

NO. 19 EASTERN OREGON 35, MONTANA TECH 17

Eastern dominates against Tech

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Eastern Oregon's offense found its rhythm after a slow start. The defense suffocated Montana Tech all afternoon. The outcome was a dominant homecoming win for the Mountaineers.

Kai Quinn threw four touchdown passes, the defense recorded seven sacks, and No. 19 EOU earned a 35-17 win over the Orediggers in Frontier Conference play Saturday at Community Stadium.

"Homecoming is one of the biggest things," EOU Head Coach Tim Camp said. "When people come back, you want to put a great product on the field, for the people who worked so hard and gave so much to this program to be able to see the turf and all the progress we made."

The Mountaineers turned what started out as a defensive battle into a drubbing by the early stages of the fourth quarter, at one point rattling off 35 straight points to go up 35-3 on Kaler Moore's six-yard

touchdown reception with 12:53 to play.

Montana Tech managed to add a couple late touchdowns to make the score more respectable, but was ultimately locked up by the EOU defense for the second time this season.

The effort started up front for Eastern. Isaiah Cranford combined with Chase Van Wyck and later with Sage DeLong for sacks on the first defensive series, which set the

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

EOU's Chris Kindle pounces on a MontanaTech fumble for the Mountaineers' defense early in the third quarter. The turnover led to a touchdown.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon's Taylor Boyer, left, works against Corban's Rylee MacDonald Friday. Boyer scored in both of EOU's wins over the weekend to help Eastern clinch the top seed in the Cascade Collegiate Conference.

Mountaineers repeat

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

To say the Eastern Oregon women's soccer team is on a roll is an understatement.

Five straight wins. A 9-0-1 record in the last 10 matches. Eight of those victories, including the last five, all by shutout.

The result of the lengthy streak? A second straight Cascade Collegiate Conference title and national tournament berth.

Taylor Boyer scored the lone goal early in the second half as Eastern blanked Corban Friday, 1-0, then Boyer and MacKinley Gregus both scored in the Mountaineers' 2-0 win over Northwest Christian Sunday in the regular season finale.

"This (conference title is) definitely a little bit sweeter in my opinion, because of how we were able to take it back and get the result we wanted," EOU Head Coach Jacob Plocher said, referring to Eastern's 0-1-1 start in conference play. "It was definitely a bigger battle. It was more rewarding."

The victories put Eastern's CCC record at 9-1-2. Either Carroll or Southern Oregon, who are both 7-1-2, could theoretically tie the Mountaineers in their final weekend of play and share the title, but EOU already owns the head-to-head tiebreaker for the top seed over SOU thanks to a 2-0 win earlier in the season. The Mountaineers and Saints tied on the field, 3-3, back

in September, but the next tiebreaker — goals allowed in CCC play — goes to EOU. Eastern has given up just eight goals in conference action, while Carroll has allowed 11 with two matches remaining. SOU and Carroll face off Oct. 28 in Helena, Montana.

The Mountaineers were in control of both games this weekend, though the scoreboard Friday against Corban didn't indicate that reality with the match scoreless after one half. EOU had a handful of chances turned away, while the opportunities for the Warriors missed altogether.

"It was one of those things (where) we were dominating the whole game," Boyer said. "We had our opportunities and were strong defensively, but we couldn't put one in the back of the net. Soccer's cruel, so sometimes that's how it goes. But (I'm) happy we were able to get one in and get the win we needed."

Plocher said, in fact, the first half was one of the better halves played by his squad in recent weeks.

"We just had to be more balanced with our attack and how we built it up, but I felt from start to finish it was one of the best games we'd played in a while," he said. "It was good to see that energy."

Boyer got Eastern on the scoreboard less than four minutes into the second half, taking a pass over the top from Abri Cardenas and putting a shot home from about 15 yards out.

"I think it took a little bit of a lucky

bounce, and sometimes that's all you need," Boyer said.

The defense, which took a couple lumps early in the season, did the rest. The Mountaineers, who earlier had a four-match stretch where they allowed nine goals, have now surrendered just three goals during the current 10-match unbeaten streak. In fact, the Warriors were the third team during the run not to register an official shot on goal on the EOU defense.

