

Mountaineers run streak to seven with rare performances

Observer staff
Eastern Oregon volleyball

The Eastern Oregon Mountaineers' volleyball team not only continued its winning streak over the weekend, but two players put

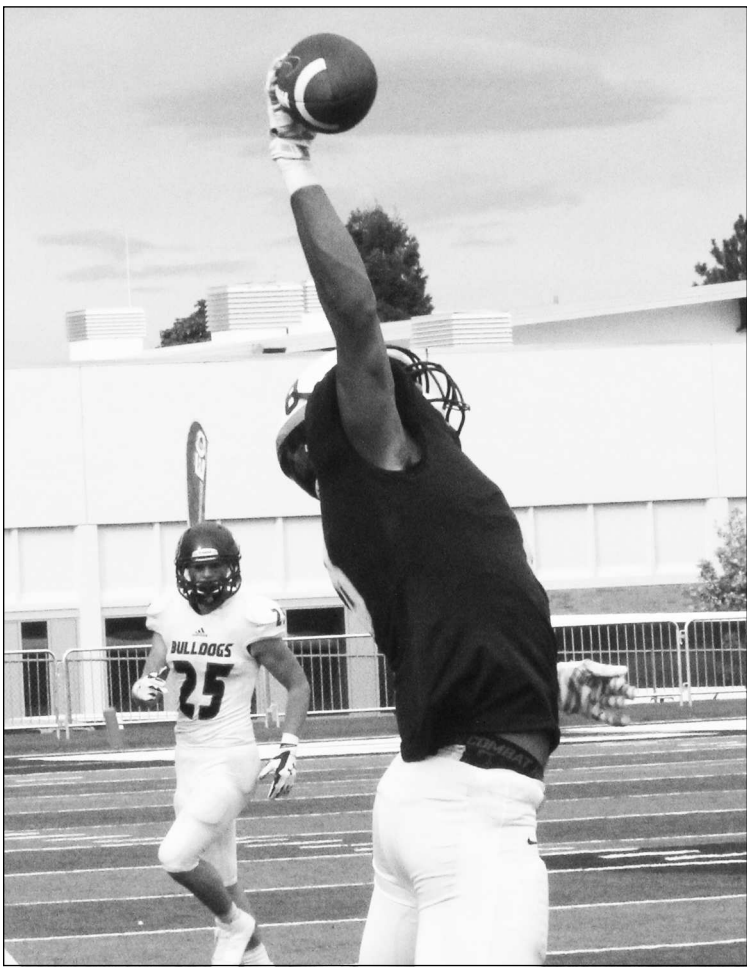
up a rare feat in Friday's win. Megan Bunn posted 22 kills and Hailee Ackerman had 21 — both career bests — as the No. 17 Mountaineers topped Northwest Christian Friday in Cascade Collegiate

Conference action in Eugene, 25-14, 23-25, 25-23, 25-19. It was the first time since 2007 that two Mountaineers have tallied 20 kills or more in the same match since Grace DeBoodt and Chelsea

Lally did so 11 years ago — coincidentally, also in a road match against NCU on Sept. 21. Another EOU duo also reached 20, with setters Madison Pilon and Sarah Carpenter posting 25 and

20 assists, respectively. The pair accomplished the feat last in 2017. Kiley McMurtrey added 25 digs in the match, while Pilon (14 digs) and Bunn (12 digs) and
See Volleyball / Page 10A

EASTERN OREGON 54, NO. 22 MONTANA WESTERN 51, 30T



Left: Brenden Kelly tips a pass to himself to make a catch as part of his EOU-record 265-yard performance during Saturday's game against Montana Western. Right: Isaiah Cranford runs out of a pile up after recovering a fumble late in the fourth quarter.

Photos by Ronald Bond/The Observer

Stevens takes seventh at Bob Firman

Observer staff
Prep cross country
Big day for Stevens, Union/Cove

Tim Stevens turned in a record-setting performance at the Bob Firman Invitational Saturday in Eagle, Idaho, an event that saw nearly 4,300 runners take part in 16 races.

The Union/Cove senior cross country runner took seventh in the boys 5,000-meter elite race with a time of 15:29.20 that Head Coach Steve Sheehy said was a program record.

The elite division, according to Sheehy, had three of the top 25 runners in the nation competing.

The time was a personal best in a 5K race for Stevens by nearly 11 seconds. Grant Gardner, of Springville, Utah, was the elite division champion in 15:06.70.

