



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

La Grande's Parker Robinson, top, enters the Class 4A state wrestling championships today as the top seed at 160 pounds. The Tigers are looking for their first trophy since 2009.

## Tigers in trophy discussion

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

It's been a decade since the La Grande Tigers wrestling team made it to the podium.

This weekend looks to be the team's best opportunity to end that spell.

The Tigers are taking 16 wrestlers to the Class 4A state tournament Friday and Saturday at Portland's Memorial Coliseum, and Head Coach Kle Carson said La Grande will need wrestlers to step up throughout the lineup if the team wants to get back into the top four and home a tournament trophy.

"I was asked (Wednesday) what it's going to take to (earn a) trophy, and we need everyone to contribute," he said.

The Tigers last garnered a trophy in 2009, when they took third at state.

Before the season started, Carson considered his Tigers as a team that could potentially be in contention for the program's first state championship since 1996. La Grande still has the numbers and the talent to be in the mix, but it will be harder after losing Nathan Reed — a state runner-up a year ago — to a midseason leg injury and Alex Kehr — who took third a year ago — to a shoulder injury during the district tournament.

"It's a lot of potential points (that are lost)," Carson said.

Even with the losses, the Tigers still have two wrestlers on the team who placed high at state a year ago — Parker Robinson (second) and Christopher Woodworth (third) — and half of the 16 headed to Portland made the trip a year ago, so the squad is not lacking state experience.

The team is also highly touted, and the individual seeding received by La Grande's wrestlers show that fact. Ten of the grapplers competing this weekend are seeded eighth or higher.

"I feel like we've got seven or eight guys that if we got a great weekend (out of them) we could be in the top four," Carson said.

Six of the Tigers are a top-three seed. Robinson is the top seed in his 160-pound weight class, and Grayson Livingston (170) and Woodworth (195) are both seeded second.

"All three of them are really focused on (con-



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

LHS's Christopher Woodworth is one of two Tigers who enter state seeded second.

tending for a state title)," Carson said. "They put in a lot of hard work the last couple of weeks. They're in a really good spot. I wouldn't want to wrestle them this weekend, that's for sure."

Carson considered Tillamook as the favorite for the state title, but believes several teams, including his Tigers, are top-four contenders.

"They're the favorite because of the number of kids," Carson said of Tillamook. "They won the Oregon Classic. Sweet Home is going to be in there. We're in there. Cascade doesn't have the numbers that we have, but has five guys who are capable of winning it. Baker is sending quite a few kids to state. Woodburn is going to be in the conversation, (as well as) Molalla."

The Joseph/Wallowa Eagles likely are not in range to contend for a team trophy at the 2A/1A level, but one of their wrestlers has an opportunity to etch his name among the all-time greats, as Steven Beckman guns for a third consecutive state title. He won the last two years at 106 pounds, and this year looks to add on as the top seed at 113. If he accomplishes the feat, he would become the first-three-time state champion at any classification in the tri-county region.

Joining him is Zeb Ramsden, the third seed at 132, Austin Brockamp (170) and Jonah Staigle (195), both of whom are unseeded. Ramsden and Brockamp are both making their second straight trips to Portland, while Staigle is a first-time qualifier.

### Local state tournament competitors

#### LA GRANDE TIGERS

Cody Hibbert - 113  
Ezra McIntosh - 120  
Braden Carson - 126  
Cole Isaacson - 126  
Casey McCall - 138  
Braxton Bisenius - 138  
Brody MacMillian - 145  
Keith Oswald - 152  
Parker Robinson - 160  
Hayden Shafer - 160  
Grayson Livingston - 170  
Christopher Woodworth - 195  
Spencer Gerst - 220  
Lincoln Clark - 220  
Gabe Shukle - 285  
Joel Rogers - 285

#### JOSEPH/WALLOWA EAGLES

Steven Beckman - 113  
Zeb Ramsden - 132  
Austin Brockamp - 170  
Jonah Staigle - 195

#### ENTERPRISE OUTLAWS

Trace Evans - 138  
Klint Norton - 285

#### IMBLER PANTHERS

Logan Butcher - 145

#### UNION/COVE BOBCATS

Jaxon Blackburn - 126

The Enterprise Outlaws are taking two wrestlers, both unseeded, in Trace Evans (138) and Klint Norton (285). Evans reached state a year ago, while Norton is making his first trip.

Logan Butcher (145) is the lone representative for the Imbler Panthers and is making his second straight trip to state. If he places, See **Wrestling** / Page 8A

## EOU men bounced from tourney

Observer staff

The third time wasn't a charm for the Eastern Oregon men's basketball team.

After defeating Corban twice during the regular season, the Mountaineers fell short in their attempt at a third victory over the Warriors, losing in the Cascade Collegiate Conference quarterfinals, 80-75, Wednesday in Salem.

The back-and-forth contest featured eight ties and four lead changes. Corban took the lead for good, though, on two free throws and a dunk by Joel Johnson to go ahead 70-66 with 5:28 to play.

The lead reached nine with less than three minutes to play before EOU put together a last-ditch effort to keep its season alive. Three-pointers by Kobi Gardea and Zane Wright brought the Mountaineers

within 76-72, and Peter Hamilton drained a triple after a Corban turnover to make it 76-75 with 34 seconds to play. Tyler Wadleigh made two free throws to push the margin back to three, then iced the game with two more free throws in the final seconds after Said Hersi's tying 3-point attempt missed.

EOU led by as much as five in the first half, going ahead 27-22 on a Jordan May layup, and went into the half tied at 40-40 after a Hamilton 3-pointer. The Mountaineers, though, never led in the second half.

May led EOU with 18 points and three steals. Hamilton added 14 points and Gardea, Wright and Landon Jones all had eight points.

With the loss, Eastern Oregon finishes with a final record of 15-15. ■

## Eagles roll into second round

Observer staff

The Joseph Eagles girls basketball team netted 30 points in the first quarter alone and cruised from there on its way to a 62-24 home victory over the Ione Cardinals in the first round of the Class 1A state playoff Wednesday.

Sabrina Albee, who led Joseph with 28 points, had 12 in the opening quarter as the Eagles jumped out to a 30-12 lead after one. Madelyn Nelson, who added 15 points for Joseph, had eight in the first.

The Eagles held a 39-21 lead at the half, then outscored Ione 23-3 in the second half to complete the rout.

Haley Miller added eight points and Emma Hite scored seven for Joseph.

The Eagles (24-3 overall) travel to Mohawk for the second round of the state playoffs Saturday, with the winner advancing to the state quarterfinals next week in Baker City.

### COUGARS ELIMINATED BY CRANE

The Wallowa Cougars girls basketball team saw its best season in four years come to an end with a 67-31 road loss to the Crane Mustangs Wednesday in the first round of the Class 1A state playoffs.

Shanna Rae Tillery led Wallowa in the loss with 13 points, and three players —

Kyla Hook, Ashlyn Young and Jamie Johnston — scored four points apiece.

Wallowa finished with a record of 14-12, and matched its win total from the 2014-15 year, when the Cougars also won 14 games.

### BADGERSTO HOST WILDCATS

The Powder Valley Badgers girls basketball team will host the Southwest Christian Wildcats, who defeated Echo in the first round, 37-22, in the second round of the Class 1A state playoffs at 7 p.m. Saturday.

The winner will advance to the state quarterfinals next week in Baker City. ■

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