

Tigers, Buckaroos set for showdown in season opener

By Brett Kane
EO Media Group

PREP FOOTBALL

The last time the Pendleton Buckaroos and La Grande Tigers met, it was on Pendleton's football field, where the Bucks made off with the win.

This year, the rematch is coming to La Grande's turf. Last year's

38-12 loss to the Bucks is one that Tigers coach Rich McIlmoil remembers well.

"We learned a lot from that game last year," McIlmoil said. "I know right off the bat that Pendleton is a great team. They have a great

tradition and a great coaching staff. We have to run it right this year. A lot of guys last year didn't understand that. At the end of the day, things weren't clicking. The guys understand that better this year."

Friday night's game will be a cross-classification battle between Pendleton, from the 5A division,

and La Grande — a 4A contender. Although the teams hail from different divisions, both coaches emphasize that one major factor could turn the tide either way: experience.

While the Bucks, who are fresh off their best season in over four decades, graduated 17 seniors

from last year's roster, the Tigers welcome back 18 of their own.

"They returned 85-90% of their starting line," Pendleton coach Erik Davis said of La Grande. "They're a senior-heavy team. We look at them as a top 4A team in the state. I expect La Grande to

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Katie Perry, right, points up field while Taryn Miller tries to track her down during a recent scrimmage. The girls soccer team begins the season Thursday at home against Pendleton.

Powder Valley sweeps past Union



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Union's Sydney Antoine, left, and Powder Valley's Autumn Davis both make a play on a ball at the net during Tuesday's match in Union.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Brooke Allen said she felt like the Powder Valley Badgers didn't play to their full potential Tuesday night.

It was still a good enough effort to earn a sweep.

Allen had 16 assists, seven digs and five kills as part of a balanced attack as Powder Valley swept the Union Bobcats, 25-19, 25-17, 25-22, in a nonleague contest Tuesday in Union.

"We didn't have a lot of energy, and we had (our first day of) school today (Tuesday)," Allen said. "We had 10 games last week, so we're still tired from that."

Powder Valley head coach Marji Lind agreed that the team was "still sluggish" after the long weekend — having played matches Thursday and Friday in Molalla and Saturday in La Grande — but said the Badgers found a way.

"They came out and did their jobs. It may not have been flashy or the way they wanted it to click, but they got it done," she said.

The Badgers were rarely threatened Tuesday, using a 6-0 run and later a 5-0 run to take the first set and building double-digit leads in both the second and third sets. A kill by Josi Krieger in the second gave the Badgers a 23-13 lead before Keanna Bingham finished it with a kill. Another kill by Bingham put the Badgers ahead by an identical 23-13 score in the third as they appeared set to finish the match.

But the Bobcats rallied. Taylor Daggett started a 9-0 run with a kill. Ahnica Shoemaker had consecutive blocks — teaming with Autumn Daggett on one — to bring Union within

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'New' coach, same look

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

PREP GIRLS SOCCER

The La Grande Tigers not only enter the 2019 season missing six seniors from last fall's squad that made a run to the 4A state semifinals, but with a new head coach.

The change at the top, though, is not a drastic one.

Sam Brown, who was the Tigers' assistant coach under Kristen "Tiger" Rice and previously was La Grande's head coach for four years — coaching the 2013 team that reached the state championship — is back at the helm after Rice, who was the head coach for three years, chose to step away from the position.

"I enjoy the privilege of coaching the girls team," Brown said. "It's a team I've been associated with for going on 10 years. I just really love this team and the players and the parents, and the whole organization. It's good to be a part of it."

Because of Brown and Rice's history together on the sideline — Rice was also an assistant coach under Brown — there won't be much in the way of changes.

And why tamper with what has worked? The Tigers have won the Greater Oregon League each of the last eight years — twice in that time reaching the semifinals or further — have become a power in Northeast Oregon and shown the ability to mix it up with west-side schools in the postseason.

"They are well acquainted with me and the philosophy that Tiger coached by," Brown said. "We coached together with it, so there's not a lot of changing of system and approach. There are a few things that are different, but for the most part it's business as usual — working toward the high possession beautiful game."

Katie Perry, one of the seniors who is back for La Grande, said the transition has been a smooth one.

"We're all really sad that Tiger's not coaching, but since Sam was there and we knew him before, it wasn't a complete change. He's been doing a really good job. We're really enjoying that," she said.

On the field, senior Lara Insko said the new members of the squad are stepping in and meshing with the returners.

"I know we're missing a lot of our seniors, who we loved to play with so much and played with for years, but we have a lot of incoming underclassmen that I'm really excited about," she said. "(There is) a lot of talent coming up, and (we've seen) a lot of improvement over the summer."

And even with what they lost, Insko believes the pieces are in place for La Grande to maintain its success without a major regression.

"The passion and energy

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

Sam Brown, above, is back as the LHS head coach. Below, LHS players work through a drill.



Mounties drop second heartbreaker

Observer staff

MEN'S COLLEGE SOCCER

The Eastern Oregon men's soccer team was dealt a second straight heartbreaking loss Monday, dropping its road match against Marymount California, 2-1, in double overtime in Rancho Palos Verdes.

EOU took a 1-0 lead into the half when Elvis Pavon scored off a feed from Javier Moran in the 37th minute. It was one of just two shots taken by

the Mountaineers in the first half.

The lead held until the 80th minute when Joshua Bynoe scored the first of two goals to even the game and send the match to overtime.

Bynoe broke the stalemate by scoring the golden goal 77 seconds into the second overtime.

It's the third time in as many matches

EOU has gone to overtime this season, all of which have ended on a golden goal.

Marymount secured a 21-16 shot advantage. Bynoe was Marymount's main catalyst with five shots, while Pavon took three for EOU. Max Rose had three saves for the Mountaineer. Ramon Garcia tallied five for Marymount.

EOU (1-2-0 overall) returns to the pitch today against The Master's (California).

PREP SPORTS ROUNDUP

La Grande blanks Riverside on road

Observer staff

The La Grande Tigers boys soccer team scored two goals less than 10 minutes into their contest against Riverside, and cruised from there on the way to a 4-0 victory over the Pirates Tuesday in Boardman.

"The boys just played really well," head coach Sid Rangel said. "They scored two right off the bat and took control. They dictated the play, they gave it their best, they connected their passes and they made it work."

Callum Ebel kicked it off with a goal in the fifth minute for the Tigers, and James Thurman followed in the seventh to put La Grande up 2-0 at the half.

Logan Sandoval and Adam Remily scored in the second half for the final margin, finding the back of the net in the 50th and 78th minutes,

respectively. Jacob Huntsman had his second shutout in goal, registering three saves.

"We expect great things from here on out," Rangel added. "(We have) a couple things we've gotta work on."

The Tigers (2-1-0 overall) host Fruitland, Idaho, Tuesday.

Prep volleyball

TIGER TOP PROSPECTORS

Jayce Seavert had a double-double with 14 kills and 16 digs, and the La Grande Tigers took down Grant Union in four sets, 25-10, 20-25, 25-6, 25-18, Tuesday in nonleague action in John Day.

"In Games 1 and 3 we came out like gangbusters and took care of business," head coach Melinda Becker-Bisenius said.

Presley Justice added

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