

SATURDAY’S GAMES

ALL TIMES PACIFIC

SOUTHERN OREGON
AT EASTERN OREGON, 1 P.M.

Tim Camp said Southern Oregon is in a similar position to Eastern Oregon of a team trying to steady its season. Both teams took a step to doing that with wins last weekend. Whoever can keep its newly-rediscovered ground game going and be more physical will have the best chance for a big win.

MONTANA TECH
AT COLLEGE OF IDAHO, NOON

The Orediggers won the first of their two vitally important games against the top teams in the conference. Can they slow down the College of Idaho running game and put an end to the Coyotes’ 11-game winning streak? If so, they’ll be tied for first. If not, their conference title hopes are likely done.

MONTANA WESTERN
AT CARROLL COLLEGE, NOON

Carroll’s postseason hopes went up in smoke last weekend after getting blasted at home by C of I. The Fighting Saints will have an opportunity to avenge an earlier loss and play spoiler against a Bulldogs’ squad looking to stay in the mix for a conference title and playoff berth.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
AT MSU-NORTHERN, NOON

Somebody has to win this game, right? Rocky won the first contest a month ago, 53-34, before seeing its season go into a tailspin. This is likely the Lights’ best chance at getting off the schneid, though they themselves have been roughed up in the last month since that early contest.

PLAYER TO WATCH

Eastern Oregon quarterback Kai Quinn had easily his best game of the season last week, completing more than 70% of his passes in the win over MSUN, though he was still picked off twice. The EOU coaching staff has taken steps to simplify the offense, which worked a week ago. How the junior QB’s progress looks this week will be important to watch.

TREND TO WATCH

Home field advantage rarely seems to apply in the Small School Civil War. The last four meetings between Southern Oregon and Eastern Oregon — and, in fact, 11 of the last 14 — have been won by the road team. Eastern’s last win at Community Stadium against Southern came in the season opener in 2016, which the Mountaineers won, 45-40.

NAIA POLL

Team	Record	Points
1. Morningside (Iowa) [17]	5-0	392
2. Kansas Wesleyan	6-0	367
3. Marian (Ind.)	4-0	365
4. Grand View (Iowa)	6-0	346
5. Benedictine (Kan.)	5-1	316
6. Northwestern (Iowa)	5-0	310
7. Saint Francis (Ind.)	4-1	301
8. College of Idaho	5-0	295
9. Lindsey Wilson (Ky.)	6-0	278
10. Concordia (Mich.)	5-1	260
11. Cumberlands (Ky.)	5-0	238
12. Southeastern (Fla.)	5-0	214
13. Saint Xavier (Ill.)	3-2	202
14. Dickinson State (N.D.)	5-1	189
15. Langston (Okla.)	4-1	180
16. Evangel (Mo.)	5-1	160
17. Ottawa (Ariz.)	6-0	142
18. Keiser (Fla.)	5-0	130
19. Montana Tech	4-1	124
20. Reinhardt (Ga.)	5-2	121
21. Siena Heights (Mich.)	5-1	101
22. Montana Western	4-1	88
23. MidAmerica Naz. (Kan.)	5-1	59
24. Baker (Kan.)	4-2	57
25. Sterling (Kan.)	5-1	42
Dropped Out:		
Bethel (Tenn.)		
Others Receiving Votes:		
None		

Mountaineers keep working to improve as Raiders visit La Grande



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon players go through conditioning drills during practice Tuesday at Community Stadium. The Mountaineers are looking for a second straight win when they play Southern Oregon.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

There were plenty of positives that came out of last week’s 45-7 win over Montana State Northern, one that ended a three-game losing streak for Eastern Oregon. The team was much more physical on both sides of the ball — an emphasis of head coach Tim Camp’s during the bye week and during the lead up to the game against the Lights. EOU also turned in a strong running effort, piling up 222 yards — its most in a game in a year.

“Being able to run the ball and get some yards that way opens up the pass,” offensive lineman PJ Schubert said. “I think we need to build on our effort, energy, and get a little grit.”

But there is still plenty for the Mountaineers to work on as they head into Saturday’s Small School Civil War against rival Southern Oregon. Among the focuses, Camp said earlier this week, are limiting the penalties — which EOU was better at in the second half last weekend but still needs to focus on — and maintaining the physicality established last week.

“There were some good things that happened, but they were overshadowed by the penalties in the first half,” he said.

Being disciplined was an emphasis during practice earlier this week for Camp and the Mountaineers, as was continuing to build off of what happened a week ago.

Quarterback Kai Quinn was the sharpest he had been all season in terms of passing percentage — 70.5% (24-for-34) — but did throw two interceptions, and, in spite of the improvements, said his own play needs to be better.

“We were clean, but not clean enough Saturday,” he said. “I threw two interceptions, and that’s not acceptable. I gotta clean some things up and get this taken care of this week. I just gotta keep making sure I’m putting the ball where it needs to be. I made some errors myself trying to force things, and I can’t do that.”

One of the big adjustments for EOU on offense was simplicity — huddling up, calling and executing plays the personnel on the team can manage.

“That’s going to continue to make a big difference,” Quinn said.

Camp said on offense the team will focus mainly on further fine-tuning what it is currently running as opposed to adding more elements to the offense.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

EOU defensive back Brennan Pope tries to wrap up running back Kaler Moore during practice Tuesday.

About the game
SERIES HISTORY

Eastern Oregon and Southern Oregon have met a total of 77 times, with the Raiders holding a sizeable 54-20-3 edge. This has been the true definition of a rivalry in recent years, though. The teams have split the last 12 matchups an even 6-6. Furthermore, 10 of those 12 have been decided by 10 points or fewer.

