfer Jarek Schetzle to the roster. Schetzle, a 7-foot center, gives EOU a viable rim protector. "Jarek is a legit big man that will give opposing teams match-up problems," Labarda said in an EOU press release. "His size, along with his footwork, shooting touch and low-post presence will be a huge part of our offensive success." The incoming junior, a native of Mountain Home, Idaho, averaged 11.6 points, 7.0 rebounds and 1.4 blocks per game for the Chukars, according to the press release. He's the fourth transfer to be inked by EOU this offseason, and the second player to make the move from TVCC.

Mariners win 6-3 over Blue Jays

By Eric Erickson  
The Associated Press

The Seattle Mariners had been waiting for a big day from Kyle Seager to spark their struggling offense, and they finally got it Sunday. Seager hit two home runs and Nelson Cruz added another as the Mariners powered their way to a 6-3 win over the Toronto Blue Jays. "We had the Seager game today," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "We've been waiting for that one and Kyle was huge there." The Mariners had been held to three or fewer runs in 18 of their last 23 games, including three straight losses to the Blue Jays to begin the series, but got 10 hits Sunday as they snapped a five-game losing streak. "The at-bats were better. We made better contact," Servais said. "We need it to continue. It's been a rough stretch offensively but hopefully today is a bright spot and we turn the corner here going forward."



Concordia Athletics photo

Concordia University point guard and former Union High School standout Keesha Sarman is shown during a game with Concordia last season. Despite a tough early going, Sarman has made a successful jump to the next level and is a key piece of an ever-improving Cavaliers' squad.

A successful leap to college

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

Fans in Union grew accustomed to watching Keesha Sarman tear it up on the playing surface during her high school career, whether in volleyball, basketball or softball. Basketball, at least from a statistical standpoint, was her best sport. Sarman was a four-time Wapiti League player or co-player of the year, a two-time Class 2A state player of the year, and posted exceptional numbers at state tournaments throughout her career. That included a run at state as a senior that saw her average 14.3 points, 14 rebounds, five assists and 4.7 steals per game to help Union place third. The last three years, she has been adjusting to life at the college level, playing for NCAA Division II school Concordia in Portland. While she isn't averaging double-doubles like she did during state her senior year, Sarman has consistently improved and has taken on a bigger role. The team has also improved each year she has played. In fact, as she enters her senior season, the Cavaliers are coming off their best campaign in nearly a decade and are looking to make a return to the postseason. Sarman has been right in the middle of the success, starting at point guard for Concordia every game the last three seasons. Making the adjustment to the college game is enough of a chore as it is. But what about starting as a freshman? "At first I was so excited (to start), and then you get out there and you're not (only) starting as a freshman but a point guard. You're a leader on the team," she said. "It was so stressful. My first year wasn't my best year." Sarman said looking back, she would have benefitted from a red-shirt year, adding, "I've never been so uncomfortable playing basketball." One of the challenges was adapting to the speed of the game and



Concordia Athletics photo

Sarman, who will be a senior this upcoming season averaged 7.7 points, 6.3 rebounds, 5.0 assists and 2.1 steals per game as a junior.

the height and length of opposing players, especially for Sarman, who at 5-feet-6 is among the shortest players on her team. She also said, as the primary ball-handler, she was (and still is) constantly facing pressure from top-level defenders in every game. That was a bit of a shock to Sarman. "I felt really confident about my ball handling, but when you get there and play against someone whose defense is better, that is something I didn't plan for," she said. There was also the added challenge of adjusting to a whole new group of teammates, whereas many of the players she'd suited up with in Union she had played with since middle school. But she said she started to feel more comfortable as her freshman year progressed. Learning how to play with her new teammates was a big part of that. "I think the thing that helped me the most is my recruiting class," Sarman said. "We're all close and played

quite a bit." By the end of the first year, she had posted 6.4 points, 4.6 rebounds, 3.2 assists and 1.5 steals, and she led the team in both steals and assists, per the Concordia website. The young team, though, which featured as many freshmen (six) as juniors and seniors, did struggle through a 6-22 campaign. But the team improved, and Sarman's game did as well. As a sophomore she posted 8.4 points, 5.4 rebounds, 3.0 assists and 1.6 steals per game. She also had a game early in the campaign where she put up 26 points. As a team, the Cavaliers upped their record to 12-16. Her junior season was her best yet. Her scoring dropped to 7.7 points per game, but her other numbers jumped to 6.3 rebounds, 5.0 assists and 2.1 steals per game. She also improved in taking care of the ball. After averaging 3.75 turnovers per game in both of her first two years, she cut that total to 2.54 per game. She was also named honorable mention in the Greater

Northwest Athletic Conference. What's more, the Cavaliers went 14-14 for their first season with a record of .500 or better since 2011. "I feel like I'm getting to be a better athlete as the years come," Sarman said. "I've been able to be strong in little things like steals and rebounds." A big piece of her individual improvement has been constant work on refining her skills — she's been able to focus on it essentially 24/7, not juggling two other sports like she did in high school. "When you have all year you do have time to say, 'Let's fix this,'" she said. "They can't break apart everything in high school (in three months)." Her shooting — especially from the 3-point line, which she knew needed to improve — is also better. She shot just .191 from beyond the arc as a freshman, but upped that to .373 last year. She has started looking for her offense. Early on as she was adapting to the game, she was primarily trying just to run the offense. "I'm more confident," she said. "It's (believing), 'You can make it,' where my freshman and even my sophomore years I wasn't think about shooting." She's not only thinking about scoring more now, but also about what could lie ahead for her and the Cavaliers in her final season on the basketball court. Even with the improvement to 14-14 last year, Concordia went just 8-12 in the GNAC and missed the conference playoffs. But Sarman believes the Cavaliers can get there, and possibly beyond. "Make it to GNAC and then to nationals — that's the only goal you can have," she said. It would be a solid payoff for years of work and would allow an extended senior season for Concordia fans to watch Sarman tear it up one more time. "It's not an unreachable goal," she said. "With the amount of talent on our team, we should make it."

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