

## Nats win first title



David J. Phillip/The Associated Press

Washington Nationals catcher Yan Gomes celebrates with the trophy after Game 7 of the baseball World Series against the Houston Astros Wednesday in Houston.

By Ben Walker  
The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Stephen Strasburg paraded the MVP trophy for delirious fans packed behind the dugout. Max Scherzer tearfully hugged his teammates. Gerardo Parra did the Baby Shark chop, Sean Doolittle flapped snow angels next to the mound.

Almost out of contention in May, champs in October.

Howie Kendrick, Anthony Rendon and the Washington Nationals completed their amazing comeback journey — fittingly with one last late rally on the road.

In Game 7 of the World Series, no less.

Kendrick and Rendon homered in the seventh inning as the Nationals overcame a two-run deficit, rocking the Houston Astros 6-2 Wednesday night to win the first title in franchise history.

With all eyes on Scherzer and his remarkable recovery after a painkilling injection, these Nationals truly embraced their shot in the only Series when the road team won every game.

Even more against the odds: Juan Soto and Washington came from behind to win five elimination games this postseason, an unprecedented feat.

“What a story,” said Ryan Zimmerman, the only player who’s been a part of every Nationals team.

“The way this game went is the way our whole season went.”

Strasburg, new lefty Patrick Corbin and the Nats brought the first World Series championship to the nation’s capital since of Walter Johnson delivered the crown for the Senators in 1924.

This franchise started out as the Mon-

trepreneurial Expos in 1969 when the major leagues expanded beyond the border, putting a team with tricolor caps at jaunty Jarry Park. They moved to D.C. in 2005, ending Washington’s three-decade-plus wait for big league baseball after the Senators skipped town to become the Texas Rangers.

But the incredible path these wild-card Nationals with the curly W logo took, well, no one could have imagined.

Because in one topsy-turvy week, they put aside the pain of past playoff failures and upended heavily favored Houston. Quite an ending to a season that began back in February with the Nationals and Astros working out side-by-side at the spring training complex they share in Florida.

“Resilient, relentless bunch of guys,” manager Dave Martinez said. “They fought all year long.”

Having lost star slugger Bryce Harper in free agency and beset by bullpen woes, Washington plummeted to 19-31 in late May. It got so bad there was talk the Nationals might fire Martinez and trade away Scherzer.

Instead, they stuck with the mantra that sprung up on T-shirts — Stay In The Fight. “That was our motto,” Scherzer said.

And months later they finished it, indeed. Shut out on one hit by Zack Greinke going into the seventh, they still found a way to win.

“Guess what? We stayed in the fight. We won the fight!” Martinez shouted during the trophy celebration on the field.

“We were down and out. We were 19-31. We didn’t quit then, we weren’t going to quit now,” he said.

Strasburg earned the World Series MVP

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## EOU women surge to 12th

Observer staff

The Eastern Oregon women’s cross country team picked up its highest ranking in seven years, surging to No. 12 in the nation in the NAIA coaches’ poll, which came out Thursday.

The Mountaineers, who jumped from No. 23 to the cusp of the top 10, have their highest ranking since 2012 when they reached as high as 11th in the nation, according to the NAIA website.

EOU, which picked up 364 points in the poll, is one of four Cascade Collegiate Conference teams in the top 20, trailing

No. 3 College of Idaho and No. 9 Southern Oregon, but ahead of No. 18 Oregon Tech.

The EOU men’s team remained in the top 25, but dropped four spots to No. 23 Thursday.

The same four teams from the CCC are in the rankings on the men’s side, with No. 2 College of Idaho, No. 5 Southern Oregon and No. 17 Oregon Tech also in the poll with EOU, which picked up 183 points.

The EOU women’s soccer team, which has been in the rankings all season and has spent time in the top 10, fell out of the top 25 on Wednesday after suffering a loss to CCC leader Northwest.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Powder Valley’s Brooke Allen, left, was named Old Oregon League player of the year.

## Allen named OOL POY

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

The Powder Valley Badgers volleyball team lost six seniors from the 2018 state runner-up squad, but it was still able to run the table in the Old Oregon League and enter the state playoffs with a 31-1 record — that only loss coming to 4A La Grande.

Brooke Allen played a major role in the Badgers’ success, and the junior setter was named league player of the year for her efforts — one of three Badgers who made the all-OOL team.

“Brooke is a super dedicated young lady on and off the court,” head coach Marji Lind said. “She remains positive the whole time, she brings energy the whole time, and she’s a really well-rounded player. From the serving to the setting to the digging to the swinging, she has a high work ethic and commitment to the whole entire system. She was deserving.”

Allen said she was excited about receiving the award, especially considering she didn’t think there was any hardware coming her way when the awards were announced following the Old Oregon League tournament last weekend.

