

Eastern Oregon upsets SOU, rejoins in conference race

Observer staff

The Eastern Oregon football team used a suffocating defensive effort to down rival Southern Oregon and get back in the thick of the Frontier Conference race.

The No. 24 Mountaineers forced three interceptions, collected four

sacks and held the No. 7 Raiders to their lowest offensive output since 2015 with a 27-17 road win Saturday in Ashland.

"Great day to be a Mountie," EOU Head Coach Tim Camp said. "Anytime you beat a top 10 team and in-state rival you feel proud."

It marked the fourth time in the last six years EOU has won at SOU, joining road victories in 2013, 2014 and 2016. It also marked the 10th time in the last 13 games the road team has won in the series.

Zackary Jacobs, Eli Teuteu and Haziel Ledezma each had intercep-

tions for the Mountaineers, and Isaiah Cranford totaled 3-1/2 sacks as he and the Mountaineers constantly pressured SOU quarterback Wyatt Hutchinson and his backup Chase Knutz.

Both teams hit first half field goals and went into halftime even

at 3-3. Eastern Oregon kicker Nathan Harden hit a 29-yard field goal early in the third quarter for a 6-3 lead, then the Mountaineer offense woke up. Victor Dias capped an eight-play drive with a one-yard run, and Kai Quinn followed with

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Boost from the bench

Ronald Bond/The Observer

The Eastern Oregon volleyball team, led by a leaping Nina Bailey (13) celebrate a point during the third set of Friday's match against Warner Pacific. Bailey and Jet Taylor, left, brought a spark off the bench in EOU's 3-1 win.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Eastern Oregon volleyball teammates Nina Bailey and Jet Taylor both see themselves as energy-boosting players.

The Mountaineer newcomers came off the bench in the second set to give No. 13 Eastern the jolt it needed to overcome an off night against Warner Pacific Friday in Cascade Collegiate Conference play at Quinn Coliseum.

Bailey had six kills and six block assists, Taylor added eight block assists and EOU rebounded from a first-set loss to defeat the Knights, 24-26, 25-19, 25-21, 25-17.

"I tried to put some people on the floor who were energy producers," EOU Head Coach Kaki McLean-Morehead said. "It was a little dead, and we needed some energy. Nina and Jet definitely both came in and did that for us."

Eastern found itself down 10-5 in

the first set, and though EOU rallied to take a four-point lead late, it was a block by WPU's Lauren Jones and Macy DuCoeur that gave the Knights the first-set shocker.

Bailey provided a jumpstart the moment she stepped on the floor in the second set. The junior teamed with Cambree Scott for a block on her first play, then followed with a kill. The plays were key in a 7-0 run that gave the Mountaineers a 9-2 lead in the set.

"Jet (and I) always say all the time when we get our moment, we're going to let it shine," Bailey said. "I think we both pump each other up. We lift each other and (say), 'We're going to get this ball. Let's do this.'"

Eastern built as much as an 11-point lead in the second set, and finished it with a block by Taylor Tibbetts and Allyson Crisp.

Jet Taylor, who came on late in the second set, brought her own burst in

the third, getting an early block along with Megan Bunn for a 5-3 lead.

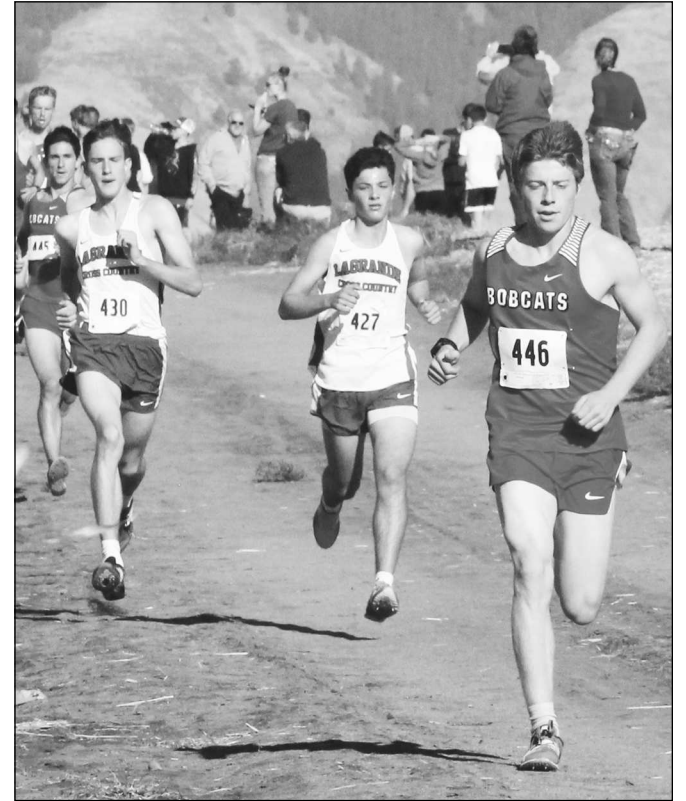
"One of the things I like to live by as a player is being an energy producer, being an energizer bunny," Taylor said. "Whenever I get my shots on the floor, I like to come in and make that kind of difference energy wise. That's something you can always control."

