



EOU's Hailee Ackerman, left, puts down one of her seven kills in Tuesday's home opener against Whitman.

**VOLLEYBALL**

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in — with four kills and three blocks. "It's a little hard to hit around her when she's there on her block. We just need to work on some timing, and the middles need to work on getting close to her, because if they are close to her, then it's a big block," McLean-Morehead said. EOU added a 7-1 run later in the set, capped by a kill from Bunn, to take a 20-7 lead and coast to the win of the second set. While the coach said the block is an area where EOU still needs to develop, its potential — in conjunction with the team's defense and scrappiness — was shown in particular at one point in the third set. Eastern and Whitman locked up in a lengthy rally midway through the set before Taylor and Madison Pilon combined for a block and a 14-6 lead — part of an 8-0 EOU

run and a stretch where the Mountaineers scored three points in a row off its block. EOU's defense, by the way, recorded 49 digs, led by Holli Mullins with 11 and Kiley McMurtrey with seven. "Our serve-receive and floor defense are solid," McLean-Morehead said. Sarah Carpenter had 15 assists to lead EOU for the fourth time this season. She credited the coach with knowing how to tinker with the offensive rotations. "Kaki does a good job of putting the right setters with the right hitters," she said. The senior added that she and the other setters, Pilon and Abby Smith, "are connecting way better with our middles, and the other team struggles when our middles are getting the ball down." Eastern (4-0 overall) returns to the road Friday and Saturday at the Big Sky Invitational in Butte, Montana. It opens play at the Invite against Vanguard, California.

**SOCCER**

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dangerous in the attack." Where EOU needs to regroup the most is on defense, which was impacted by the graduation of defender Rosalie Salisbury and midfielders Yasmin Mookerdum and Mariana Madrigal. The defense allowed only eight goals all season a year ago, and was ranked in the top 10 at the NAIA level. Among the returners on the back line, though, are starters Josee Bassett and Chelsey Nicol. Those two will mix with both newcomers and returners who saw limited action last year, but could be just as strong on the defensive end. "Obviously we have a few more moving parts, so it's about getting on the same page and (getting) the style of play (down)," Plocher said. Returner Danelle Davidial, freshman Yahaira Chavarria-Mondragon and transfers Emily Bliven and Danielle Nicotera are just a few of the players who could fill a major role on the defensive back line.

The defense will be anchored in the back by goalkeeper Cydni Cottrell, who had eight shutouts last season. "She did great (and) our back line definitely helped her out. It'll be potentially a

bit more on her shoulders, but she should be able to handle that," Plocher said. The junior goalkeeper said she believes EOU is more than capable of matching its lofty goals, but like both Boyer and Plocher said, she added the team can't focus on the outside noise.

"We obviously want to come in first again in the conference, but we also want to be able to make it to (the final site in) Alabama, not just the first round of nationals," she said. "I think we can do that just by sticking together and playing how we normally can play."

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**KEY MATCHES**

Today: Midland, Nebraska (season opener) at Prescott, Arizona — first of a seven-match road trip to open season

Sept 14: Eastern Oregon at Providence, Montana (CCC opener) at Great Falls, Montana, 2:30 p.m.

Sept. 21: Southern Oregon at Eastern Oregon (home opener, first official match on new Community Stadium turf), 7 p.m.

Sept. 30: Rocky Mountain at EOU, Community Stadium, 11 a.m.

Oct. 19: Corban (CCC preseason runner-up) at EOU, Community Stadium, 6:30 p.m.

Source: eousports.com

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