



Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Audrey Garlitz, right, had two goals and four assists as the Tigers defeated Pendleton in their season opener, 10-0, Thursday at Community Stadium.

## La Grande rolls in season opener

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

PREP GIRLS SOCCER

La Grande Tigers' head coach Sam Brown couldn't have asked for a much better start to the season.

Cecelia Aguilera netted a hat trick, Audrey Garlitz added two goals and had four assists, and the Tigers opened the 2019 season with a 10-0 home win over the Pendleton Buckaroos Thursday at Community Stadium in La Grande.

"Very pleased with how they played," Brown said. "Possession was good. Touches were good. Movement was good. No complaints today."

With the game getting out of hand quickly — La Grande scored four times

in the first 13 minutes to take a 4-0 lead and led by seven goals at the half — Brown had an opportunity to go to his bench early and get a look at potential lineups.

"It's always nice to get some of those players in. It also allows them to gain some confidence, and allows us as a coaching staff to be able to see how things (can be) put together," he said.

La Grande scored early and often to put the game away quickly, and was able to dominate possession no matter who was on the field.

Freshman Rosie Aguilera scored from

in close in the third minute, and Cecelia Aguilera — her older sister — followed with her first two goals for a 3-0 lead in the 13th minute.

"We were trying to work on the speed of our play a lot," Cecelia Aguilera said. "I think we're doing well. And I think we built a lot of trust on this team."

She was also excited to see her sister put home her first career goal.

"That was pretty good," Aguilera said. "She kind of surprised me, but she did good."

Garlitz — who assisted each of the first three goals — followed with her first seconds later for a four-goal lead.

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## Tiger youth movement



Ronald Bond/The Observer

The La Grande Tigers, led by Cristian Mendoza in front, work through warmups at practice Wednesday. The Tigers begin the 2019 cross country season Saturday at the Runner Soul XC Fest in Hermiston.

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

PREP CROSS COUNTRY

The La Grande Tigers cross country team is going through a youth movement — especially on the girls side.

The LHS girls return just one senior who ran with the team last fall, but have one of the larger teams in recent memory — 16 runners, in fact, are listed on the team roster on athletic.net — and more than half of those athletes are freshmen and sophomores.

The Tigers girl squad hasn't been this large since at least the early 2000s, when athletic.net archives began.

It's a far cry from when the Tigers didn't have enough runners to qualify a full team at the district meet just four years ago.

"I'm really excited for what they can do. This year we have a ton of girls, (and) they're all extremely talented," said head coach Alma Crow, who enters her sixth year leading the program. "We have so many girls that I really think our program

has never been this strong (with numbers)."

The infusion of athletes is more than at just the high school level. Crow said the middle school program now has around 25 runners.

"I just think of our recruiting (is helping)," she said. "We're building a solid program. When I started the middle school program we started out with five kids."

The Tigers are coming off a season that saw them take fifth at state and miss out on a team trophy — given to the top four teams — by four points.

The lone returning senior from that team, Maia Vandervlugt, took 21st last fall. Audrey Garlitz (31st at state), Corbyn Sexton (43rd), Jenna Ault (69th) and Lacey Pratt (88th) — runners who also competed a year ago at state — return as well. LHS did lose its top runner — 14th-place finisher Abby Crews — to graduation.

"They are solid. They're strong," Crow said of the girls



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Jacki Martini, who transferred from Arkansas earlier in the year, looks to help the Tigers this fall.

team. "Usually other years I couldn't run them as hard as I am (this fall). I know their training. Some of them have been running since June. That makes them solid for the rest of the year."

She also believes the team

will get a boost from the addition of Jacki Martini, who transferred to La Grande from Arkansas earlier this year and gave a boost to the track team.

"She is like a gazelle. That

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Felicity Houston returns a ball during the Tigers' match against Pendleton Thursday.

