

Mounties finding their stride

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The No. 21 Eastern Oregon Mountaineers volleyball team overcame a tough first set to extend its winning streak and stay in the top tier of the Cascade Collegiate Conference Saturday night.

Megan Bunn had 17 kills and 11 digs for her ninth double-double, Hailee Ackerman added 11 kills and EOU earned its fifth straight victory, topping the Northwest Eagles, 24-26, 25-8, 25-12, 25-22 at Quinn Coliseum.

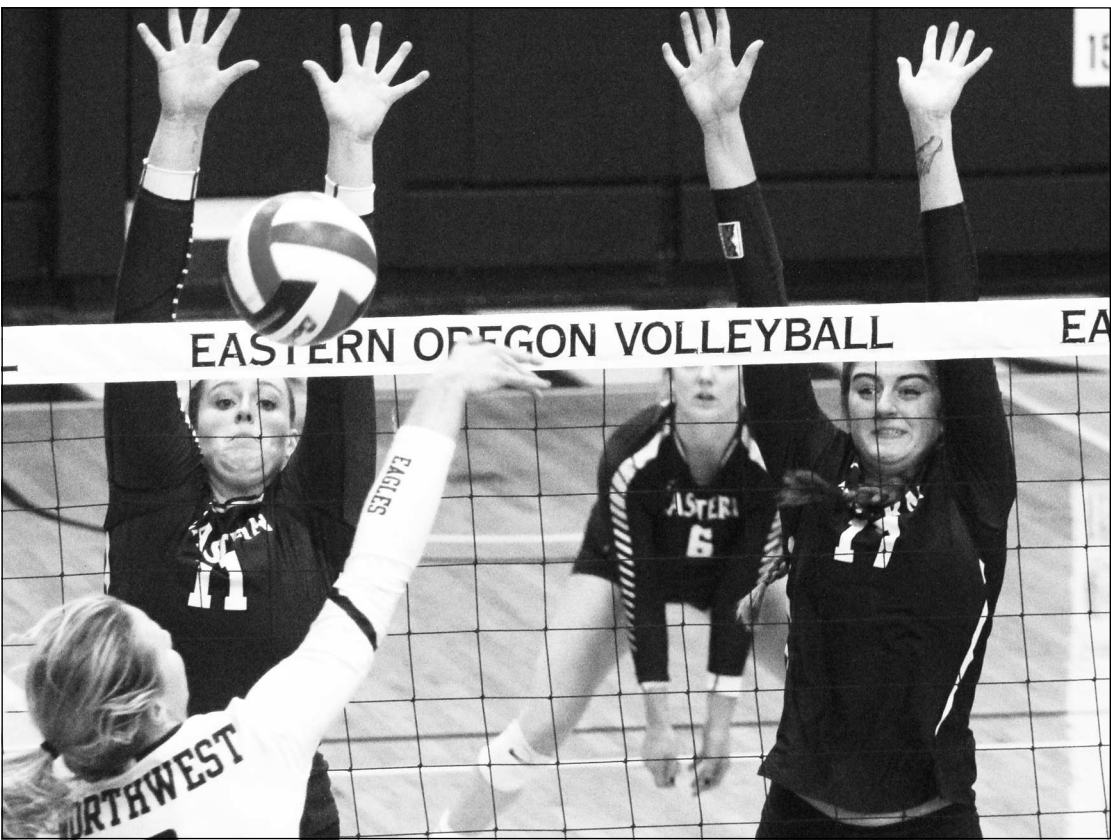
The win kept EOU in a tie for second with College of Idaho in CCC play.

“It’s the growth,” Head Coach Kaki McLean-Morehead said of the team’s play of late. “We’re working on keeping things simple and (are) getting really good at those simple things in practice. They really are embracing the process, as corny as that sounds. They are improving every single day and every single week.”

EOU, which had won its previous four matches in straight sets, saw any hopes for a fifth consecutive sweep vanish during the first set Saturday. Eastern fell behind as much as 9-3 early, and although the Mountaineers briefly took the lead late — the last time at 24-23 — they never found a rhythm.

But the team looked entirely different during a dominant second and third set. EOU never trailed and was never threatened as it took an 11-2 second-set lead on a block by Ackerman, Taylor Tibbetts and Cambree Scott, and later led by scores of 18-3, 21-5 and 24-6. Northwest at times looked fazed while EOU was seemingly able to dig or block every kill attempt, pound the ball with authority and serve almost flawlessly.

