



The Eastern Oregon women's basketball team celebrates after winning the Cascade Collegiate Conference title Saturday.

Higa claims Eastern's best finish

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

Macy Higa recorded the highest individual finish in the history of the Eastern Oregon women's wrestling program and became the third athlete to earn an all-American as she placed third at the WCWA National Championships Friday and Saturday in Atlanta.

"It's unexpected. It's been pretty crazy," Higa said of the high finish. "I didn't realize it was possible. Of course, I had set (high) goals, but to get on the podium was really nice.

"My mindset in general was to be a national champ. I was taught you should set your goals high."

Higa finished with an overall record of 7-1 in the 123-pound bracket, and joined Jessica DeHart (2017, 2018) and Makayla Grimm (2017) as all-Americans in the three-year history of the program. She's the second freshman to pull off the feat, as well, which Grimm also did in her seventh-place finish. DeHart placed fourth in 2018, and eighth in 2017.

"She (only) lost to the No. 1 seed," EOU Coach Walt Anderson said. "That's a good showing. That girl (Simon Fraser's Dominique Parrish) is legit. She's a world team member for Canada."

Anderson added of Higa that "a lot of the other wrestlers and coaches around were surprised to hear she was a freshman."

Higa rolled through two of her first three matches on Friday with a 10-0 technical fall over Grays Harbor's Lesly Baires and a 14-4 technical fall over Koral Sugiyama. In between, she had a close 10-6 decision over Alexia Ward of McKendree University.

The three wins put her into the quarterfinals before she suffered her only loss, an 11-0 technical fall to Parrish, the eventual national champion.

"After that I knew if I moped around or felt sorry it wouldn't do any good. I forgot about

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EOU keeps on rolling

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

Eastern Oregon women's basketball player Maya Ah You-Dias said she heard some of the whispers in the offseason that this could be a rebuilding year for the Mountaineers after the team lost several seniors from a year ago.

Instead, the machine the program has become racked up yet another Cascade Collegiate Conference title and continued a CCC winning streak that is reaching unthinkable lengths.

The Mountaineers earned two more blowout victories at

home this weekend — Friday over Warner Pacific, 83-61, and Saturday over Multnomah, 84-38 — to secure the program's third consecutive regular-season title. Friday's win gave EOU at least a share, while Saturday's drubbing clinched it outright for the second year in a row.

"Our expectations are always to win a conference championship, so for us that's all we had on our minds," Ah You-Dias said after Saturday's win, the 24th win in a row for EOU and the 48th overall in CCC action.

In fact, the domination has

become so great of late that Maren Herrud, a senior transfer who scored a career-high 27 points in her final regular-season game at Quinn Coliseum, doesn't even know what it's like to lose to a CCC opponent.

"To actually step back and think about it, it's such a big deal, but (at EOU) it's almost expected," Herrud said. "If we weren't to win it, it would be a big deal in reverse. That's what happens here. They always win."

It's the 11th title won outright or shared by the Mountaineers, the second time

they've won three in a row and the sixth championship this decade.

And EOU Head Coach Anji Weissenfluh, who has engineered each one, said it may be the most fulfilling given the plethora of new players — freshmen and transfers — brought in this season and the process it took to mesh the team.

"Every year is different," the coach said. "Every championship is different, but this year we started out so raw and so new (with) so many different

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LHS boys take first, girls place second

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

Some outsiders could look at the season the La Grande Tigers boys swim team has had this season and consider it a down year. After all, La Grande hasn't been winning the plethora of races or meets like it typically does.

That all changed Friday. Led by four victories by senior Garren Dutto — two in relays and two individually — La Grande won six races and the six automatic state berths that came with them on its way to the title in the Class 4A/3A/2A/1A Special District 2 Meet in La Grande.

"It was going to depend on how they came together, and they did it," LHS Head Coach Darren Dutto said of the Tigers' chances of a district title. "They put together some really good swims to be in the mix."

In all, La Grande scored 309 points to run away with the top spot. The Tigers were more than 80 points ahead of runner-up Molalla (225.5 points).



La Grande's Garren Dutto won two individual races and swam on two winning relay teams to lead the LHS boys to a district title Friday.

Garren Dutto led the way by dominating his two sprints: the 50-yard freestyle and the 100 freestyle. His time of 21.83 seconds in the 50 freestyle was a per-

sonal best, and he won the race by almost two seconds. He turned around later for a time of 48.56 in the 100 freestyle, winning by nearly 4.5 seconds.