The EOU spark plugs then started teaming up — both in the play and on the energy level. Bailey and Taylor's combined block and a pair of Bailey kills kept EOU ahead, 9-8, in the third. Both had kills — each leaping in celebration after the kill to fire up their team — during a 4-1 run later to give Eastern some separation at 19-15, then the pair capped the set with a combination block for a 2-1 lead.

"When I get a block, I'll jump on (my teammates) or I'll shove them, just to

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Bobcat boys, girls take Tiger Invite



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Union/Cove's Tim Stevens, right, runs in front of La Grande's Bennett Welch, left, and Cristian Mendoza, center, near the midway point of Friday's Tiger Invite. Stevens pulled away for the win in a time of 16:41.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

After running a controlled first mile at the Tiger Invite, the Union/Cove boys cross country team was supposed to kick it into high gear in the middle mile.

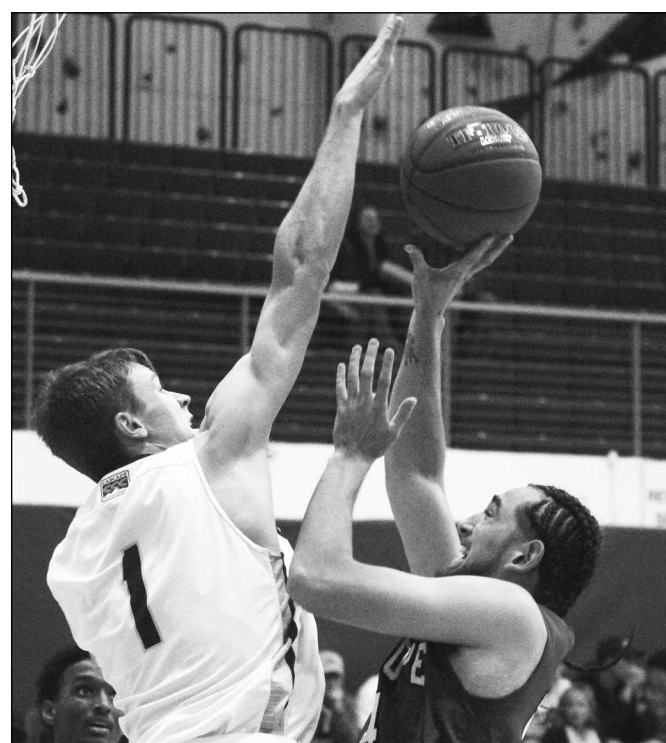
That's exactly what Tim Stevens did.

The Bobcats' senior distanced himself from the pack and pulled away for a 37-second win Friday at La Grande's annual meet, which this year was moved to Lane Farms east of La Grande.

"We were supposed to run as a team for the first mile at a 5:50 pace, and then our coach wanted us to run hard for the second mile and really focus on that middle mile," Stevens said. "I think it went pretty well."

Stevens' middle mile, which Union/Cove Head Coach Steve Sheehy said was unofficially clocked at 4:57, helped him to a winning time of 16:41. Teammate Jack Silveira outkicked La Grande's Bennett Welch to the finish line for second in 17:18. Welch

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon's Landon Jones, left, blocks a shot by New Hope Christian's Mitchell Beckwith Saturday.

Offense shines for EOU at Quinn Classic

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Eastern Oregon men's basketball head coach Carlito Labarda Jr. wanted to see more out of his defense after the Mountaineers allowed 115 points in their season opener — a 125-115 win over Salish Kootenai Friday.

The defense was better Saturday. Joel Anderson led five Mountaineers in double figures with 22 points and added 10 assists as EOU wrapped up the Quinn Classic with a 114-86 win over New Hope Christian Saturday night.

"We concentrated on our defense tonight. We still gave up a little too much, but the last four or five minutes is run-and-gun pick-up ball," Labarda said.

The second-year head coach did like what EOU did offensively, as the Mountaineers averaged 119.5 points

in its first two games. On Saturday, the Mountaineers shot 57 percent from the floor — including 62 percent in the second half — and hit 11 3-pointers.

"We're pretty efficient. We've got some good shooters on this team, which I knew. I was hoping that would come out in the game, which it did," Labarda said.

The efficiency on both sides of the ball should only improve as well, with three of EOU's main rotation players — Max McCullough, Peter Eke and Jarek Schetzle — sitting out over the weekend.

"We've got three potential starters that we're still missing, and this team is still efficient," Labarda said.

Anderson was a key part of that efficiency. After a 35-point effort in his first game for EOU Friday night, the junior was 7-for-11 shooting against New Hope Christian, hit three 3s and added four

steals.

"As soon as I get the ball, I'm looking up (for) whatever play is available," Anderson said. "If somebody's open, get them the ball. If not, be as aggressive as possible and make smart plays."

Labarda said a piece of what makes Anderson solid at the point is how he sets players up, even more so than whether he's flashy.

"He'll make one or two exciting passes, but it's the easy passes (that make a difference)," the coach said. "He'll pitch it ahead. He'll make the simple pass for a standstill 3. He takes pride in assists."

Anderson had six assists in the first half alone as EOU overcame a slow start to build a 55-39 lead by halftime. Eastern took the lead for good on a 14-3 first-half run, capped by a Said Hersi jumper for a 21-14 edge. Brock John-

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