“It started off a little rough, but we figured it out and started



Eastern Oregon’s Taylor Tibbetts, left, and Allyson Crisp, right, attempt a block Saturday night.

playing as a team in the second, third and fourth sets,” Bunn said. “It was communication, too — things we could change easily.”

The Mountaineers were nearly as strong in the third, quickly building a 14-4 lead on a kill by Bunn. Northwest briefly got within six, but Eastern responded with a 7-2 scoring run to retake command.

The Eagles pushed EOU in the fourth set that saw 11 ties and six lead changes. Bunn gave EOU a 20-19 lead with a kill, but Northwest responded to take a 21-20 edge on a kill by Abigail Broussard. EOU scored the next four points, the last two on blocks by Tibbetts and Allyson Crisp, and two points later Bunn finished the match with a kill.

While Bunn and Ackerman led the offense, McLean-Morehead said the attack is getting distributed better, and that was the case

Saturday. Tibbetts added eight kills, Kaci Cox had six and Scott chipped in with five.

“More hitters are finally getting involved rather than us just being so dependent on Hailee and Megan,” the coach said. “That’s the most important (factor). We can’t ride two hitters all the way to the conference tournament. We have to do a better job of distributing the ball, and they are doing that.”

Sarah Carpenter dished out 22 assists and added six aces for EOU, and Kiley McMurtrey led the back line with 18 digs. Crisp and Tibbetts added five and four block assists, respectively, another area McLean-Morehead said is improving.

Bunn agreed. “That’s basically all we’ve been working on in practice, so it’s improved a lot,” Bunn quipped. “Just communicating (with) each

other is the biggest thing.”

Eastern (10-4 overall, 5-1 CCC) travels to Eugene to face Northwest Christian Friday.

FRIDAY EOU SWEEPS EVERGREEN

Bunn had 16 kills to again lead the Eastern Oregon offense as the Mountaineers rolled to a three-set win over Evergreen Friday, 25-22, 25-15, 25-17, handing the Geoducks their first loss in CCC play.

Ackerman joined Bunn in double figures with 11 kills, while Tibbetts added six kills and three block assists. Jet Taylor led EOU with four block assists — all in the third set — including teaming with Bunn on blocks for the final two points of the match.

Madison Pilon led Eastern with 24 assists, Carpenter had 12 assists and McMurtrey collected 15 digs. Bunn added 10 digs for her eighth double-double.

Eastern men open CCC with two wins

Observer staff

The 19th ranked Eastern Oregon Mountaineers women’s soccer team began its pursuit of a second straight Cascade Collegiate Conference title on the wrong foot.

EOU saw two second-half leads vanish during their road trip to Montana, falling to Providence in overtime Friday, 2-1, and settling for a 3-3 tie at Carroll Sunday.

The five goals allowed pushes Eastern’s total on the season to nine, one more than it allowed all of 2017 — and Sunday was the third straight game EOU has given up multiple goals.

PROVIDENCE 2, EOU 1, OT

EOU gave up the tying goal with less than 23 minutes to play in regulation, then fell in overtime as Providence’s Malena Lennon scored the golden goal in the 93rd minute to lift the Argos Friday afternoon in Great Falls, Montana.

The Mountaineers took a 1-0 lead into the half when Kaitlyn McLeod scored off a pass from Cailin Koupal in the 44th minute.

That lead held until Grace Ibsen put home goal off a rebound in the 68th minute.

The Argos outshot EOU 17-11, and had a 13-4 advantage in shots in the second half and overtime.

Cyndi Cottrell made five saves for EOU.

EOU 3, CARROLL 3, 2OT

The Mountaineers seemed poised for a win before Carroll scored twice in the final 76 seconds of regulation to force overtime, and the teams battled to a draw Sunday in Helena, Montana.

After allowing an early goal to Carroll’s Kirsten Girolami, EOU pulled ahead 3-1 by halftime on goals by Abri Cardenas in the ninth minute, Taylor Boyer in the 18th minute and Morgan Farrington in the 34th.

But Tayla Vaira scored on a rebound off a Carroll penalty kick in the 89th minute, then Vaira knotted the score on a shot from about 30 yards out with 36 seconds to go.

Cottrell recorded six saves for Eastern.

