

# EOU wins thriller Friday, falls Saturday

**By Ronald Bond**  
The Observer

Just 24 hours after securing a much-needed, wild, buzzer-beating victory, the Eastern Oregon men's basketball team suffered a stinging loss.

Behind a 42-point performance from Zach Richardson, the Multnomah Lions rained in 23 3-pointers and fended off every Mountaineer comeback attempt for a 112-105 win at Quinn Coliseum Saturday in Cascade Collegiate Conference play.

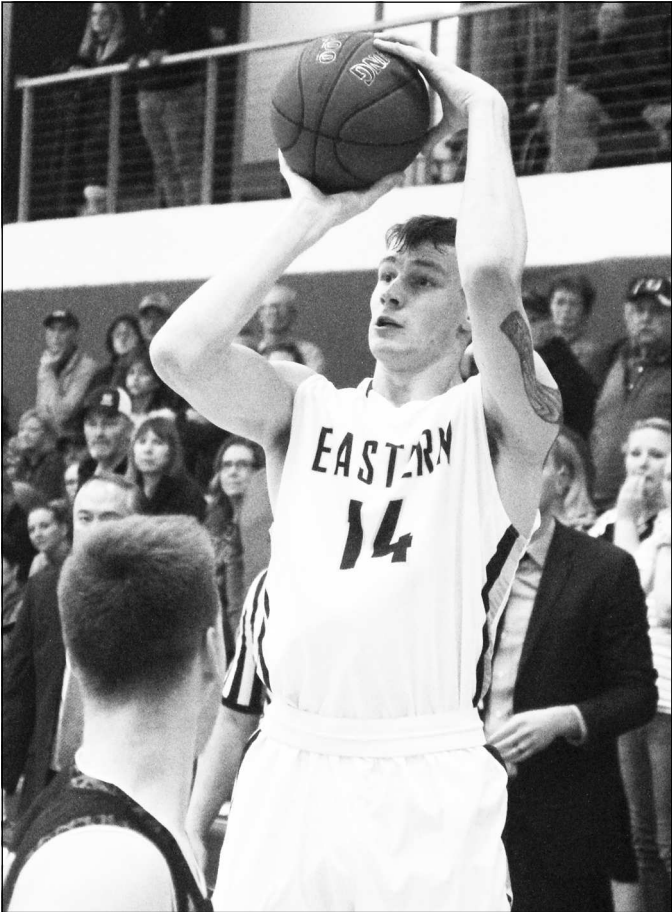
"After an emotional win it's always hard to keep that emotion up," EOU Head Coach Carlito Labarda Jr. said. "Everyone thinks you lose a game in the last seconds. No. You can lose a game in the first two, three minutes, and I think that's where we lost it."

Multnomah never trailed as it scored the game's first eight points and was up double digits for much of the contest while launching — and making — 3-pointers at a rate that would make the Golden State Warriors dizzy.

The Lions didn't connect on the 38 triples they hit in a win earlier this season, but they did shoot 23-for-50, with Richardson hitting eight and Ben Grandle, who added 30 points, connecting on nine 3-pointers.

"They hit some incredible shots," Labarda said. "They miss two or three of those incredible shots, maybe we win the game."

Each EOU run to get close — including when Jordan May hit a 3-pointer for the only tie at 52-52 early in the second half — was met by a flurry from the Lions. Multnomah, in fact, hit six 3s in a



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Landon Jones puts up a potential game-tying 3-pointer Saturday night against Multnomah.

row after EOU pulled even. Grandle hit three during the run — including one from 30 feet out — and Richardson hit the sixth for a 71-61 lead.

In spite of the hot shooting from Multnomah and cold shooting on its own part — Eastern was 11-for-37 from 3-point range — the Mountaineers gave themselves a chance after erasing a 10-point deficit in the final two minutes. Said Hersi hit two 3-pointers to help trim a 102-92 deficit to 104-98. Landon Jones then hit two free throws and Zane Wright hit a 3-pointer of his own that cut it to 106-103 with 48.7 seconds to go.

A steal by Kobi Gardea

then gave Eastern a chance at the tie, but a good look at a trey by Jones missed, and Gardea saw a layup spin off in the late stages before the Lions iced the win at the line.

