

# No. 3 Mounties get two more wins

Observer staff

The No. 3 Eastern Oregon volleyball team locked up its 24th and 25th victories of the season over the weekend, taking down Northwest in four sets Friday and sweeping Evergreen Saturday in its road trip against the Washington school.

On Friday, EOU shook off a first-set loss to come back and top the Eagles, 24-26, 25-21, 25-17, 25-20, behind a massive performance by Megan Bunn.

The senior led all players with 22 kills and 25 digs, and recorded the first 20-20 game of her career. Her effort was a season-high in kills and matched her career-best — she reached 22 kills in a match twice in 2018 — and her dig total was the second highest of her career. EOU setter Madison Pilon also had a career night with 50 assists, Jet Taylor added 10 kills and five block assists, and both Hailee Ackerman and Cambree Scott had nine kills. Scott, Pilon and Taylor Tibbetts each added four blocks, with one of Tibbetts' a solo effort.

EOU was on the cusp of a first-set win when a Pilon and Taylor block and a service error by Northwest put the Mountaineers up 24-22. The Eagles, however, responded with the final four points to grab the early lead on a Tatiana Ensz kill and an Eastern attack error.

The rest of the night belonged to EOU. Bunn had four kills during a 9-2 run to end the second set — one that Tibbetts finished with a kill — and a 9-1 run to end the third gave EOU the lead. Bunn had three kills and Ackerman two during the run.

EOU never trailed during the final set, one that saw Bunn put down eight kills and Tibbetts and Scott finish the match with back to back kills.

Aspen Christiansen added 19 digs for



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Megan Bunn, shown Oct. 19 against Walla Walla, had 22 kills and 25 assists in Eastern Oregon's win over Northwest Friday.

Eastern, and Sade Williams had 16.

The Mountaineers had less problem with Evergreen Saturday, sweeping the Geoducks 25-16, 25-19, 25-22.

Bunn again led the Mountaineers' offense, finishing with 15 kills in the match. Scott and Tibbetts added nine and eight kills, respectively. Bunn added 12 digs for another double-double. Kiley McMurtrey led Eastern with 17 digs and Christiansen had 16. Pilon had 35 assists.

Eastern took the lead for good in the first set with a 5-1 run — one that featured back-to-back aces by Kaci Cox — for a 7-4 lead. EOU extended its lead to five on several occasions during the set, then scored the final five points

to take the set on a Geoducks' attack error.

An 11-1 run by Eastern in the second set turned an early deficit into a 12-5 lead after a kill by Taylor. Evergreen got as close at four points late in the set before Eastern took the 2-0 lead on a Geoducks service error.

Eastern trailed a large portion of the third before going on a 10-3 run — which included the final four points — for the match.

The Mountaineers (25-1 overall, 15-1 CCC) host Southern Oregon in yet another matchup of top 10 teams Friday at Quinn Coliseum. EOU can clinch the CCC title if it knocks off SOU Friday and OIT Saturday.

## MEN

*Continued from Page 7A* Mills said of the team. "Every game is (like) a cup final. If we can do this, we can really take it into the tournament and have a good attitude, good mentality, and we'll see what happens there."

One of those teams in that mix, Warner Pacific, is Eastern's next opponent. Warner Pacific is currently in eighth place for the final spot in the CCC tournament at 5-4-2. Eastern is in 10th.

"We're under a lot of pressure," said Oscar Munoz, who scored in both games over the weekend. "We're in a situation where every game matters. Every game is a do or die."

In both wins, another trend continued for the Mountaineers, one that has hurt it at times this season, but ultimately didn't this weekend — struggling to finish matches.

In Friday's win, the Mountaineers scored twice in the first half, getting goals from Jorge Chavez and Munoz for a 2-0 lead at the half.

"Today we came out strong. We played a great first half," Munoz said. "Second half was a little bit shaky, but we stayed compact and did our job."

In that second half, the Eagles scored in the 56th minute on a goal from Gian Herrera to get within 2-1 and had opportunities for the equalizer, but failed to pull even.

EOU has given up 19 second-half goals in CCC play this season but just six in the first half, and none in the first half of its last five contests.

