

Late dagger sinks Tigers in home opener

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The La Grande Tigers boys basketball team looked as though it may escape with a win in its home opener after Justin Jenner gave the team a 51-50 lead over the Nyssa Bulldogs with a putback with 16 seconds remaining. Nyssa, though, had other ideas. Pedro Chavez hit a tough pull-up 19-foot jumper with three seconds to play, and La Grande was unable to get off a final shot as the Bulldogs

stole a 52-51 victory Saturday night in La Grande. “It was a very tough shot that the kid hit,” LHS Head Coach Mark Carollo said. The Tigers, who trailed nearly the entire second half, cut an eight-point deficit down to one on three occasions, the last at 50-49 when Nick Tsiatsos drove for a layup with 2:03 to play. The teams traded turnovers and missed free throws before the Tigers had a late chance for the lead. Out of a timeout, Braden Bell saw a shot in

the lane rim out, but Jenner collected the last of 12 LHS offensive rebounds and put the follow-up attempt in for the one-point lead. But on the ensuing possession Chavez, who led all scorers with 21 points, dribbled left, pulled up on the left wing with a foot on the 3-point line, and, while falling down with a defender in his face, drained the winning shot to help Nyssa split the season series. La Grande won a month ago in Nyssa, 59-50. While Carollo credited

Chavez with hitting the tough shot, he added the Tigers didn’t put forth the effort needed for the full 32 minutes. “I’m a little bit disappointed in our effort level tonight,” the coach said. “We’ve been taking steps in the right direction, (but) tonight (there) was a lack of focus, lack of energy, and that lack of determination.” The team did show in spurts what it needed to potentially get a win, including a hot start where it took

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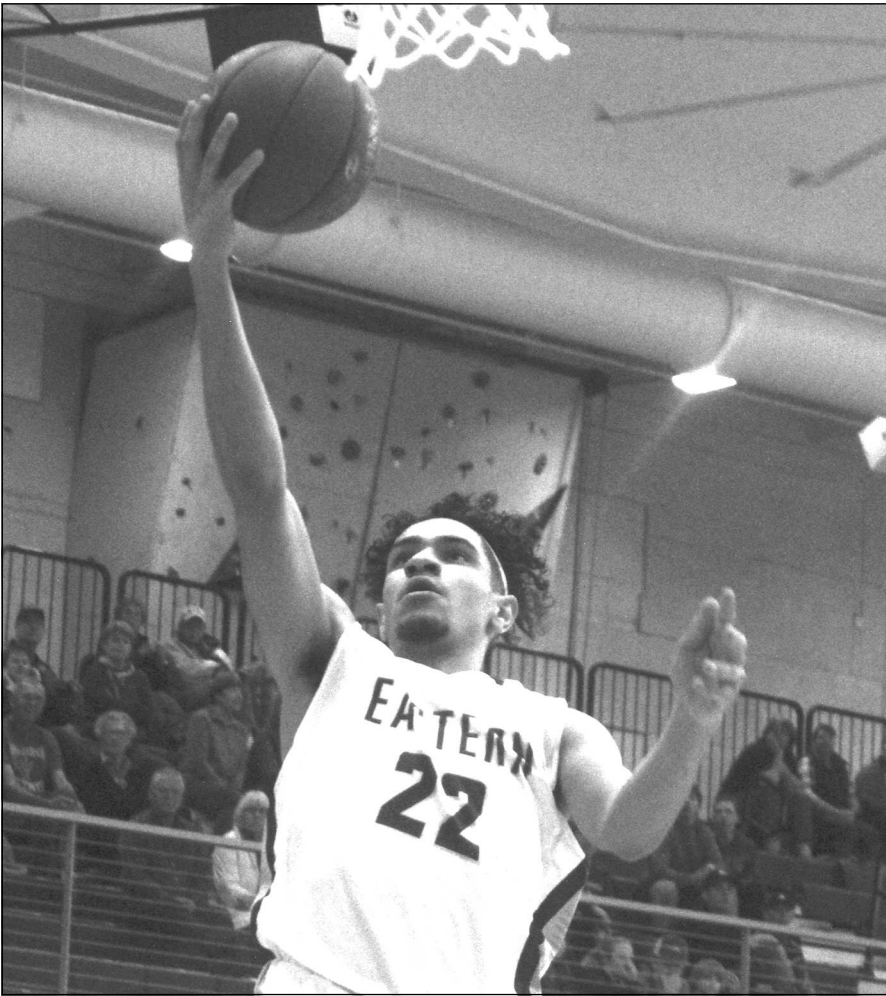
Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande’s Justin Jenner, shown during the first half Saturday against Nyssa, had eight points.

