

Gooderham continuing career at home

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

Fans who have become accustomed to watching Kara Gooderham on the soccer pitch won't have to travel far to see her continue her athletic career.

The La Grande High School senior signed a letter of intent Thursday evening to join the Eastern Oregon women's soccer team, landing her with a squad that is coming off arguably its best season in program history.

"I realized the closer it got to deciding that I wasn't quite ready to leave (La Grande)," Gooderham said. "EOU (has) a really good team and program. I really like the coach, and I'll be happy staying here."

Gooderham, who scored six goals during her senior season, has been a mainstay in the Tigers' starting lineup for years and has shown versatility in that role. She was primarily a defender throughout most of her career, but this season she transitioned to playing midfielder.

"I used to hate mid, but I really like it now," Gooderham said. "I'll play wherever, but I hope I can play mid."

Her ability to play multiple positions will help her in the move to the next level, according to EOU Head Coach Jacob Plocher.

"I've seen her play forward, mid and defense. As she grows and gets experience (at the college level, we'll be) able to hone in where she fits," Plocher said.

What may give her the best lift as she moves to the college game, however, is her physicality on the field. Gooderham has shown she can take a big hit, and she can give it out in equal measure.



La Grande's Kara Gooderham is shown at top during the 2018 play-offs and at bottom center signing with Eastern Oregon Thursday.



She said that approach comes from having a lead-by-example mentality.

"Since I was a captain, I've always had that thought in my head of 'I'm playing for these

girls. I have to lead these girls," she said. "Not only was I leading them, they were looking up to me. I wanted to win with them."

Plocher said that nature of the game is something Gooderham will see plenty of at the next level.

"That's just going to allow her to grow and develop, especially in our conference and at the national stage," he said. "It's a physical game. Her playing with that style is only going to help her."

La Grande Head Coach Kristen Rice said in addition to Gooderham's style of play, field vision is a trait that will serve her well at the next level.

"How physical she's playing, the way she sees the field no matter what position she's playing, and (that) she has the right mindset to go out there and do what's best for the team," Rice said of Gooderham's attributes.

Gooderham said she wants to improve in all facets of the game, and she plans to work on her fitness level before joining the squad next summer.

Plocher agreed, and added her top area for growth is in "connecting the passes. At this level we want to make sure that we're not turning it over, especially if she's in the back line or holding (midfielder). And (she needs to) be confident and vocal."

Rice, a former EOU player who said she's at most EOU home games, is looking forward to the chance to continue watching Gooderham's career from home.

"I'm super proud of her," Rice said. "She's accomplished a lot in her four years, and (I'm) ready to see what she can do in the next four at Eastern."

Tigers top Homedale

Observer staff

Camryn Collman scored 21 points and hit three 3-pointers to lead nine players in scoring as the La Grande Tigers girls basketball team earned its first win of the season, topping the Homedale Trojans, 46-36, at the Today's Dentistry Elite Eight Tournament Thursday in Nampa, Idaho.

Josie Reagan added nine points for the Tigers, while Grace Neer added six points.

Collman had two first-quarter 3s to help La Grande take a 14-8 lead after one quarter. After the Tigers took a six-point lead at the half, Collman and Neer teamed up for 11 of La Grande's 13 points in the third for a 37-29 advantage.

The Tigers (1-2 overall) face Nampa this afternoon in the tournament semifinals.

LA GRANDE BOYS ALSO DEFEAT TROJANS

The La Grande Tigers boys basketball team opened the Today's Dentistry Elite Eight Tournament in Nampa, Idaho, with a 52-39 win over the Homedale Trojans Thursday afternoon.

Kaden Chandler led the way for the Tigers with 18 points — 12 of which came in the first half as La Grande took a 31-24 lead at the break. Kaleb Myer added nine points — six in the fourth quarter — and Nick Tsiatsos added all six of his points in the first quarter. In all, eight players scored for La Grande.

Chandler's big first half included eight points in the first quarter to help La Grande to a 20-12 lead. The lead held at eight — 39-31 — after three before LHS sealed the win in the fourth.

The Tigers (3-2 overall) face Nampa this afternoon in the tournament semifinals.

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