



Ronald Bond/The Observer
Eric Prom (25) returns an interception for a touchdown in Eastern Oregon's win over MSU-Northern Saturday.

EOU turns out Lights on Homecoming

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

The defense set the tone with a fumble recovery on the first play of the game. The offense was improved.

Eastern Oregon University's homecoming football game went the way the Mountaineers wanted.

EOU scored the game's first 24 points, finished with more than 500 yards of offense and forced five turnovers in a 45-7 trouncing of Montana State Northern Saturday night in Frontier Conference play at Community Stadium.

"We definitely stepped it up from what we've been doing," said linebacker Gunnar Blix, who had eight tackles and 1.5 sacks. "Our secondary and run stopping has kind of been not all there, but today was a step in the right direction in stopping the run and shutting down the pass."

Derrick Fontenot recovered a fumble for EOU on the Lights' first carry of the game, and Victor Dias punched in the first of his two touchdowns from a yard out for a quick 7-0 lead.

But the main momentum shift came

later in the quarter. MSUN drove inside the Eastern 5-yard line and appeared poised to even the game.

The Eastern defensive line, though, stopped Lights' running back Cameron Taylor short of the goal line on fourth down, and EOU followed with an impressive 99-yard drive — one that saw it convert three third downs — and finished it with a 13-yard touchdown reception by Conner Falk for a two-touchdown lead.

It was all Eastern from that point. The Mountaineers did mostly whatever they

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Mounties rally, stun Corban

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Breathtaking rallies. Unimaginable digs. Major momentum swings.

And one monumental comeback.

"Those are the kind of games we live for," Eastern Oregon University libero Kiley McMurtrey said. "That's why we play volleyball."

The Cascade Collegiate Conference's top volleyball match of the season more than lived up to the hype. No. 5 Eastern Oregon flipped the switch to rally from two sets down and stunned No. 7 Corban, 16-25, 24-26, 25-11, 25-16, 15-6, Friday night in a matchup of the CCC leaders at Quinn Coliseum.

"A lot of crazy adrenaline and emotion in that game," Megan Bunn, who had 21 kills, said. "We came out the first couple of sets a little too wound up. From there we took off. We knew we were there for a reason. We're a team that can push through anything."

EOU trailed only once in the final set and took the lead for good as a kill by Megan Bunn, two from Jet Taylor and a block by Madison Pilon put EOU ahead 4-1. A kill by Taylor Tibbetts, and then a Tibbetts and Taylor block made it 9-2. Eastern finished the match on Taylor's 17th kill, which was somehow assisted by a one-handed set right at the net by Pilon, who had 44 assists.

"It was just a good game," McMurtrey said. "We know that we have a tough conference and every time we step out here there are going to be tough games. We have a longstanding rivalry with Corban that added to it. I think everyone was ready to play."

Maybe a little too ready at the start.

The Mountaineers played



Ronald Bond/The Observer
The Eastern Oregon volleyball team celebrates a point during the third set Friday against Corban. The No. 5 Mountaineers rallied from two sets down to knock off the No. 7 Warriors, 16-25, 24-26, 25-11, 25-16, 15-6.



Ronald Bond/The Observer
Megan Bunn had 21 kills for the Eastern Oregon volleyball team in its win over Corban Friday.

flat in the first set, one that Corban ended on a 14-5 run. Eastern appeared ready to even the match when Bunn had a kill and a block for a

24-22 lead, but Corban stole the final four points and the set when Cassie Cunningham fired an ace.

"I think we wanted it

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so bad that it came out as almost too much energy. It was almost like a tense energy," Pilon said. "It wasn't coming out the way we wanted it to."

And then the Mountaineers flipped the switch.

"I think one key difference in our mentality transitioning from the second to the third set is it felt like (in the) first two sets we were playing not to lose. Going into the third set (we said) let's play to win," Taylor said.