Stevens wasn't the only Union/Cove runner to have a strong performance. The Bobcats took 12th in the Division II varsity race with 367 points. Jack Silveira (16:36) led Union/Cove in 15th place. Andrew Lackey (17:34.60) was 45th, Israel O'Reilly (18:34.70) was 95th, Tyler Olson (18:52.40) was 114th, and Carter Blackburn (18:54.10) was 117th.

The La Grande boys were right behind Union/Cove in 13th, scoring 447 points. Bennett Welch (16:39.50) led the Tigers in 17th, with Cristian Mendoza (17:16.90) following in 33rd.

Eli McLean (18:47.50) placed 107th, Braxton Bisenius (18:51.10) was 111th and Donald Sweet (19:58.70) was 209th. There were 290 runners in the race.

The Enterprise boys took second in the freshman 5K race with 121 points. Henry Coughlan (16:51.70) led the Outlaws in third. Bayden Menton (17:30.60) followed in 11th. Zac Knapp (17:52) was 16th, Ian Goodrich (19:19.50) was 63rd and Reece Nelson (19:26.80) was 71st. A total of 255 runners finished the race.

On the girls side, Union/Cove edged Enterprise, 363-407, for 13th place in the Division II varsity race. Jaimee Baxter led the Bobcats in 44th with a time of 21:11.40, with teammate Audrey Wells (21:12.20) on her tail in 46th. Abriel O'Reilly (22:23.50) took 89th, Kaitlin Martens (23:10.50) came in 117th and Audrey Hill (24:13.20) was 160th.

Ellyse Tingelstad led Enterprise, which took 14th, with a time of 20:13.90, which was good for 18th. Ashley Wilson (21:32.40)

See Firman / Page 9A

Eastern claims wild battle

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Wild and wacky doesn't even begin to describe Eastern Oregon's Frontier Conference football contest Saturday against No. 22 Montana Western.

Unfathomable, stunning or unbelievable may be better words.

"Everything that could possibly happen probably happened in that game," EOU Head Coach Tim Camp said.

The Mountaineers entered the final quarter with a 28-point lead only to see three touchdowns scored in a span of 92 seconds, then later the tying touchdown with 2:43 to play, all before recovering to deliver the final blow and outlast the Bulldogs in a triple-overtime game for the ages, 54-51, Saturday at Community Stadium.

"It was unreal," said quarter-

back Kai Quinn, who passed for an EOU record 466 yards in the victory. "To see this team come together like that was amazing. It was a great team win."

Fight was a word used repeatedly by Camp postgame to describe his team's ability to grind out a win in a game that had endless twists and turns.

"At the end of the day I think they showed great resilience," Camp said. "They showed fight today. That's the one thing I wanted to see."

He added later, "(I'm) super excited about the kids and the effort they put out there. 'If you have fight, you'll respond when things are against you.'"

The game ended on an uncommon play — a blocked field goal — which was perhaps fitting for the uncommon afternoon. The teams had traded field goals in

the first overtime — after UMW had the winning touchdown called back on a penalty — and touchdowns by UMW's Jake Messerly and Quinn in the second overtime.

Nathan Harden gave EOU the lead back with a 39-yard field goal, and moments later Mark Kharchenko lined up his own 36-yard attempt to possibly send the game to a fourth extra period.

But Zach Lacey, who said he had two earlier kicks go right between his hands, got the block to seal the win and set off the celebration.

"It was awesome to see the team never stop fighting," Lacey said. "Going into that last play, I lined up and said, 'I want a win. I don't want a loss or a tie.' I knew I had to blow it up and get a hand up."

He later said the contest was

"easily one of my top three favorite games I've ever been a part of, and the way it ended might have made it No. 1. It was amazing."

Amazing would indeed be another fitting word for the game. The teams combined for 1,036 yards of offense and 105 points in the nearly four-hour marathon between two teams that, so far this season, had allowed 39 points per game combined.

But the offensive outburst, at least for EOU, didn't shock Camp.

"I really thought we could have a 500-yard game in the air if done correctly," he said. "I knew we could score points on them even though they are a good football team."

That's not to say the defenses were bad. The teams forced a combined nine turnovers. EOU recorded seven sacks and 14

See Battle / Page 10A

EOU men earn weekend split

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Eastern Oregon Mountaineers men's soccer team not only had to rally from a tough loss to rival Southern Oregon Friday, but had to rebound in their Sunday morning match against Oregon Tech.

A turnover led to the goal that allowed the opportunity.

Carlos Solorio scored the winning goal with about seven minutes to play, boosting the Mountaineers to a 2-1 victory over the Owls in Cascade Collegiate Conference play at Community Stadium.