High energy boosts Eastern

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Eastern Oregon men’s basketball Head Coach Carlito Labarda Jr. said his team is at its best when it plays with energy. The Mountaineers showed that in the second half Friday night. Jordan May scored 24 points, Jarek Schetzle just missed out on a double-double, and EOU pulled away in the second half from a pesky Evergreen College for a 86-68 home win in Cascade Collegiate Conference play. “We talk about that every game,” Labarda said. “When we play with lots of energy, we’re very good.” The Mountaineers found an energy reserve toward the tail end of the first half and carried it over into the second half to take control of a close game. A 14-0 run — with seven points coming on either side of the halftime break — turned a 36-36 tie late in the first half into a 50-36 lead for EOU less than two minutes into the second half. “I like how we responded with the adjustments (and) with a little more energy in the second half,” Labarda said. Landon Jones helped spark the offense in the second half with 11 of his 13 points, and Eastern’s bench got into the groove with 23 of its 28 points coming after halftime. But May and Schetzle, who had 16 points and nine rebounds, helped set the tone for the offense early. May had 22 of his points in the first half while Schetzle had 12 to help get the inside-out production Eastern is hoping to establish. “We talked (earlier in the season) about being able to go inside out, and



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon’s Jordan May converts a layup for two of his game-high 24 points in the Mountaineers’ win over Evergreen Friday.

tonight really showed that. We had it going outside, and then we had it going inside,” May said. “Last year we were all outside (and) that didn’t work. This year we can go inside and out.” Schetzle was at times unstoppable in the paint, as evidenced by his 8-for-10

effort from the floor. Labarda said the 7-footer is finding his footing better in the flow of EOU’s offense, and it’s paying dividends. “Jarek is steadily improving. I think with these transfers it takes about half

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Caballa’s win paces Mounties

Observer staff

Mhar Caballa (125 pounds) went 4-0 to win the tournament title and lead the Eastern Oregon men’s wrestling team to a fourth-place finish at the Menlo Open Saturday in Atherton, California. Three of Caballa’s four wins came by decision, including the final, where he eked out a close 4-3 decision over unattached wrestler Eric Sanchez for his second tournament title of the year, according to the EOU website. Three other Mountaineers placed in the top four. Blake McNall (133) went 3-1 to take third place, and in the third-place

match defeated teammate Ryan Ninman, who went 2-2 on the day for fourth. McNall cruised to a 19-0 technical fall win in the match. Ninman did turn in a wild win earlier in the tournament, opening with a high-scoring 28-15 major decision over Warner Pacific’s Lucas Higginbotham. Drake Randall (165) finished with a 3-2 record to place fourth. Four other EOU grapplers posted multiple wins on the day. Both Keegan Mulhill (157) and Dino May (184) finished with 3-2 records, while Tyler Miller (141) and Jared

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LHS girls avenge loss to Nyssa, now 7-3