## Buckaroos slip by La Grande in five

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

PREP VOLLEYBALL

The La Grande Tigers and Pendleton Buckaroos seem to have an affinity for playing five-set matches.

The teams went the distance for the seven time in their last 13 meetings on Thursday. This time, though, the match went to the visiting Buckaroos.

Daisy Jenness had 11 kills, Zoey Jones added 10, and Pendleton rallied to top the Tigers, 25-17, 24-26, 21-25, 25-14, 15-4, Thursday at La Grande High School.

"I think at the end of the game we ran out of gas," La Grande head coach Melinda Becker-Bisenius said. "We were struggling to put the ball away and keep the ball in play, and that is something we do well at. It's going to happen against a good team."

Buckaroos' head coach Amanda Lapp said her team has shown an ability early in the season to come on strong late, and did so Thursday.

"We see them come out and really try to dig deep in the last," she said. "They're (finding) heart, and wanting to dig in not just for one person to get the kill, but for the team. They're thinking, 'I wanna get this.'"

Pendleton rolled in the fourth set, using a 13-1 run to build a double-digit lead and coast to an easy win, then rode that momentum into the decisive fifth set, one in which it was never threatened.

Jones and Jenness teamed on a block to start a 5-0 run that gave the Bucks an 8-2 lead on a Jenness kill. DeLaney Duchek later had an ace and Emma had two kills before Jenness ended the match with a kill and its first win of the young season.

"It took a lot of heart," Jones, who also had a .500

kill percentage, said. "We really needed to come together as one and finish strong."

Pendleton seemed primed to get out with a quick win. The Buckaroos scored the final five points to pull away late for the first-set victory, and raced out to a 14-4 lead in the second set with a powerful offensive attack.

"We're trying to get them balls on the net so they can get up and swing well," Lapp said.

La Grande, which started the match slow, chipped its way back into the second set, getting within 15-11 on a kill by Jayce Seavert. Pendleton pushed the lead back to 21-14 on a Jones kill and was up 23-18. But La Grande scored the next five points to pull even, and eventually eked out the set to knot the score on another kill by Seavert, who had eight on the night for the Tigers.

La Grande rode the momentum to an early lead in the third set, going up 6-0 and later 8-1. Pendleton briefly got as close as three, then two, and eventually took a 21-20 lead on a House kill and two La Grande errors. But Presley Justice helped La Grande retake the lead, and two Pendleton errors gave the Tigers the set.

Once Pendleton reclaimed the momentum, though, La Grande didn't have an answer.

"This match was pretty tough," said Justice, who had 15 kills to lead the Tigers. "Losing that first set bummed us out. In the second set we got the momentum back. We could have had that game, (but) I think we let ourselves go in the fifth set."

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MEN'S COLLEGE SOCCER

## Mountaineers soccer battles to draw

Observer staff

The Eastern Oregon men's soccer team found itself in yet another overtime match Wednesday.

This one, though, ended in a draw, as the Mountaineers battled to a 3-3 tie with The Master's (California) on Wednesday in Santa Clarita.

Each team found the

goal in the first half, with The Master's scoring in the 13th minute on a goal from Luis Garcia Sosa and EOU pulling even in the 40th on a Mike Dias goal.

TMC took a 2-1 lead in the 49th on a Dylan Bielanski goal before a frenetic finish sent the game to overtime. Alexander Zuluaga scored the equalizer

for Eastern in the 77th, only to see Bielanski score again less than 90 seconds later for a 3-2 edge. EOU knotted the score again in the 84th when Micah Hill put home a rebound off a miss that hit the crossbar.

EOU was the aggressor in overtime, putting up six shots to none for The Master's, but couldn't find

the winner.

In all, EOU had 20 shots, including 11 on goal, while The Master's had 11 and eight. Max Rose had five saves in net for the Mountaineers. Price Anderson had eight saves for The Master's.

EOU (1-2-1 overall) wraps up its California road trip today against No. 11 Vanguard.