The Mountaineers (4-1-1 overall, 0-1-1 CCC) host Southern Oregon Friday in their home opener.

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Imbler’s Ryan Patterson cuts up-field during the Panthers’ game against Enterprise Friday afternoon.

Panthers keep winning

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Imbler Panthers are off to their best start since 2014.

Ryan Patterson rushed for 186 yards and four touchdowns — his third straight game with at least 180 rushing yards — and the Panthers pulled away for a 40-14 victory over the Enterprise Outlaws Friday afternoon in Special District 3-West action in Imbler.

“We’re in a good place, but we have a long ways to go if we want to finish out the season the right way,” Imbler Head Coach Dustan Adams said. “(There’s) a lot of football left to play.”

The Panthers last started 3-0 in 2014, the final season of former Head Coach Lee Lowe’s career.

Patterson scored once in each quarter, finding the end zone on runs of four, six, 75 and six yards to power Imbler’s ground game, which accumulated 260 yards.

“The offensive line overall did a

pretty good job engaging and staying on blocks, for the most part,” Adams said.

Jayce Burnette added 60 yards rushing, and Chance Goodman was 9-for-16 passing for 135 yards with a touchdown — a 75-yard pass to Wade McDonald less than a minute into the game — and two interceptions.

Imbler seemed in complete control after Patterson’s second touchdown made it 24-0 with 7:41 in the second quarter.

But the Outlaws hung around. Trace Evans returned a punt 62 yards for a score just before the first half ended to make it 24-6, and after Dylan Marr grabbed an interception, Enterprise marched downfield trying to draw closer.

But the Outlaws’ 14-play drive that ate 8:35 off the clock and included a successful punt fake ultimately came up empty. Imbler’s defense pushed

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Wallowa runs away with victory

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Before the season began, Wallowa Head Coach Matt Brockamp said he wanted to mix a bit more of a passing attack in with the team’s power running game.

In the last two weeks, sticking to the ground game had worked just fine for the Cougars, who have dominated in two contests since their season-opening loss at St. Paul.

Three Cougars eclipsed the 100-yard mark rushing, led by Austin Brockamp’s 236-yard, four-touchdown performance, as Wallowa won its second straight Special District 3-East game in blowout fashion, rolling over the Elgin Huskies on the road, 60-6, Friday night.

“The kids are doing good things,” the coach said. “We’re working hard. I’m proud of them. We can still run the football pretty well. I like what the kids have done so far.”

It was the second straight game that Wallowa didn’t allow an offensive touchdown. Elgin’s lone score came on a 78-yard kickoff return by Wyatt Hallgarth that pulled the Huskies within two points at 8-6 just 99 seconds into the game.

But any thoughts of a shootout were quickly put aside. Austin Brockamp scored on runs of 10, 52 and 44 yards in the first quarter. Quarterback Gus Ramsden, who opened the scoring with a 40-yard run and finished with 105 yards, later scored from 38 yards out to make it 38-6 after one quarter.

A safety and two more scoring runs by Wallowa’s top two players — a seven-yard rush by Brockamp and a 17-yard scamper by Ramsden — helped extend the lead to



Wallowa’s Gus Ramsden, right, hands the ball off to Austin Brockamp during Friday night’s game in Elgin.

54-6 by halftime.

“We wanted to come out and play physical, play tough and run the ball hard,” Austin Brockamp said. “We’ve got a really good line. Everybody does their job and executes.”

It was a half that was dominated by Wallowa’s offense. In the opening 24 minutes, the Cougars outgained Elgin, 475-48. Brockamp and Ramsden, who added 40 yards passing, did all their damage in the first half.

Zeb Ramsden, who added a 57-yard scoring run in the third quarter for the final margin, finished with 126 yards rushing. The trio ran for 467 yards on 32 carries, and Wallowa ran for 506 as a team.

The head coach said getting back to the ground-and-pound mentality may be somewhat attributed to him reverting to his high school days when he was a running back, but he noted it has also become Wallowa’s identity, and the Cougars got away from that in their 54-20 loss to St. Paul two weeks ago.

“We talk about being a physical football team every day, every play,” Brockamp said. “We’ve tried to get better fundamentally up front. We try to get cleaner on our blocking schemes, and are trying to be physical up front, and the kids are doing a great job.”

Elgin found some success moving the ball in the second half but

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