Dutto was also teamed with T.J. Clay, Grayson Jensen and Caden Ricker on the winning 200 medley relay team (1:47.87) and the

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Tigers seize the opportunity

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

The La Grande Tigers boys basketball team has had a handful of confidence-building wins in recent weeks.

Friday's over rival Baker, however, was arguably the biggest.

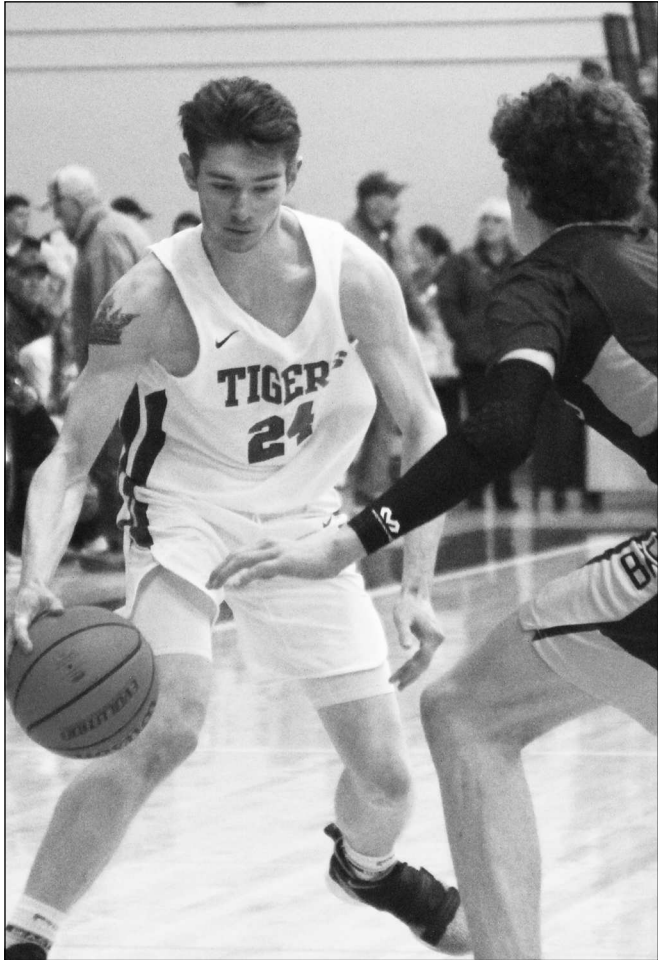
Kaden Chandler had 16 points and eight rebounds, and La Grande got rolling in the second half to earn a 54-42 home win over the Bulldogs Friday in its Greater Oregon League regular-season finale.

"We've got a lot of confidence right now," Chandler said. "This game was important to us. None of us wanted to travel back to Mac-Hi at all."

Chandler was referring to the possibility that the Tigers could have dropped to third in the GOL district tournament seeding with a loss, which likely would have meant a road game in McLoughlin later this week.

Instead, the Tigers locked up the No. 2 seed and will host a game against Mac-Hi

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La Grande's Hunter Youngblood, left, scored 12 points in the Tigers' win over Baker Friday.

La Grande to send 17 wrestlers to state

Observer staff

The La Grande Tigers wrestling team will take 17 competitors to the Class 4A state tournament — seven of them coming off of district championships — after the Tigers cruised to the Special District 4 title Friday and Saturday in Madras.

It was a result that far exceeded the expectations of Head Coach Klel Carson, who recounted part of a conversation on the way to the tourney with former LHS Coach Verl Miller.

"I said if we had a perfect day, we could qualify 16, and we qualified 17," Carson said. "It was actually better than perfect."

The coach said the 17 state qualifiers was an LHS record, and the seven district champions tied the school mark.

The champions included lower-weight outstanding wrestler, Ezra McIntosh (120 pounds) and upper-weight outstanding wrestler Grayson Livingston (170). McIntosh went 4-0,

and defeated Baker's Johnny Niehaus by a 3-1 sudden victory in the championship match. Livingston went 3-0 and also edged a rival Bulldog in the championship, topping Hon Rushton by a close 3-2 decision.

At 138, in one of two title bouts that featured two LHS wrestlers, Casey McCall came away with the third district title as he scored a 3-0 decision over teammate Braxton Bisenius. McCall went 4-0 in the tournament,

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