Almost instantly EOU — which for much of the first two sets was on its heels, out of system and couldn't generate a strong attack — was the aggressor. The offense was smooth, efficient and powerful. The defense was aligned. The front blockers were impenetrable. The back row got to nearly everything Corban tried to put down.

"This team is special in the way that once they set their mind to something, they truly work together to accomplish the goal that we need to," head coach Kaki McLean-Morehead said.

It was a complete reversal of the first two sets. And Corban, which was running on-point the first two sets, was suddenly staggered and unable to do anything it wanted.

"It was taking a breath, taking a step back and realizing what we need to do," the coach added about the turnaround. "Volleyball isn't about feelings, it's about doing your jobs. Bottom line, we had to go back to the drawing board and do our jobs."

Eastern opened the third on a 7-2 run, with three kills by Bunn and two by Scott helping build the early lead. A subsequent 6-0 run made it 13-4 on a kill by Taylor, and

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Navarro breaks 37-year-old 8K record

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Alex Navarro made history on Saturday.

The Eastern Oregon University senior broke a nearly four-decade old school record in the men's 8K race, taking seventh overall at the Inland Empire Championships in Lewiston, Idaho, with a time of 23:51.

His time bested a mark that has stood since 1982, when Don Stearns — an EOU and NAIA Hall of Famer, according to the EOU website — ran a race in 24 minutes even.

"Alex had never even seen a cross country race when he got here as a wide-eyed freshman in 2015, and wasn't even sure what cross country was," head coach Ben Welch said.

Welch said Navarro's first cross country race came in a time of 31:30. Navarro has clearly made strides since then.

"Just last week he reset his personal record at 24:57.2 and today's goal was to run sub 24:30," Welch said.

Several athletes at EOU have come close, but none had gotten any closer than

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WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Eastern wins in opener

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Eastern Oregon Mountaineers opened the 2019-20 season with a 93-33 home victory over the Yellowstone Christian Centurions Sunday afternoon at Quinn Coliseum.

"We played within ourselves," head coach Anji Weissenfuh said. "It was great team ball. We rebounded the ball well. We ran well. A couple things we're going to need to really work on are defensive rotation, pressure on the ball, and just being stronger with the ball on rebounding."

The game also gave the coach an opportunity to begin to tinker with the rotation of her players. Eastern had 14 players see the floor, all of whom contributed.

"We played a lot of different combinations," said Weissen-

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Ronald Bond/The Observer
Ellyse Tingelstad's individual victory helped boost Wallowa County to a victory at the La Grande Invitational Friday.

Wins keep coming for Outlaws

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Wallowa County cross country team continued to show its top-end dominance, which led to two more individual and team victories at the La Grande Invitational.

Henry Coughlan led three runners in the top six with a run-away first-place finish to push the Wallowa County boys past Baker for the win on a windy Friday at La Grande Country Club. Ellyse Tingelstad won on the girls side and was one of three Wallowa County runners in the top seven to help her team past both La Grande and Baker.

"I thought they competed really well," Wallowa County head

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coach Dan Moody said of both of his squads.

Coughlan pulled away from teammate Zac Knapp about midway through the race and finished with a time of 16:28, with Knapp following in 16:51.

"I looked at my watch on the back side (on the second lap) and realized we were way off pace for what I wanted to run," Coughlan said. "I started to kick it in. I was trying to be 16 (minutes) flat or lower. I've been right there the last two or three meets."

The third Wallowa County runner to cross the line, Bayden Menton, finished in sixth. Wallowa County rounded out

with two more in the top 15 with John Matthews (14th) and Brenden Moore (15th).

It was just enough to edge Baker, which also had three top-10 finishers — led by Kale Cassidy in third — and all five of its runners in the top 15. Wallowa County had 38 points as a team, and Baker scored 43.

The Union/Cove boys squad, which was third with 75 points, had its top trio finish in ninth through 11th — Israel O'Reilly, Andrew Lackey and Taylor Fox. Monte Kirby followed in 20th for the Bobcats, and Carter Blackburn was 27th.

Cristian Mendoza led the host Tigers by taking

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