

Third quarter dooms EOU football again, this time at Tech

Observer staff

For the second weekend in a row, a rough third quarter proved to be the undoing of the Eastern Oregon Mountaineers football team. The Mountaineers saw a 14-0 halftime lead vanish, committed four turnovers and lost starting quarterback Kai Quinn to a leg injury in the third and ultimately fell to the Montana Tech Orediggers, 24-17, Saturday night in Frontier Conference play in Butte, Montana. A stout defensive effort in the first half helped set up both of EOU's touchdowns and locked down Montana Tech's offense. A fumble recovery by Chris Kindle at the Montana Tech 10-yard line set up a Victor Dias 10-yard scoring run for a 7-0 first-quarter lead, and a second fumble recovery by EOU — this time by Garret DeVos — led to another short field and a six-yard touchdown run by Quinn for a 14-0 lead late in the first quarter. The defense forced two more first-half turnovers — both interceptions by Zack Jacobs — and held Tech to just 90 first-half yards. Three Mountaineers — Sage DeLong, Isaiah Cranford and Chase Van Wyck — also sacked Montana Tech quarterback Tanner Kump in the

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La Grande's Blaine Shaw pulls in a catch over the top of The Dalles' Abraham Garibay during the fourth quarter of Friday's game. Shaw scored on the play as the Tigers improved to 1-1 with a 48-20 win.

Ronald Bond/The Observer

Tigers get on track

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The La Grande football team looked much improved after what Tigers' Head Coach Rich McIlmoil called a "rough" opener a week ago at Pendleton.

The La Grande defense forced seven turnovers — including grabbing five interceptions — and Blaine Shaw turned in a career night with 191 receiving yards and five total touchdowns as the Tigers got into the win column for the first time in 2018, pulling away late for a 48-20 win over The Dalles Friday night at Community Stadium.

McIlmoil said La Grande learned a lot from the loss at Pendleton a week ago — from the top of the coaching staff all the way down — and was able to clean up mistakes it made against the Buckaroos.

"Everyone's making improvements," the first-year head coach said. "We just need to work on some discipline things and understand a few defensive schemes a little bit better, (and) we'll be on the right road every week. If we can keep understanding what we're seeing, how to block it, how to run it, and how to read the defense a little bit we'll be a lot better."

Quarterback Parker Robinson hit Shaw for four touchdowns, including on a roll out and deep ball on the Tigers' third play of the game that turned into a 70-yard scoring strike for an early 7-0 lead.

"That was an audible he hit me up with. I ran it, he tossed it up to me and I caught it," Shaw said of the call on the first TD.

The two also connected on three more scoring strikes of two, 38 and 44 yards.



La Grande's Parker Robinson celebrates after connecting with Blaine Shaw on a touchdown during Friday's win.

Ronald Bond/The Observer

But the last catch was by far the most impressive. One play after Isaac Zamora snagged his second interception of the game, Shaw jumped over a defender, pulled the ball in around the 15-yard line, then scrambled the rest of the way for a 44-yard touchdown and a 40-12 lead for the Tigers with just 8:05 to play in the game.

"I still don't know how I caught that," he said. "(It was) a little bit under-thrown, so I went back for it, reached around, caught it with my bad thumb."

McIlmoil said Shaw's play was indicative of what he expects to see from him this fall.

"From (the first day) that Blaine showed up in the summer, he's been working really hard. I knew right away that Blaine was going to be special this season," McIlmoil said. "He's going to be one of our main go-to guys. I told him I expect him to be one of our leaders."

While Shaw was making plays on the offensive side, the secondary of La Grande went bonkers collecting interceptions in the second half. The Tigers picked off The Dalles quarterback Gabe Helseth four times in a span of about seven minutes, converting three of those turnovers to touchdowns to help

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La Grande soccer sweeps Tillamook

Observer staff

James Thurman recorded a hat trick, and the La Grande Tigers boys soccer team pulled away late for a 5-2 win over Tillamook Saturday in The Dalles.

"Tillamook was the strongest team we've faced so far," La Grande Head Coach Wade Wright said. "They were good. They were skilled."

Thurman scored 10 minutes into the game, but the Tigers went into the half tied

at 1-1. They retook the lead in the 49th minute on a goal from Callum Ebel, and Adam Endress scored on a penalty kick in the 70th minute to make it 3-1.

Thurman added two more goals in the closing minutes to push the advantage to four.

"He's been doing pretty well this season, but Saturday he had kind of a breakout game," Wright said.

Christian Waugaman had three saves for the Tigers (2-1 overall), who travel to Baker

Saturday to begin Greater Oregon League play.