RAIDER TO WATCH

Quarterback Wyatt Hutchinson has been a primary cog in the offense. Not only has he passed for 1,165 yards and nine touchdowns this fall, but he leads the team in rushing with 222 yards and three scores. He accounted for 241 yards (177 passing, 64 rushing) and two scores when these teams met in Ashland in September.

“There’s a couple wrinkles, but nothing that will impact them. The things that we do are going to be based on how we run the ball, and if we add anything, it will be minimal at most,” he said.

Schubert said, too, the team can’t take days off, especially if it wants to further develop physically.

“It’s gotta be an every day kind of thing,” he said. “You just can’t take it easy one day because you’re feeling banged up. You gotta get that grind going every day with that effort and that energy, and be demonstrative in everything you do.”

EOU will need to match and exceed the physicality of Southern Oregon in order to win Saturday. Camp said the Mountaineers and Raiders — who have won two games in a row after a four-game losing streak — are similar.

“They’re trying to find out who they are,” Camp said. “I think the coaches are doing a good job of finding out what they’re good at. They’re really work on that to try to make that better.”

One area that Southern was improved a week ago in a 21-14 win over Rocky Mountain College was in getting a strong running effort from somebody other than quarterback Wyatt Hutchinson. Hakeem Massey rushed for 120 yards in the win, the first time a

Raider has eclipsed 100 yards this year.

Safety Zack Jacobs, though, said containing both Hutchinson’s arm and feet — will still be necessary.

“In the last game down there he hurt us on his feet big time,” Jacobs said of Hutchinson, who had 64 yards rushing in the first game against EOU to lead the Raiders. “That was one of the key factors that was keeping them in the game and keeping them with the lead late before we took it over. That’s huge to focus on his run game. He’s really shifty, (he’s) quick side to side, and he will make things happen.”

The contest will feature the Frontier Conference’s top two defensive backs, as both Jacobs for EOU and SOU’s Michael Chisley Jr. have four interceptions on the season. Jacobs has three in his last two games against Southern.

EOU will also look to buck a trend in the series. The road team has won the past four contests, and 11 of the last 14.

“That’s a pretty crazy thought,” Jacobs said. “We gotta keep that physical play up and mainly keep the energy we had from Homecoming. We had a great crowd and everyone came out. We gotta have that energy and that physical play translate over to Saturday.”

POWER POLL

BY RONALD BOND
THE OBSERVER

- 1. College of Idaho:** Who in the Frontier Conference is going to give the Yotes a game? Montana Tech gets the first crack in a rematch of its season opener. The Yotes won on the road that day in Butte, 28-14. This time, they play in Caldwell.
- 2. Montana Tech:** That was not the outcome I expected. The Orediggers not only beat Montana Western, they did so soundly. Tech is the only team so far to hold C of I under 40 points. Can it stay close in the rematch?
- 3. Montana Western:** The Bulldogs didn’t put up much of a fight against Tech, gaining only 150 yards on offense. Carroll College, which is on its own two-game slide, is up next. This game is a must-win for the Bulldogs’ playoff hopes.
- 4. Eastern Oregon:** Teams 4-6 are basically interchangeable, in my opinion. Eastern gets the bump to No. 4. Yes, a win against MSUN has to be taken with a grain of salt, but it is a win the program can build on.
- 5. Southern Oregon:** The Raiders, like the Mountaineers, are trying to turn things around after a rough start. They are on a two-game winning streak, and both wins have come with them scoring the winning touchdown late in the fourth quarter.
- 6. Carroll College:** I thought Carroll would put up more of a fight against C of I. Instead, the Fighting Saints were just the latest victim of a rout. The Bulldogs, who Carroll lost to by just a touchdown in the season opener, are up next.
- 7. Rocky Mountain:** The Battlin’ Bears showed some gusto to shake off a 14-point first-quarter deficit against SOU and tie the score in the fourth quarter. Can a game against Northern be the cure for RMC?
- 8. MSU-Northern:** These do indeed appear to be the same old Lights. Last four losses for MSUN by 25, 28, 42 and now 38 points.

STANDINGS

	Conf.	Overall
College of Idaho	5-0	5-0
Montana Tech	4-1	4-1
Montana Western	4-1	4-1
Carroll College	2-3	2-3
Eastern Oregon	2-3	2-4
Southern Oregon	2-3	2-4
Rocky Mountain	1-4	2-4
MSU-Northern	0-5	1-5

Saturday, Sept. 28 Montana Western 49, Eastern Oregon 13 Montana Tech 42, MSU-Northern 0 College of Idaho 42, Rocky Mountain 0 Southern Oregon 29, Carroll College 28
Saturday, Oct. 12 Eastern Oregon 45, MSU-Northern 7 College of Idaho 47, Carroll College 14 Montana Tech 35, Montana Western 12 Southern Oregon 21, Rocky Mountain 14
Saturday, Oct. 19 Southern Oregon at Eastern Oregon, 1 p.m. Rocky Mountain at MSU-Northern, noon Montana Tech at College of Idaho, noon Montana Western at Carroll College, noon
Saturday, Oct. 26 Eastern Oregon at Montana Tech, noon MSU-Northern at Montana Western, noon Carroll College at Rocky Mountain, noon College of Idaho at Southern Oregon, 2 p.m.

ON THE COVER

Zack Jacobs has emerged into one of the best defensive backs in the conference and in NAIA football. (Ronald Bond, The Observer)

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