"We've finally got the chemistry," senior defender Chelsey Nicol said. "Coming in with two new outside back-ers was a really big change for us, but we're finally connecting."

Plocher also commented on the growth of the defense, adding the new players to the back line have stepped into their roles.

"We knew it was going to take a little bit," he said. "We gave up a few goals a little earlier and that hurt us, but we've worked through it. They have been jelling a lot more. We've put some pressure on them, called them out, and tried to put some big responsibility on their shoulders and they stepped up to that."

The dominance was on display even more Sunday when EOU registered a 30-4 shot advantage as it sewed up the CCC's top seed.

Boyer scored in the 33rd minute — her 13th goal of the season — as the offensive barrage finally broke through against the Beacons.

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Men's soccer is CCC playoff bound

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Eastern Oregon men's soccer team had an opportunity to clinch its first Cascade Collegiate Conference playoff berth by taking care of its own business and getting some help.

Check both boxes for the Mountaineers.

EOU picked up a weekend sweep at Community Stadium that included one of the biggest wins in program history, a 2-1 victory over No. 10 Corban, Friday night behind two Carlos Solorio goals and nine saves from goalkeeper Aidan Wright.

"We came out with a new strategy on how to play this team," Solorio said. "We watched film on them. Coaches studied them really hard. We believed the way we played tonight was the way we were going to beat them. It showed the strategy worked."

That win, coupled with several other outcomes across the CCC, means EOU is guaranteed a berth in the postseason tournament which begins Nov. 7.

"They earned it and deserve all the recognition for their hard work," EOU Head

Coach Zach Mills said of the playoff berth. "I'm glad it's not over, and I am excited to see what these guys bring to the postseason."

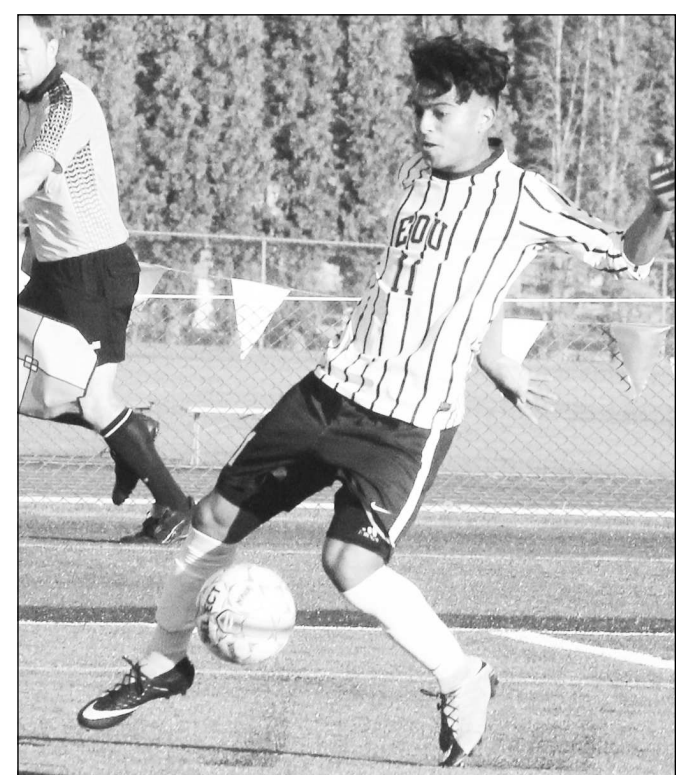
Eastern is currently in the fourth seed in the conference with one week to go.

"It's a big moment in history for us," Wright said. "We've worked hard all year. We played some good games but this might be the best one yet. Working hard gives you positive things. You get what you give."

It also proved a reality Head Coach Zach Mills has believed all season — that EOU has the capability to contend with the conference's upper echelon.

"Anything can happen and we can run with them. We showed it tonight," the first-year coach said. "Corban's a great team. Not taking anything away from the No. 10 team in the nation, but we knew if we played to our potential, played as we should, listened to each other, did the little things right, we could hang. We ended up taking the game tonight. It's been a blessing seeing these guys grow."

One of those players Mills See **Playoffs** / Page 10A



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern's Carlos Solorio makes a play on the ball just before taking a shot for a goal in the first half of Friday's upset of No. 10 Corban.

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