

Tigers run away from Bulldogs

■ La Grande rolls past Baker, 34-0, to complete perfect regular season

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

La Grande's defense held stout until the offense was able to break through.

Once it did, the floodgates opened, and the Tigers reached one of their goals — an undefeated regular season. Much more, though, lies ahead for La Grande.

"The boys have had a lot of goals from the beginning, and they've worked hard to do that. They've put a lot of time and energy into football, and this is what they've wanted," head coach Rich McIlmoil said. "They deserve all the credit. We probably had our best week of practice this week. All their hard work and accomplishing those goals is coming out."

Nathan Reed rushed for 114 yards and three touchdowns, Parker Robinson and Blaine Shaw also scored, and the Tigers locked up the Greater Oregon League title outright with a 34-0 home win over the Baker Bulldogs Saturday afternoon at Community Stadium.

"We've been working really hard all week," Reed, who eclipsed 1,000 yards rushing for the season in the win, said. "We worked on scheming things differently (and) blocking things differently. We played a lot harder. We had a great week of practice and we came out and executed."

La Grande scored on its second offensive play of the game — a 15-yard run by Reed — but then was held in check by Baker's defense most of the first half.

"Sometimes one of our weak links (is) that we start a little slow, and then we gotta get it rolling later in the game," McIlmoil said.

But two big plays late in the half led to two touchdowns and what



Ben Lonergan/EO Media Group

La Grande running back Nathan Reed (25) breaks free of the Baker defense to run for a touchdown during the third quarter. The La Grande Tigers defeated the Baker Bulldogs 34-0 at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande Saturday afternoon.

felt like an insurmountable lead for La Grande going into the half.

Reed — who had been held to short gains on his previous four carries — broke through the line on

fourth and five for a 39-yard touchdown and a 14-0 lead with 2:12 to play in the half.

Shaw then grabbed an interception — his second of the game

— and scored four plays later on a 10-yard reception to make the margin 21-0 at the break and La Grande, indeed, was rolling.

"We just started wearing them

down," Reed said. "They're a pretty confident team, and you could see as the game progressed they started losing confidence. They

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Northwest brings an end to Mountaineers home streak



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Sarah Mitchell tracks down a ball deep in Eastern Oregon's end of the field in a match against Northwest Friday night. Mitchell scored EOU's lone goal in a 2-1 loss.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Eastern Oregon University's women's soccer team experienced something it hadn't since 2016 — a loss at home.

The No. 11 Mountaineers split their home slate over the weekend, falling to Cascade Collegiate Conference-leading Northwest, 2-1, Friday night, before recovering for a 3-0 win over Evergreen on Saturday.

"Hats off to Northwest," EOU head coach Jacob Plocher said. "They're a great team. We knew that coming in. It's been them and us battling the last two years for that top spot. Hopefully well get to see them again in

the conference tournament."

The loss to the Eagles Friday put an end to a 17-match home winning streak for Eastern, one that dated back to the 2016 season. It was also the first loss the team has taken on the Community Stadium turf.

"All good things come to an end as far as streaks go, but it's an opportunity to start a new one," Plocher said following Friday's match. "Sometimes losses can be good and reignite that fire and that drive, and hopefully that's what we're able to do."

Perhaps bigger than seeing the winning streak end, however, is what the loss does

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon players Oscar Munoz, left, Calvin Mitchell, center, and Alexander Zuluaga celebrate after Munoz scored a goal against Northwest Friday.

Eastern men get two much-needed wins to stay in hunt

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Maybe the Eastern Oregon University's men's soccer team just needed a little pressure on itself.

Being in a must-win scenario, the rest of the regular season certainly is pressure, but the Mountaineers, to this point, have thrived in that position.

EOU locked up two victories it needed to have to stay in the hunt for a Cascade Collegiate Conference tournament berth, earning a pair of one-goal victories over two Washington schools it's jockeying with for a playoff berth — Northwest on Friday, 2-1,

and Evergreen on Saturday, 3-2.

"We like to put pressure on ourselves, I guess," EOU head coach Zach Mills said after Friday's win. "We told (the team) before Walla Walla (last week) we need five wins in a row, but we're taking them game by game."

So far, the Mountaineers have three of the five wins in a row that they need, moving themselves to 5-6 in the CCC. Eastern is now in a tight bunch with Evergreen, Warner Pacific, Carroll College and Northwest for a postseason berth.

"It's a bad place to be. We'd rather be ahead of the game, (but) they know now it's time to go,"

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