Observer staff

The La Grande Tigers girls basketball team avenged an earlier loss to the Nyssa Bulldogs with a 44-40 road win Saturday night. After scoring just four points in the first quarter, La Grande found a spark to take a 22-19 lead at the break. The Tigers led just 32-31 after three quarters, but held on in the fourth for the win. Camryn Collman scored 14 points, including six in the fourth quarter, to lead the Tigers. Grace Neer added eight points, and both Alexyss Chamberlain and Ella Dunlap had six points. La Grande (7-3 overall) hosts Pendleton Tuesday. Also Saturday ANDERSON HAS BIG NIGHT IN HUSKIES’ WIN Tymra Anderson poured in 27 points to lead three players in double figures as the Elgin Huskies girls basketball team picked up its first Old Oregon League win of the season with a 61-40 home victory over the Griswold Grizzlies on Saturday. Kaelin Evans added 11 points for Elgin, and Jayden Palmer was close behind with 10 points. The Huskies (4-6 overall, 1-1 OOL) head to Joseph on Friday. BOBCATS FALL ON THE ROAD TO GRANT UNION The Union Bobcats girls basketball team hung with

Grant Union, which currently leads the Blue Mountain Conference, most of the night, but came up short in a 60-52 loss to the Prospectors Saturday in John Day. Kaylin Nowak scored 14 points to lead three Bobcats in double figures. Kylie Marriott followed with 12 points, and Brianna Kohr added 11 points. Union was within 34-29 at halftime before the Prospectors pushed the lead to double digits at 48-37 after three quarters and held on from there. Union (7-6 overall, 1-2 BMC) hosts Stanfield Friday. RUN BOOSTS BADGERS TO BLOWOUT WIN A 21-2 run in the second quarter by the Powder Valley Badgers girls basketball team helped set the tone as it rolled to a 52-14 thumping of the Cove Leopards in Old Oregon League action Saturday in Cove. The big quarter boosted Powder Valley to a 32-8 lead at the half, and the Badgers held Cove to just six points in the second half. Megan Bingham led Powder Valley with 12 points and had five of the Badgers’ 24 steals. Shelby Sieckman and Josi Krieger both added eight points. Maggie Frisch had six points for Cove, and Rebekah Farrell added four points. The Badgers (11-2 overall, 2-0 OOL) visit Imbler

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EOU pulls away for another weekend sweep

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Evergreen College women’s basketball team was only remotely close to Eastern Oregon at halftime — and it was still down by 22 — thanks to a hot first half from the 3-point line. EOU fixed that in the second half. The No. 14 Mountaineers clamped down on defense to hold the Geoducks to just 16 percent shooting and 20 points after the break on their way to a 101-55 rout at home Friday in Cascade Collegiate Conference play. “Second half we played great defense,” EOU Head Coach Anji Weissenfluh said. “First half we struggled (and) we stood around. Second half we made the adjustment, we went to the boards, and a lot of different people stepped up.” In addition to playing better perimeter defense, a key adjustment EOU made was a player-suggested move. “We wanted to get out and deny,” Weissenfluh said. “We normally play gap defense.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon’s Madison Crews, right, fires a pass into the paint Friday. Crews had seven assists in EOU’s win.

We adjusted and played some denial defense, and I think that helped us move. We were stagnant, and I wanted some energy.” It worked. Evergreen made just five second-half field

goals and was 2-for-11 from beyond the arc. EOU had little issue finding a flow on offense, shooting 47 percent overall and connecting on 16-of-28 3-pointers. Maya Ah You-

Dias sparked a balanced offensive attack that saw 11 players score with 20 points, including 15 in the first half. Jane Nelson and Madison Crews added 18 and 11 points, respectively. EOU distanced itself after a close first few minutes by ending the opening quarter on a 20-2 run for a 34-16 lead. Evergreen got within 12, but the Mountaineers pushed the advantage to 57-35 by halftime, then added on in the second half. “We did a good job keeping the intensity up despite the score and working hard,” Ah You-Dias, who added a game-high 11 rebounds, said. “We really picked up the defense in the second half, which helped extend the score even more.” It was just the fifth game back for Ah You-Dias this season, and the senior admitted to being worried early she could affect the team’s on-court chemistry for a couple games. That seems to be far from

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