



Montana Tech
at
No. 19 Eastern Oregon
1 p.m. Sat., Community Stadium

Eastern Oregon tight end Gabe Giacci pulls in a one-handed catch during practice Wednesday. The Mountaineers look to avenge an earlier loss to Montana Tech in Saturday's rematch. Ronald Bond/The Observer

■ Mountaineers look to continue momentum of their current three-game winning streak as they host Orediggers on homecoming

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Eastern Oregon football team is finding a rhythm. The Mountaineers enter Saturday's homecoming contest against Montana Tech on a three-game winning streak. The most recent victory, last Saturday's 27-17 win on the road against then-No. 7 Southern Oregon, has moved EOU up to No. 19 in the nation and back in the discussion to contend for both a Frontier Conference title and a second playoff berth in three years. "We figured out the formula our team needs to play well, which is high energy and a lot of fun being

around each other," EOU senior offensive lineman Mick Wilson said. "The first couple weeks we were trying to figure out if we were going to be a real intense team, and it worked out that we play our best when we're having fun and playing with high energy." Playing a complete game has also helped the Mountaineers in recent weeks. Early in the season a bad quarter often cost EOU dearly. Eastern gave up 22 third-quarter points in an early-season loss to Southern at home, and 21 in the third the following week in a loss to Montana Tech. That trend has improved, most

notably against SOU in last week's rematch. While the Raiders scored 14 points late to make it interesting, they never truly threatened the Mountaineers down the stretch. It's a trend they'll need to continue Saturday. "That was kind of our issue at the beginning of the year in our two losses," Wilson said. "If we could have finished that game (against Montana Tech), we would have come away with a win." Tackling and playing solid defense were also much improved against Southern Oregon, and junior linebacker Eli Teuteu that will again be a point of emphasis

Saturday. "We have to (take) the same things we (took) into the game against Southern into this one — staying physical, making tackles and doing what we do best, which is doing (our) assignments right. No errors." Teuteu said there was also a bit of a revenge factor entering the SOU contest, and that aspect is there again, especially considering the Mountaineers let a 14-0 half-time lead slip away in an eventual 24-17 loss to the Montana Tech Orediggers. "This is another revenge game I've been thinking about a lot, and

I think other players on the field are thinking about it too," he said. "We're just ready to get back out there and show we never should have lost that game. This time we're working extra hard at practice." In the last meeting, EOU held the Orediggers to just 280 yards — the fewest Eastern has allowed since 2016 — and forced five turnovers. But four third-quarter turnovers resulted in a short field for all three of Tech's touchdown drives, which combined to total 63 yards. Running back Jed Fike, who rushed for a season-best 149 yards in the last matchup for Tech, also had his best

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Joseph High School receives all-encompassing Oregonian Cup

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

From an athletic standpoint, Joseph High School has taken a step forward and gained some statewide recognition in recent years. Among the accomplishments, the Eagles won the girls state track and field titles in 2016 and 2017, were part of a co-op with Enterprise that won state in cross country a year ago and garnered third place — the top finish in program history — in volleyball in 2017. But Joseph is not just gaining on the athletic scale. It's also seeing improvement in academics and in sportsmanship. Those are among the criteria used in naming the champion of the Oregonian Cup, which Joseph earned back in June as the top 1A

school in the 2017-18 school year and was officially awarded during a home volleyball match last week. "The most impressive piece of this to me is athletically you always want to do well, you play the game to win. But when you couple that with academics and sportsmanship (the award is) all encompassing," said Superintendent Lance Homan, who is also the girls basketball coach. The award, which was first given out in 1999, uses several point systems to tally points based on athletic excellence, such as team and individual state championships; academics, including having a team GPA of 3.0 or better and winning an academic activity; and sportsmanship, which gives points for going

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Several Joseph football and volleyball players are presented the Oregonian Cup trophy during a match at Joseph High School last week. Jason Crenshaw photo

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