"We've been talking about what is keeping us from finishing games off, because we'll be up and we'll let them come back," Mills said. "It's good that we've been talking about it because mentally they prepared themselves in case they got up to hold (the lead). They played with some composure. I think they did much better (Friday) with relaxing (and) knowing they could do the job."

Max Rose had a save in goal for EOU Friday, which had an 11-6 shot advantage.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon's Jorge Chavez, left, scored a goal in the Mountaineers' win over Northwest Friday.

On Saturday, Eastern again built a 2-0 lead, this time on a first-half goal by Munoz and a second-half goal by Javier Moran.

Evergreen staged a furious rally to pull even, scoring two goals in six minutes — including one that came after the Geoducks were tagged with a red card and forced to finish playing 10-on-11 — with less than six

minutes to play. Joe DiCarlo and Tino Pantaleon scored for Evergreen.

But Eastern found a way to escape with the victory as Erik Mattice scored on a free kick with just 2:28 to play in the match.

Rose had three saves for EOU Saturday.

The Mountaineers (7-8-1 overall, 5-6 CCC) host Warner Pacific Saturday evening.

## WOMEN

*Continued from Page 7A* to the Mountaineers' hopes for a third-straight CCC title. Eastern remains in third place in the CCC at 7-2-1 but did get some help from College of Idaho, which knocked off Northwest on Saturday. The Eagles are still atop the conference at 9-1, while Oregon Tech is in second at 8-0-2. Northwest and Oregon Tech play next weekend in Klamath Falls.

Plocher said the reality of EOU's conference title hopes likely being gone, could serve as a benefit.

"Honestly, (it's) probably a good thing. Now the pressure and the stress of trying to three-peat (and) trying to be perfect can go away," he said. "Now it's, 'Let's focus. Let's get back to playing how we're capable of playing, and we'll make a run for it at the conference tournament.'"

Northwest took only three shots on Friday, but made them count. The Eagles took a 1-0 lead on a goal by Callie Wright from the edge of the

net in the 23rd minute and then went up 2-0 in the 52nd minute when Olivia Morris hit a high-arching shot from about 35 yards out into a nearly unreachable spot at the top of the net.

The deficit was cut to one with a goal by Sarah Mitchell in the 64th minute, but numerous opportunities the Mountaineers had both earlier in the match and after Mitchell's goal either went just wide — a header at the post by Mackinley Gregus missed by a couple feet — or were stopped by Kat Sanchez, who had six saves for the Eagles. Sanchez denied two shots by Nan Kiebert — one in each half. Four of her saves came in the second half.

"Their keeper is really good," Plocher said. "She made some really good saves to keep them in it."

Plocher said he was proud of his team for showing its mettle despite being in a spot it isn't in often — down by multiple goals at home.

"There were some unlucky breaks, but at the same time I liked our



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon's Kaitlyn McLeod plays a ball upfield during EOU's match against Northwest Friday.

composure," he said. "I liked our ability to stay calm and create opportunities."

Eastern bounced back from the loss to blank Evergreen Saturday.

The Mountaineers took a 1-0 lead into the break on a goal by Gregus in the 20th minute, then put the game away with two goals in just over seven minutes in the

second half, as Anna Hager and Erika Skindlov each found the back of the net.

The Mountaineers peppered the Geoducks' net to the tune of 20 shots. Cydni Cottrell, who had just one save Friday, stopped four shots on Saturday.

Eastern (10-2-2 overall, 7-2-1 CCC) hosts Warner Pacific Saturday.

# EOU football falls on the road to Montana Tech

Observer staff

The game was much closer this time, but the Eastern Oregon football team struggled to get its offense in gear in a 23-10 road loss to Montana Tech Saturday in Frontier Conference play in Butte, Montana.

EOU didn't get on the board until the fourth quarter, when a 32-yard Jaiden Machuca field goal made it 16-3. Eastern then drew closer thanks to its special teams, when Derrick Fontenot blocked a punt and Josh Mendoza returned the blocked kick 30 yards for a touchdown to get within 16-10 with 9:59 to play. But Tech running back Blake Counts' third touchdown of the day pushed the margin back to 13 with just over six

minutes to go.