Though disappointed in the loss, Labarda commended his team for rallying.

"This team doesn't give up," he said, also referencing a game earlier this season when they put together a similar rally late to nearly upset College of Idaho. "I advise the fans next year don't ever leave early. We'll always be in it."

Jones had 20 points and 14 rebounds to lead EOU. May had 17 points, Hersi added 16 and Peter Hamilton scored

12. Jarek Schetzle had 10 points and 10 boards.

A night earlier, May hit a game-winning 3-pointer as EOU rallied from 18 points down in the second half to earn a huge 77-74 win over Warner Pacific.

The comeback capped a wild contest in which EOU scored the game's first 17 points only to see Warner Pacific go on a 38-10 run to take a 38-27 lead at the half. The Knights pushed the lead to as much as 50-32 early in the second half before Eastern came back. Schetzle scored in the paint to give EOU a 61-60 lead, and Hersi followed with a 3-pointer to cap the 32-10 run for a four-point edge. Schetzle later scored to put Eastern up 74-69 with two minutes to play. The Knights eventually pulled even to set up May's heroics as he hit the game-winner.

May finished with 19 points and 13 rebounds, while Schetzle also scored 19 points.

The weekend split leaves EOU (14-13 overall, 9-7 CCC) currently in fifth in the CCC headed into its final weekend of play at Oregon Tech and Southern Oregon. A sweep by EOU would guarantee the Mountaineers no worse than fourth in the conference — and possibly as high as third — and a home game in the first round of the CCC tournament. A split and a win by Corban over Northwest Christian next weekend would also put the Mountaineers in fourth. If they're swept, though, they'll finish fifth or sixth.

"It's a monumental task," Labarda said. "Oregon Tech is one of the top teams in the league, (and) Southern Oregon is no gimme."

# EOU track sends more to nationals

Observer staff

The women's 4-by-400 relay team and long jumper Ebony Wilson both posted national qualifying marks to lead the efforts of the Eastern Oregon women's track and field team Saturday at the Boise State Team Challenge in Nampa, Idaho.

Megan Bolton, Olivia Lane, Michelle Herbes and Elizabeth Herbes turned in a time of 3:53.67 to not only qualify for the indoor national championships, but win the race over a field that contained several NCAA Division I teams. It was also the second-fastest time in program history.

Wilson added a mark of 18-feet-5-3/4 to break her own school record, take second overall and reach nationals.

In addition to the win in the relay, EOU scored a victory from Kalulusno Ngaida in the high jump at 5-feet-3-3/4, with teammate Paige Dodd taking fourth at 5-feet-1-3/4. Also in fourth was the distance medley relay team of the Herbes sisters, Megan Boals and Faith Homer in 12:44.74, and Maggie Ledbetter in the shot put at 40-feet-0-3/4.

Danielle Church placed in both the weight throw (47-feet-11-3/4) and the shot put (30-feet-10-1/4), taking third and seventh, respectively. The Mountaineers had a 5-6-7 finish in the women's 5,000 from Stormy Bullard (20:35.05), Dierdre McKay (20:37.75) and Molly Gulden (21:41.36), and added a trio of eighth-place finishes: Homer in the 800 (2:19.92), Morgan Reddington in the long jump (17-feet-8) and Victoria Branch in the triple jump (36-feet-0-3/4).

The EOU men were led by a victory in the 4-by-400 relay, which also featured several D-I schools, as Conner Young, Cooper Shaw, Derian Handfield and Devin-Lewis Allen posted a time of 3:19.98, the fastest in program history.

The EOU men also had a solid showing in the pole vault, with Corey Sledge placing second (16-feet-2-1/2), Justin Gould third (15-feet-8-1/2) and Darrin Walker sixth (15-feet-2-3/4). Sledge and Gould, who had already qualified for nationals, exceeded the national mark again.

The men's DMR team of Hunter Kratz, Lewis-Allen, Alex Navarro and Lane Inwards placed third in 10:22.39. Also third was Young in the 400 (49.47).

Allex Kosel took seventh in the long jump at 21-feet-8-3/4, and taking eighth were Navarro in the mile (4:22.09) and Chase Van Wyck in the shot put (45-feet-4-1/4).