“I thought I didn’t get anything because it was the last one (named),” she said. “My coach looked at me and said (jokingly), ‘Sorry, didn’t look like you made the cut this year’ (before being named). I was super happy when I got it.”

Allen had to step into a key role for the Badgers not only as a setter, but as one of the team leaders for a squad that now boasts just two seniors and is largely juniors and freshmen.

“Last year we had six seniors, and they were the main captains,” she said. “This year I was a captain, so I always tried to be loud, lift



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Sabrina Albee was a first-team all-OOL award recipient for Joseph, which took second in the league.

the team up, and I’ve been playing for a long time.”

Allen said a key for her on the court is “being really energetic and positive all the time, (yet being) relaxed. (I) don’t let things get in my head (and) try to keep my composure.”

Lind said Allen stepped up as a leader from the beginning of the season.

“We lost some great players last year. All the girls met this summer and said, ‘It’s now our turn to fill those shoes,’ and they did,” Lind said. “Brooke was one of the first who said, ‘I will take on whatever role you ask of me,’ and she has poured herself into it.”

Along with Allen on the first team for the Badgers were middle blocker Belle Blair and libero Bailey Cole. Outside hitter Keanna Bingham and right-side hitter Josi Krieger were named to the second team to round out the Badger award winners.

The Wallowa Cougars, who won 21 regular season matches and qualified for the state playoffs, had three athletes named all-league, including two on the first team. Senior setter Ashlyn

Young and senior middle blocker Jamie Johnston were selected to the first team, and junior outside hitter Shanna Rae Tillery garnered a second-team selection.

The Joseph Eagles, who finished the season with 10 wins in their final 12 matches to get to 16 wins in the regular season and earn a playoff berth, saw two players recognized, as junior outside hitter Sabrina Albee was a first-team all-league performer and senior Camille Crenshaw was selected to the second team.

The Imbler Panthers saw four players gain notice, including two first-team award winners in junior setter Rylee Deal and junior outside hitter Aspen Smith. Junior libero Anika McDonald was a second-team all-league choice, and junior outside hitter Erin Coston was honorable mention.

The Panthers, who won 11 games — including eight in league play despite not having a senior — also saw head coach Jennifer Teeter earn the league coach of the year award.

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Courtesy photo

Sisters Chloe (age 14), Rinnah (10), Willow (6), and Hannah Lynch (7) all took part in the Spooktacular swim meet for the La Grande Swim Club last weekend.

## Swim club success at Spooktacular

Observer staff

The La Grande Swim Club held its annual Spooktacular swim meet Saturday and Sunday at Veterans’ Memorial Pool in La Grande.

As a team, the La Grande girls took first with 1,581 points, and the boys were third with 588.5 points. La Grande’s combined score of 588.5 points was good for second overall.

Listed are the individual race winners for La Grande Swim Club:

Brianna Stadler, girls 15 and older 100-yard freestyle (57.02), girls 15 and older 200 freestyle (2:18.71), girls 15 and older 400 individual medley (4:48.23), girls 15 and older 100 butterfly (1:01.56), girls 15 and older 200 IM (2:21.64), girls 15 and older 100 backstroke (1:02.54), girls

15 and older 200 freestyle (2:05.57), girls and older backstroke (2:12.99).

Zane Ricker, boys 11-12 100 freestyle (54.55), boys 11-12 400 IM (4:55.78), boys 11-12 50 freestyle (25.75), boys 11-12 200 freestyle (2:04.45), boys 11-12 500 freestyle (5:28.74).

Rinnah Lynch, girls 9-10 50 breaststroke (39.59), girls 9-10 100 breaststroke (1:28.67), girls 9-10 200 freestyle (2:26.83), girls 9-10 50 backstroke (36.00).

Dominic Wheeler, boys 8 and under 25 butterfly (23.88), boys 8 and under 50 butterfly (57.00).

Amelia Koza, girls 8 and under 25 backstroke (20.82), girls 8 and under 50 breaststroke (52.07).

Sarah Koza, girls 13-14 200

breaststroke (2:39.19), girls 13-14 400 IM (5:01.91).

Kennedy Kruse, girls 15 and older 500 freestyle (5:53.22).

Romayne Ricker, girls 15 and older 100 breaststroke (1:12.54).

Tim Koza, boys 15 and older 200 breaststroke (2:25.78).

Girls 10 and under 100 medley relay (Callie Fox, Amelia Zamora, Rinnah Lynch, Hannah Lynch, 1:22.58).

Girls 13 and over 200 medley relay (Brianna Stadler, Romayne Ricker, Sarah Koza, Kennedy Kruse, 1:58.39).

Girls 13 and over 200 freestyle relay (Kennedy Kruse, Elizabeth Zamora, Brianna Stadler, Sarah Koza, 1:53.06).