The Mountaineers managed just 171 yards of total offense, and only 43 on the ground, the fifth time this season Eastern has been held under 100 yards rushing.

EOU, though, hung tough after a rough first quarter that saw it fall behind 13-0 after two short rushing touchdowns by Counts, who had 134 yards on the ground.

Victor Dias had 60 yards rushing and 47 yards receiving for EOU, and Kai Quinn was 12-for-35 passing for 128 yards and an interception.

Tech quarterback Jet Campbell had 159 yards on 11-for-18 passing.

EOU (2-6 overall, 2-5 Frontier) hosts No. 7 and undefeated College of Idaho Saturday.

# Women come in third, men fifth at William Jessup

Observer staff

Michelle Herbes and Megan Boals both finished in the top 10 to power the No. 23 Eastern Oregon women's cross country team to a third-place finish at the William Jessup Warrior Invite Saturday in Rocklin, California, while Alex Navarro's fifth-place effort helped the No. 19 EOU men take fifth.

Herbes, who came in fourth, and Boals, who was seventh, finished less than seven seconds apart. Herbes clocked in with a time of 18:03.8, and Boals finished in 18:10.0. The Mountaineers finished as a team in group of Cascade Collegiate Conference programs, with College of Idaho (53 points) winning the meet, followed by Southern Oregon (82), Eastern Oregon (104) and Oregon Tech (114).

The Mountaineers' third-place finisher, Katie Jo Gebhardt, followed about

a minute later in 34th with a time of 19:18.0. The rest of Eastern's top five was MacKenzie Trainer (19:26.0) in 38th and Stormy Bullard (19:27.8) in 40th.

The men's team finished with 158 points for its fifth-place standing, trailing College of Idaho (36), Southern Oregon (67), The Masters (California) College (94) and Oregon Tech (124).

Navarro, who crossed the finish line in 24:46.7 for his fifth-place showing, was one of two runners in the top five for EOU, followed by Travis Running (25:16.8) in 16th.

Hunter Schiess (25:56.8) finished in 42nd for EOU, with Hunter Nichols (26:14.0) and Brennen LeBel (26:35.4) taking 51st and 67th, respectively.

Eastern returns to the course Nov. 8 for the CCC championships in Cottage Grove.

# Men's wrestling opens with four wins at Simpson

Observer staff

The Eastern Oregon men's wrestling team opened the season with four solid victories at the Simpson Duals in Redding, California, on Saturday. The Mountaineers blanked host Simpson, 46-0, scored 38 points in wins over both Sacramento City College (38-6) and Lassen College (38-12) and had a 35-9 win over Sierra College.

"It was a good opener to get our men some mat time and experience traveling," head coach Dustyn Azure said. "They responded well to wins and losses, and continued to try and put points on the board."

EOU had four wins by forfeit against Simpson, and picked up six points on Keegan Mulhill's second-round pin at 174 pounds. Marco Retano scored a 13-3 major decision at 184, and Eastern earned wins by decision from Hunter Nees (4-3 at 125), Jesse Camacho (9-3 at 157) John Bittering (9-5 at 165) and Ryan Redford (6-1 at 197).

The Mountaineers won eight matches against Sacramento City, including getting four victories by fall from

Camacho, Bittering, Retano and Redford. Monte Zufelt (12-4 at 133) and Jared Brant (16-3 at 149) each earned major decisions, and both Blake McNall (7-4 at 141) and Mulhill (8-1) added wins by decision.

EOU was tested in the lower weights against Lassen College, taking three early losses, but dominated the middle and upper weights for the win. Mulhill and Retano picked up victories by fall, and Bittering (24-9) and Redford (18-3) won by technical fall. Camacho added a 15-2 major decision, and EOU also had two wins by forfeit.

The Mountaineers secured eight wins against Sierra College and, unlike the bout against Lassen, owned the lower weights. Both McNall (13-2) and Brant (11-1) earned major decisions. Nees (7-4) and Camacho (11-8) won close matches by decision, and Zufelt won by injury. At the upper weights, Mulhill won by fall and Redford eked out a 6-4 decision. The Mountaineers added a win by forfeit.

EOU returns to the mat Saturday against North Idaho College.