EOU is off until the SPU Final Tune Up Feb. 23 in Seattle.

# TIGERS

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or Ontario Thursday with a state playoff berth on the line.

That game will be just another opportunity for the Tigers, which is a point Head Coach Mark Carollo has been emphasizing lately to his team.

"There's something to be said for continuing to trust the process — I know that's overused — and just understanding that things might not go your way the whole season, but if you to work, there's opportunities," he said. "We still have these opportunities ahead."

Chandler and fellow senior Hunter Youngblood, who added 12 points, were two players who clearly took that message to heart. Chandler had nine points in the first half to help keep the Tigers close as the teams battled to a 21-21 tie at the break, then he and Youngblood combined for La Grande's first 10 points of a third quarter that ended with the Tigers up 34-24.

"I knew this game was important. I didn't play last game (against Baker) so they haven't seen me play all year," Chandler said. "I just came out here and tried to ball with my bros."

Youngblood had a steal and dunk to open the fourth to push the margin to 12, and the Tigers had a response for every late attempt by Baker to rally.

"Kaden and Hunter really stepped up in some crunch times and gave us some buckets we needed," Carollo said.

The biggest one, though, was a dagger by Kaleb Myer, who finished with nine points. Baker botched a breakaway layup attempt that would have cut the margin to just six points, and on the ensuing possession Myer drilled an open 3-pointer that gave La Grande a 44-33 lead midway through the final quarter.

Baker got no closer than eight points the rest of the way.

"Kaleb Myer hit a big shot, Cristian Mendoza took care of the ball and made some big passes down the stretch, the list could go on," Carollo said of who stepped up for La Grande.

Most of Baker's scoring came from Kaden Sand and Gabe Gambleton, who had 16 and 15 points, respectively, but La Grande limited Baker to 33 percent shooting, forced 17 turnovers and outrebounded the Bulldogs 35-22.

La Grande wasn't much better from the floor at 35 percent, but shot 43 percent after halftime and grabbed 11 offensive rebounds.

The Tigers (7-11 overall, 4-2 GOL) host the winner between Ontario and Mac-Hi likely Thursday evening in the GOL semifinals.

**Also Friday**  
**UNION 64, PILOT ROCK 50**

The Union Bobcats boys basketball team scored 30 points in the fourth quarter to rally for a 64-50 road win over the Pilot Rock Rockets Friday in its Blue Mountain Conference regular season finale.

Union trailed much of the night, including 39-34 entering the final quarter, then exploded on the offensive end to pull ahead, and eventually pull away.

Keegan Glenn led the way with a double-double, scoring 17 points and collecting 11 rebounds. He also had six steals. Tate Lantis added 14 points, Jace Phillips scored 12 and Gannon Carreiro had 11.

The Bobcats (15-7 overall, 8-4 BMC) who finished third in the conference, will face Grant Union Friday at the BMC district tournament in Pendleton. A win sends Union to the state playoffs, while a loss eliminates it from postseason contention.

**GRANT UNION 64, ENTERPRISE 54**

A third-quarter run was too much for the Enterprise

Outlaws boys basketball team to overcome as it dropped its regular-season finale on the road in Blue Mountain Conference play to the Grant Union Prospectors Friday, 64-54.

Enterprise held an early lead and was down just 34-30 at the half, but a 21-9 third quarter run by Grant Union pushed its lead to double figures and gave it what proved to be an insurmountable lead.

Cason Kirkland led Enterprise with 19 points, while Devin Greer had 17 and Dylan Marr added 12.

Enterprise (9-14 overall, 3-9 BMC), which finished fifth in the BMC, will face Stanfield in the BMC district tournament Friday in Pendleton.

**JOSEPH 52, WALLOWA 40**

The Joseph Eagles boys basketball team found its offense in the second half to pull away from a pesky Wallowa Cougars squad for a 52-40 home win Friday in Old Oregon League play.

The Eagles led 15-14 at halftime before matching that total in the third for a 30-25 lead, then adding 22 points in the final quarter for the win.

Mason Ferré scored 14 points — 12 in the second half — to lead Joseph. Hadley Miller added 13 points and Tyler Homan scored nine points.