LHS GIRLS EARN SHUTOUT

The La Grande Tigers girls soccer team scored twice in the second half to break open a close game and came away with a 3-0 win over Tillamook Saturday in a game played in The Dalles.

Alaina Carson scored the only goal in the first half off an assist from Lexee Gomes for a 1-0 lead at the break. The duo connected again in the second half — this time

a Gomes goal and a Carson assist — for a 2-0 lead, and Audrey Garlitz also scored for La Grande.

"The wind was a big factor. (We were) trying to play on the ground but the wind would get ahold of it and blow (the ball) away from us," Head Coach Kristen Rice said. "In the second half we possessed much better."

Faith Akers added three saves for La Grande (3-0 overall), which travels to Riverside Tuesday.

Young Mounties come in sixth at Twin Falls

Observer staff

With three freshmen leading the way, the Eastern Oregon Mountaineers women's cross country team opened the 2018 season by placing sixth at the College of Southern Idaho Classic Friday in Twin Falls.

Katie Jo Gebhardt was the top runner for EOU, finishing in 27th place with an overall time of 21:05.1. Two other freshmen cracked the top 40 and finished second and third for Eastern — Michelle Herbes, who was 34th in a time of 21:50.4, and Molly Gulden, who came in 37th in a time of

22:21.0. Sophomore Megan Boals also finished inside the top 40, placing 39th in a time of 22:43.3.

Freshman Calista Van Delden rounded out the top five for EOU with a time of 23:10.9.

Eastern scored 166 points as a team for the sixth-place finish. National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I schools Utah (28) and Weber State (38) finished first and second, respectively, while Cascade Collegiate Conference rival College of Idaho (99) was third.

Eastern hosts the EOU Invitational Sept. 21.

Eastern volleyball earns road sweeps

Observer staff

The No. 21 Eastern Oregon Mountaineers volleyball team earned two road sweeps in Cascade Collegiate Conference play over the weekend, topping the Multnomah Lions in straight sets Friday and following with a three-set win over the Warner Pacific Knights Saturday.

EOU 3, MULTNOMAH 0

The Mountaineers took advantage of an error-prone Multnomah squad to earn an easy win, 25-14, 25-12, 25-15.

No Eastern players reached double-digits in kills, with Hailee Ackerman's seven and Megan Bunn's five leading the way.

But that was due largely to the Lions committing 31 attack errors and strong play at the net by EOU, which recorded 13 blocks. Allyson Crisp led the way with two solo blocks and five block assists, and Taylor Tibbetts also had five block assists.

Sarah Carpenter dished out 12 assists to lead the Mountaineers and also served up seven aces. Aspen Christiansen anchored the back line with 16 digs.

EOU 3, WARNER PACIFIC 0

EOU was only seriously threatened in one set against the Knights as they earned a 25-18, 25-12, 25-23 victory.

The teams were tied at 21-21, 22-22 and 23-23 in the final set, but back-to-back errors by Warner Pacific gave the set, and match, to EOU.

Ackerman led the Mountaineers attack with 10 kills and added five aces. Bunn added seven kills. Crisp was again strong at the net with six block assists. Christiansen had 10 digs and Madison Pilon recorded 13 assists, just ahead of Carpenter's 12 assists.

Eastern (8-4 overall, 3-1 CCC) hosts Evergreen and Northwest Friday and Saturday.

Imbler reaches final at Griswold tourney

Observer staff

The Imbler Panthers volleyball team took second place at the Griswold Tournament Saturday, defeating host Griswold (25-14, 25-13) in the quarterfinals and Cove (25-19, 25-18) in the semifinals before falling in the tournament title match to Heppner (25-19, 25-14).

Caysie McGinness led the Panthers' attack in all three matches, and finished with 19 kills. Karrington Troyer dished out 41 assists, four aces and had 19 digs, and Aspen Smith had 11 kills and 17 digs.

Imbler (7-4 overall) hosts Powder Valley Thursday.

COVE REACHES SEMIS

The Cove Leopards went

1-1 in bracket play at the Griswold Tournament, defeating McLoughlin in the quarterfinals (25-12, 25-11) and falling to Imbler in the semifinals (25-19, 25-18).

Cove went 2-1 in pool play, beating Umatilla and Griswold before losing to Heppner. Stats were not available.

Cove (4-4 overall) travels to Joseph Thursday.

OUTLAWS TOP ELGIN

Ashlyn Gray had seven kills and seven aces, leading the Enterprise Outlaws to a win (25-19, 25-19, 25-12) over the Elgin Huskies Saturday.

Lexie Gasset, Shelby Moncrief and Rylin Kirkland added three aces

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