



EOU Athletics photo

Grace Deboodt Bliss, who finished her career as the all-time leader in several offensive categories for the EOU volleyball team, will be inducted tonight.

EOU to add five to Hall of Fame tonight

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Grace Deboodt graduated as the all-time leader in kills, blocks and aces in the history of the Eastern Oregon University volleyball program.

Nearly a decade later, her name is still plastered throughout the record books at EOU, and it will be in Eastern lore forever as Deboodt — now Grace Bliss — is among those who will be inducted into the EOU Athletics Hall of Fame tonight.

Deboodt was the first major attacker for the Mountaineers under head coach

Kaki McLean-Morehead. She was on the team at the beginning of a shift in a program that at one point had 16 consecutive losing seasons.

That changed her sophomore year, when EOU went 16-10, and the Mounties followed a year later with their first 20-win season in nearly two decades.

Deboodt, who played her last match for EOU in 2009, left as the all-time leader in kills (1,261), aces (119), blocks (299), block assists (273) and points (1,542.5). She has since been passed in kills, blocks and block assists but is still in the top 10 in those categories (second

in kills) and remains at the top of the record book in points and aces.

She is being joined in the Hall of Fame by two members of what was until three years ago the best team in EOU football history, along with their head coach.

Don Turner, who coached at Eastern for six seasons, including the 1980 team that won a then-record eight games, is being inducted posthumously into the Hall of Fame along with a pair of players who were a part of the Mountaineers in the early 1980s — Rick Ward

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Eastern starting early

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Eastern Oregon women's basketball team is starting early this season.

It was a move made by EOU head coach Anji Weissenfluh in order to get some additional games on the Mountaineers' nonconference schedule.

It is also one that could play dividends, as the early start will allow the team additional time to gel as it sets out for a fourth consecutive Cascade Collegiate Conference title this season.

"Hopefully with our earlier start we can get people up to speed where we need them to be," said Weissenfluh, who begins her 20th season at the helm for EOU. "The learning curve is a little steep this year."

EOU does return 12 players from a team that went 29-4 a year ago, but did lose four seniors, including arguably the best player in Mountaineer history in Maya Ah You-Dias, to graduation.

"We've got three starters back. We are going to need them to step up and provide not only production on the court, but leadership on the court," Weissenfluh said. "We have been dependent on Maya for that the last five years, and someone needs to find their leadership."

Jane Nelson, Madison Crews and Kylie Smith are Eastern's returning starters. Nelson said she has been encouraged by what the seven newcomers to the programs have brought.

"I'm really excited about a lot of the new kids we have," she said. "They bring a lot of energy to our offense and our defense, and they have been working hard in practice."

The senior also said the team is trying to learn what it can from the graduated players, which is somewhat easier



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Jill Albright, right, tries to score against teammate Beverly Slater during a pick-and-roll drill during practice Thursday. Eastern Oregon begins its season Sunday.

with Ah You-Dias, as she has hung around and is on the coaching staff this season.

"She not only had a lot to offer the program while she was a player, but she has a lot of knowledge, and it's nice to have her as a coach," Nelson said. "Having a previously player you played with giving you advice is really helpful."

The Mountaineers will also look to players who were role players off the bench a year ago for an added boost, and Weissenfluh said several have stepped up to help fill the void.

"I'm really proud of Whitney Meier. She is stepping up and leading by example," Weissenfluh said. "She is being a vocal leader. Jill Albright comes to practice every day and works her tail off. She sets the tone and can be vocal."

EOU will likely also get a boost from sophomore Beverly Slater, who contributed solid minutes as a freshman.

"She's super athletic, she's lean, she has length to her (and) she can run," the coach said. "She's a coachable kid.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Jane Nelson is one of three starters returning for Eastern Oregon this season.

That's the part I love about Bev the most. She responds to coaching."

But as she has done for

several years, Weissenfluh has also brought in a slew of transfers who will benefit the

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First place on the line in massive CCC showdown



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Hailee Ackerman, right, missed the first matchup against Corban, but will be on the floor for EOU tonight.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Eastern Oregon Mountaineers will have a shot at redemption against the one team that has beaten them this fall.

And it'll be in one of the CCC's and NIAA's biggest matches of the season, as the No. 5 Mountaineers host No. 7 Corban tonight with first place in the conference on the line.

"It's exciting," Eastern head coach Kaki McLean-Morehead said. "I think Corban's a really good team (and) I think we're a good team."

What's at stake in the match? A win by Corban, which is 10-0 in conference, would give it a full two-game lead over EOU for first in the CCC and possession of the tiebreaker. A win by Eastern, which is 9-1, would pull the Mountaineers even with the Warriors with nine matches to play.

But even with the magnitude of the match — one that will go a long way to helping determine the conference champion and that is between teams that could make noise at the national level — McLean-Morehead said the team isn't focusing on those added components. "What we talked about is it's just another game," she said. "It's the start of our second half (of CCC play). We worked on some things this week where we want to improve and start to climb and really peak at the right time. That's been more of our focus than the matchup."

The Warriors, ranked No. 19 at the time of the first match, handed Eastern its first loss when the teams met in Salem five weeks ago, 20-25, 27-25, 25-21, 25-23.

It was 12th of a 13-match

haul on the road to start the season, and one that EOU played without one of its top attackers in Hailee Ackerman, who had suffered an ankle injury the previous match.

But even with that, EOU had chances to win the match. Eastern held a 24-23 lead in the second set, and was up 23-21 in the fourth, but couldn't put either away.

"When we played against Corban (the first time) we played well. It wasn't that we played horrible," McLean-Morehead said. "At the end of the day we made more errors than they did."

McLean-Morehead said as of Thursday, she wasn't set on if EOU would run a 6-2 rotation — which puts an extra front row attacker on the court — or a 5-1, and said that could change during the match.

"A lot of it depends on how our consistency is and how we are playing in system," she said.

The coach said part of the emphasis this week has been on expanding the tools used by EOU on its attack and on the 6-2 rotation, should she employ it.

"This week has been a really good week of practice," she said. "We're all on the same page of getting back to the drawing board and fixing those things we need to."

The match will pit two of the top four attackers in the conference against each other in Cassie Cunningham for Corban (2.9 kills per set each), and Corban's No. 2-ranked attack in the CCC (12.6 kills per set) against Eastern's No. 1 defense (2.7 blocks and 19.1 digs per set).

First serve is at 5 p.m. at Quinn Coliseum.

Union sweeps, solidifies lead in BMC

By Annie Fowler
EO Media Group

STANFIELD — Things are getting tight in the middle of the Blue Mountain Conference volleyball standings, but the Union Bobcats are sitting pretty atop the standings at 7-0 after handily defeating Stanfield a 25-17, 25-11, 25-17 loss Thursday night.

"Things are a little more neck and neck," Union coach Karly Knapp said. "It's fun to play in this league. It has been crazy with Stanfield, Weston-McEwen and Hepner."

The Tigers (14-6 overall, 4-3 BMC) came into the match having won their past three matches, but had

trouble from the get-go with the Bobcats.

"They came ready to play," Stanfield coach Blaine Ganvoa said Union. "They executed well and got into a rhythm early."

After a 3-3 tie in the first set, Union's Callie Glenn reeled off four consecutive points, and Kylie Marriott followed with four of her own for a 11-4 lead.

The Tigers would get as close as 21-17 down the stretch, but could never put together a string of points.

Autumn Daggett had five of her match-high 14 kills in the first set, including the final point.

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Ben Lonergan/EO Media Group

Union's Taylar Daggett, front, lays out to try and dig a ball during the Bobcats' match Thursday in Stanfield.