Christopher Nobles had 18 points to lead Wallowa. Tristin Bales netted 13 points and Mason Moore scored seven.

**COVE 33, IMBLER 21**

Jayce Burnette led the way with 14 points, and the Imbler Panthers boys basketball team grinded out a win in another defensive battle, topping the Cove Leopards at home, 33-21, Friday in Old Oregon League play.

Grant Slater scored seven points and Will Coston added five for Imbler, which held an opponent to 30 points or fewer for the eighth time this season. It's 8-0 in



Observer file photo

Elgin's Kaden McClure, shown last month against Imbler, had 22 points as Elgin defeated Powder Valley Saturday.

such games, but 0-12 when allowing more than 30.

Imbler held a 16-12 lead at halftime, doubled the lead to 25-17 after three and then held Cove without a field goal in the fourth.

Blake Witten had 11 points and Cameron Dillman had five for Cove.

Imbler (8-12 overall, 5-6 OOL) faces Joseph in the OOL district tournament Thursday in Baker City.

**NIXYAAWII 75, ELGIN 47**

The Elgin Huskies boys basketball team hung in with the Nixyaawii Golden Eagles this time, but ran of steam in the fourth quarter in a 75-47 home loss Friday in Old Oregon League play.

Unlike the first meeting, which was a 70-point win for Nixyaawii, Elgin held a lead after one quarter and was within 57-47 through three quarters. But the Golden Eagles scored all 18 points in the fourth quarter to finally pull away.

Kaden McClure scored 16 points to lead the Huskies. Gage McKay added 11 and Ian Adams scored 10.

**Saturday**  
**NIXYAAWII 53, JOSEPH 40**

The Joseph Eagles boys

basketball team erased most of a huge first-quarter deficit, but came up short in a 53-40 road loss to the Nixyaawii Golden Eagles Saturday in their Old Oregon League regular-season finale.

Joseph was down 18-2 after one quarter, but got within 10 at halftime and was down just 35-31 after three quarters. Nixyaawii, though, got going again in the fourth to earn the win and finish 12-0 in OOL play.

Tyler Homan scored 15 points, including 12 in the second half, to lead the Eagles. Mason Ferré added nine and Chase Murray scored seven.

Joseph (16-8 overall, 9-3 OOL) faces Imbler in the first round of the OOL district tournament Thursday in Baker City.

**COVE 47, PINE EAGLE 36**

Dawson Gaertner led the way with 13 points as the Cove Leopards boys basketball team finished the regular season with a 47-36 home win over the Pine Eagle Spartans Saturday in Old Oregon League play.

The victory pulled Cove even with Imbler for second

in the OOL-South, but Cove owns the tiebreaker, meaning the Leopards earn the second seed into the OOL district tournament.

A strong first half, including a 14-2 run in the second quarter, gave Cove a lead it wouldn't relinquish of 30-13 by halftime.

Both Blake Witten and Landon Moore added 11 points.

Cove (12-9 overall, 5-6 OOL) faces Elgin in the OOL district tournament Thursday in Baker City.

**ELGIN 62, POWDER VALLEY 61**

The Elgin Huskies boys basketball team held off a fourth-quarter comeback by the Powder Valley Badgers to escape with a 62-61 home win Saturday night in the Old Oregon League finale for both teams.

The Huskies led most of the night, including by 16 after one quarter and by a 44-32 margin after three quarters. Powder Valley dropped in 29 points in the final quarter — including 15 from Ethan Stephens — but came up just short.

Kaden McClure scored 13 first-quarter points and 22 overall to lead Elgin. Gage McKay added 14 points and Brandon Caldwell scored 11 points.

Stephens had 19 points for the Badgers. Reece Dixon added 14 points and Roper Bingham scored 12 points.

Elgin (12-9 overall 7-5 OOL) face Cove Thursday in the first round of the OOL district tournament in Baker City, while Powder Valley (15-8, 7-4) will face either Joseph or Imbler in the district tournament semifinals Friday.

**GRISWOLD AT WALLOWA CANCELED**

The regular-season finale between the Wallowa Cougars and the Griswold Grizzlies boys basketball teams was canceled.

The Cougars finished the season with an overall record of 6-15, and were 3-8 in the Old Oregon League.