



Photo by Cindy Potter/Columbia College

Megan Bunn serves during Eastern Oregon's match Thursday against Lindsey Wilson. Bunn had a program record 32 kills in the five-set contest, which Lindsey Wilson won.

EOU finishes 2-1 in pool

■ Eastern drops final pool play match despite 32-kill performance from Megan Bunn

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Lindsey Wilson got the best of Eastern Oregon University at the NAIA national tournament again.

This time, though, it happened in a match for the ages.

Elly Burke had the final two kills of the match, and the No. 10 Blue Raiders (32-5 overall) sneaked by the No. 7 Mountaineers (31-4) in a five-set clash of the titans in both teams' final match of pool play Thursday, 23-25, 23-25, 25-23, 30-28, 15-13, offsetting a record day from EOU senior Megan Bunn.

"It's was a good match, (but) we have to have somebody other than Megan Bunn score a little more efficiently. We gotta have somebody (step up) when push comes to shove," EOU head coach Kaki McLean-Morehead said.

Burke's kills, her 14th and 15th of the night, capped a comeback not only in the final set, but in the match for LWC, which continues to have EOU's number when the teams meet at nationals. The Blue Raiders topped EOU for the third year in a row and fourth in five years at the national tournament.

None of the previous three matches went the distance, nor were they this close. Before Burke's final two kills to end the match, the teams were even in total points, 114-114. LWC finished with just four more kills in the match

than EOU (79-75). Both teams saw their setter put up 60 or more assists and three players record 20 more digs.

"It could have gone the other way. In those pressure situations we just didn't convert as much as I would have liked to today," McLean-Morehead said.

Junior setter Madison Pilon echoed a similar sentiment.

"I think that we showed moments of greatness, but in crucial times we were going back to being safe instead of lethal and terminating," said Pilon, who had 62 assists and 10 digs.

EOU seemed to have control of the fifth set, going up 10-5 after an ace by Bunn and consecutive blocks by the combo of Taylor Tibbetts and Jet Taylor. LWC stormed back to score the next points and go ahead 11-10 on a block by Mariana Pratali and Alexis Smith.

"We had great plays and they had great plays, but when we had opportunities to take it away we let them back in," Bunn said.

Taylor evened the score with a kill, but Smith followed with a kill and Burke had a block to put the Blue Raiders back up 13-11. Two attack errors by LWC evened the score before Burke's two kills sealed the win and the top seed in the pool.

The loss came despite a record-setting day for Bunn who had 32 kills to shatter the program record for kills in

a match. "Whatever she's eating, I want some of that," Pilon quipped. "She's been amazing. She's played smart and consistent every day this week."

Bunn also had 20 digs as she posted arguably the best single-match performance in program history. She also moved past 1,300 kills for her career, and is just 75 shy of Amanda Miller's all-time mark of 1,391.

"She's putting everything out there. Really, really, really proud of her," McLean-Morehead said.

Bunn, though, wasn't the only player to crack the record book Thursday. Pilon's 62 assists were the third-highest total in a match in program history. Kiley McMurtrey had 27 digs to give her 637 on the season and move her within 11 of second on the single-season list, a mark she'll likely surpass Friday.

The team also posted the fourth-most kills in a match in program history (75), most kill attempts (243) and, with 103 digs as a team, and set the team record for digs (2,373) and block assists (599) in a season.

Bunn was one of four players in double figures in kills for EOU, with Tibbetts tallying 12 and both Taylor and Breanna Shaffer adding 10, while Cambree Scott had nine kills and seven block assists. Defensively, Aspen

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Early goal does in EOU women as they fall in NAIA quarterfinals



Photo by Zach Wadley/Marian University

Eastern Oregon's Katie Arnold, left, keeps possession during Wednesday's match against Marian.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Eastern Oregon University women's soccer team saw its deepest postseason run ever end in the NAIA quarterfinals.

Marian's Drew Mason scored the lone goal in the seventh minute, and the Knights fended off a late surge from the Mountaineers to defeat EOU, 1-0, Wednesday in Orange Beach, Alabama during the quarterfinals of the NAIA national tournament, bringing an end to the Mountaineers' season.

"It took us about 10-15 minutes to settle in," head coach Jacob Plocher said. "(After) they got that goal, we were able to re-compose and create some nice chances. In the second half we really started to create. We switched our formation up to get a little more attacking. I cannot be upset or even mad with the way the ladies played. They played their hearts out. It was a great effort by everybody. We thought truthfully if the game had gone another 5-10 minutes we could have got one to tie it up."

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Staff photo by Ronald Bond

La Grande's Kaleb Myer scored a game-high 19 points Wednesday in the Tigers' game against Hermiston.

Tigers drop home opener to Dawgs

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Hermiston boys basketball team used balanced scoring and crisp passing — an emphasis of head coach Drew Preuninger — to pick up a win in its season opener.

Jaime Ramirez led four players in scoring with 12 points, and the Bulldogs never trailed in defeating the La Grande Tigers on the road Wednesday, 60-44.

"That's one thing we've been really working on is trying to pass more," Preuninger said. "I know in the past we usually dribble-drive. I'm trying to get more passing, cutting (and) screening away."

Hermiston's perimeter passing and kickouts led to four first-half 3-pointers as the Bulldogs built a 29-19

halftime lead, and seven 3s on the night. But in the second half it was interior passing that helped set up baskets in the paint and helped Hermiston eventually pull away, and it's something the coach will continue to emphasize.

"I would love to see them get it inside more, though," Preuninger said. "That's one thing at halftime I was saying (to the team). I know we don't have height, but if we get it inside it opens up the outside....They did it a couple more times (in the second half) which I was happy about."

Ramirez, Ivan Rangel and Trent Pitner were among those who got into the paint to score for the Bulldogs in the second half. Two layups by Ramirez, a

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EOU has little issue with Reinhardt

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Eastern Oregon University volleyball team had no issues with the early wake-up call.

A big day from senior outside hitter Megan Bunn helped.

"Today we took a deep breath and played more together as a team, more consistent as a team and (were) doing what we needed," head coach Kaki McLean-Morehead said.

Bunn had her second 20-kill performance of the NAIA national tournament, and the No. 7 Mountaineers had little trouble with Reinhardt (Georgia) in its second pool play match Wednesday in Sioux City, Iowa, sweeping the Eagles, 25-18, 25-14, 25-16.

"We were much more effective," McLean-Morehead said. "Our defense was on point, for sure. All the way around we did a much better job and played much more consistently."



Photo by Cindy Potter/Columbia College

Eastern Oregon's Cambree Scott, left, and Madison Pilon, right, are shown Tuesday during a match against Madonna (Michigan) Tuesday. EOU beat both Madonna and Reinhardt (Georgia) to win its first two pool play matches.

Bunn was remarkably posting a season-best kill percentage of .528, which is among the top performances of her career. Only four other times has she been more accurate

on the attack, and in none of those matches did she put up the number of kill attempts (36) that she did Wednesday.

"She was swinging. She did a nice job of using the block," McLean-Morehead

said. "She was really effective and (was) behind the ball, and could see (the court) really well."

The effort also further cemented Bunn's spot in

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