Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Parker Robinson, right, turns upfield after eluding an Ontario tackler during the Greater Oregon League opener Friday at Community Stadium. La Grande rolled to a 56-6 victory.

Tigers trounce Ontario

La Grande scores first 42 points, wins GOL opener

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

La Grande head coach Rich McIlmoil took a timeout 18 seconds into Friday's Greater Oregon League opener against Ontario to light a fire under his Tigers.

It worked.

Nathan Reed rushed for three touchdowns, Parker Robinson threw three TD passes to Blaine Shaw and also ran for a score, and La Grande scored the game's first 42 points on the way to a 56-6 thumping of Ontario at Community Stadium.

"I could tell we weren't mentally focused. I think we were a little distracted by our black uniform thing," McIlmoil said, referring to La Grande debuting new black uniforms. "(It was) a little kick in the pants to say, 'Get going or we could be in trouble.'"

La Grande did punt on that opening drive, but after that, the only team in trouble was Ontario. La Grande did essentially whatever it wanted on the offensive end — through the air or on the ground — and scored on six straight possessions to take a 42-0 halftime lead.

"There's not a lot of high school teams that can run it and pass it as well as we can," said Reed, who finished with 126 yards on just eight carries. "Usually you have just one of the two. We're so deadly at running or passing. We just keep teams on our toes and we're super effective."

The Tigers were in quick-strike mode on Friday, too. Each first-half scoring possession was five plays or less, aided in part by excellent field position due to either a poor Ontario punt or a good punt return by Justin Frederick.

Reed capped the first two scoring drives — of five and three plays, respectively — with runs of 7 and 18 yards, and Robinson found Shaw for a 26-yard TD pass on the first play of the second quarter for a 20-0 lead.

"We've got so many different weapons on offense. We run the ball, and then that opens up the passing game for everyone. And then we throw the ball, and that takes guys out of the box and the running game opens wide up," said Shaw, who finished with 101 yards receiving.

Even when La Grande had to march a considerable distance, it still scored quickly. Reed capped a three-play, 78-yard drive with a 59-yard scoring run as he weaved through the Ontario defense, and Robinson went 75 yards — bulling over defensive back Chaney Larson along the way — three minutes later for a 34-0 advantage.

Robinson joined Reed in going over 100 yards on the ground, as the quarterback finished with 103 yards

See **Blowout** / *Page 10A*

Ronald Bond/The Observer

Nathan Reed, right, follows the blocking of the La Grande offensive line in for one of his three touchdowns during theTigers' win over Ontario Friday.

PREP FOOTBALL

No. 8 Eastern takes two more

Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon's Madison Pilon had 35 assists in the Mountaineers' sweep over Northwest Saturday.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL

The Eastern Oregon University volleyball team hadn't played the kind of match it wanted to on Friday — even if it did come away with a victory.

The No. 8 Mountaineers returned to form Saturday.

Megan Bunn had 16 kills, 14 digs and seven blocks, leading the Mountaineers to a 25-16, 25-22, 25-18 sweep of Northwest University Saturday at Quinn Coliseum.

"I think consistency wise we played 10 times better than we played (Friday) night," EOU head coach Kaki McLean-Morehead said. "For some reason we were a little off last night, and consistency and energy was an issue. That was 10 times better tonight. We had overall effort from a bunch of different hitters, which helps add to our success. Our defense, again, did a great job."

Madison Pilon, who had 35 assists, said the team played with more of a "togetherness" than it had in Friday's match.

"We wanted to play how we know we can play. Yesterday we won, but it wasn't us, and we wanted to show people what Mountie volleyball is about," the junior setter said. "We had fun with it."

EOU was solid defensively both at the net with 13 blocks — Cambree Scott had seven block assists, while Bunn had six and Jet Taylor had five. The EOU back row was also all over the place collecting digs — Kiley McMurtrey had 15 and Aspen Christiansen 11 to go along with Bunn's total.

"I think we all just have a never-die attitude about the ball, and because we have so many people that can make great plays on defense, we all feed off each other," McMurtrey said. "If one person gets a great up, the next person is like, 'I want to do that, too.' We just work together back there and we don't want to let the ball hit the ground. It's fun to have everyone flying all over for it."

The Mountaineers showed an ability to close out sets strong, ending the first set on a 14-4 run — one that was started by a 7-0 burst — to grab the early lead.

The second set not only required a strong finish, but

See **Eastern** / *Page 9A*

Big second half lifts LHS to win

PREP BOYS SOCCER

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The La Grande Tigers and Baker Bulldogs appeared destined for a tight contest in their Greater Oregon League opener at Community Stadium Saturday.

But one goal by the Tigers shortly after halftime swung the momentum.

James Thurman recorded a hat trick — with the first of those goals deflecting off a Baker defender and in — and La Grande scored five unanswered goals in the second half for a 5-0 win over the Bulldogs Saturday.

"We tried something in the first half to experiment, changing formations," La Grande boys soccer head coach Sid Rangel said. "That didn't work, so (we) stuck with our original plan. We went back to that and started connecting passes, and things started working for us."

La Grande had an edge in possession and scoring opportunities in the first half but was unable to break through. Baker goalkeeper Silas Carter played a role in that, registering five saves in the first 40 minutes, including a couple of impressive plays made on attempts by Callum Ebel and Westin Blake. The Bulldogs even seemed to have the momentum early in the second half as they set the tone in the first five minutes.

But in the 46th minute, Thurman's attempt that he said appeared to be headed wide glanced off a Baker defender and trickled home to break the stalemate and set off a snowball effect.

"The opponent got a foot

See **LHS** / *Page 8A*

PREP GIRLS SOCCER

Tigers open GOL action with shutout

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The La Grande Tigers were generating constant pressure and scoring opportunities, but for much of the first half couldn't break through against the Baker Bulldogs' defense Saturday at Community Stadium.

They led 2-0 at the break, but it easily could have been a five- or six-goal margin, especially considering the Tigers had 20 shots in the first half and dominated possession.

"It wasn't our best connective possession play, but we played well," girls soccer head coach Sam Brown said. "I think in the second half we came back better."

La Grande finally broke the game wide open with three second-half goals on the way to a 5-0 win over the Bulldogs in their Greater Oregon League opener.

"When you get a couple goals ahead, (you're) able to calm down and relax a bit. The confidence increases, the touches improve," Brown said.

The Tigers needed only nine minutes to get on the scoreboard when Audrey

See **GOL** / *Page 7A*

Ronald Bond/The Observer

Starra Ullman, center, was one of five La GrandeTigers to score as the girls soccer team shut out Baker Saturday, 5-0.