"Just grinding," EOU Head Coach Zach Mills said of how his team earned the win. "That team's a good team. They play very similar to our style, and I love that. We had some pretty soccer out here today. A lot of opportunities for both teams. The loss brought us down a couple nights ago, but we said it doesn't matter. We're EOU. We don't give up. We came out (strong in the) second half, and I was proud of them."

The teams were tied at 1-1 the entire second half and traded scoring chances much of the final 30 minutes until EOU caught a break in the 83rd minute.

Michael Ebel stole a pass in the Owls' end of the field, then passed it to Solorio on the left side. Solorio worked his way through a couple

defenders left of the net then tapped a short shot that trickled home for the go-ahead score.

"(Ebel) did a great job to be there and pass the ball," Solorio said. "I saw the opportunity, took the chance and luckily we came out with the goal."

The Mountaineers dominated possession most of the first half, taking a 1-0 lead just eight minutes into the match when Steven Beaudry passed to Connor Young who headed in the goal in front of the net.

"I'll tell you this, I want everyone to watch that film," Mills said of the opening goal. "That is textbook soccer. That was unbelievable finishing and buildup. Incredible."

The Mountaineers continued to put on the pressure, but the momentum swung to OIT about 35 minutes into the half, and the Owls pulled even on Trinidad Flores' goal in the 40th minute.

The Owls mounted their own pressure early in the second half before the teams began trading opportunities down the stretch.

The balance of the match showed in the statistics. EOU held a slight 17-16 edge on shots, but OIT outdid the Mountaineers 4-3 in shots on goal.

Aidan Wright made three saves for the Mountaineers.

EOU (5-2-1 overall, 3-1-0 CCC) hosts Col-

See Men / Page 10A

EOU women back on track

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

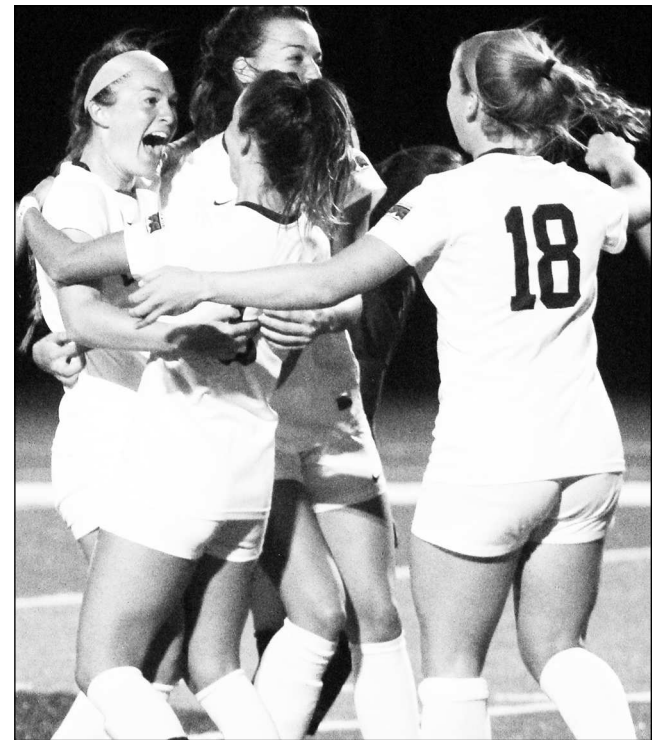
The Eastern Oregon women's soccer team was in need of a bounce-back win after an ominous start to Cascade Collegiate Conference play.

The Mountaineers got just that Friday.

Taylor Boyer scored the go-ahead goal midway through the second half and assisted a MacKinley Gregus goal later, lifting EOU to a 2-0 victory over rival Southern Oregon in its home opener Friday night at Community Stadium.

"It's for sure a good win for us," Boyer said. "It gives us more confidence going into the rest of conference play. We obviously didn't want to start off conference with a loss and a tie. Getting a win against one of our bigger rivals — and Southern was sitting at the top of the table with two wins — show(s) the conference we're still there."

Eastern Head Coach Jacob Plocher said mental lapses late hurt the team in a 2-1



Ronald Bond/The Observer

The EOU women's soccer team celebrates after Taylor Boyer, left, scored during the second half Friday.

loss at Providence and 3-3 tie at Carroll a week ago.

Cleaning that up was the focus entering play this weekend.

"We did a lot of situational stuff and really focused on (knowing) we're capable of getting the result we need,"

See Women / Page 8A