



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

La Grande football players, from left, Gabe Shukle, Blaine Shaw, Parker Robinson, Nathan Reed and Spencer Gerst are among 32 athletes in Eastern Oregon University's signing class for 2020.

EOU signing class highlighted by TIGERS' FAB FIVE

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The 2020 signing class for the Eastern Oregon University football program has a distinctively local flavor, and is highlighted by a quintet of athletes who helped carry the La Grande Tigers to a state title.

The program announced its signing class Wednesday, and of the 32 athletes inked by Eastern Oregon head coach Tim Camp, 14 are from Oregon, led by five players who will continue their careers in La Grande — Parker Robinson, Nathan Reed, Spencer Gerst, Gabe Shukle and Blaine Shaw.

"We just have really good chemistry," Gerst, an offensive and defensive lineman, said of the five. "We work good together, we have a lot of athletes, a lot of strong kids, and we have a will to win."

The five signed their letters of intent at a ceremony at LHS Thursday afternoon.

"It's always been my dream to play football on Saturdays, and to do it with these other four guys is a dream come true," Shaw, a wide receiver and defensive back for LHS, said. "Just growing up with them, they're my brothers, and to be able to do this with them is everything."

All of the LHS players expressed a similar sentiment about not only playing in the college in their hometown, but continuing their careers alongside four others they have played with for years.

"It means the world to me," said Shukle, who played tight end and defensive line for LHS and was the state defensive player of the year. "I've always wanted to play college football. It's a dream come true, and to be able to play with my brothers and my lifelong friends is a blessing."

Reed, a running back, linebacker and

the state offensive player of the year, said in addition to playing with the rest of La Grande's signees, getting to rejoin his brother Cade Reed — who is already on the EOU roster — adds to the bonus, as does the fact, he said, that he's known Camp most of his life.

"My brother's there too, Willie (Camp) and Walker (Camp) — I grew up with them — this awesome community, Coach Camp, there's so many reasons. It felt right," he said. "I've been friends with (Camp's) two boys. I've known him since I could barely walk. I'm thrilled to play under him."

Robinson, the Tigers' quarterback and linebacker, also pointed to growing up around Camp.

"I get to go play football for a guy that I played football in his backyard with his sons, and I get to go to school with part of my family," he said. "It's great support for me. I'm so thankful and grateful that I get a chance to do it."

Of the 14 Oregonians signed by EOU, 12 came from programs on the east side of the state. In addition to the five from La Grande, Camp signed a trio of athletes from Pendleton — Tanner Sweek, Travis McGee and Walker Camp, Tim Camp's son.

Coach Camp said there is a lot of talent east of the Cascades that goes unnoticed — talent he was more than willing to bring into EOU.

"My big thing is kids on the east side of the state get overlooked because of where they're at sometimes," he said. "But that's good for me, because that means business is good. I gotta go a block and a half away to get some of the best kids in the state of Oregon to stay home and have the support that they have, and obviously that support means something to them."

Also from the east side are Drew Lusco from Grant Union, Vale's Colton Kesey, Mason Lehman of Heppner and

Logan Weinke of Pilot Rock.

The other Oregonians in the signing class are Gabe Streblov of Banks and Finn Reeves, a junior college transfer from College of the Siskiyous originally from Lake Oswego.

"I think every single one of these guys wants an education, and that's why Eastern Oregon's such a great fit," Camp said of the entire signing class. "The other thing that sticks out to me is they all have position flexibility — I'm big on that. If they can play in another spot, they gotta be able to trust me and my evaluation to get them out on the field. Ultimately, that's what they want to do. They want to play football."

LHS head coach Rich McIlmoil pointed to the community support as a big part of why he believed the players wanted to continue and play at EOU.

"They enjoy this community, they're part of this community, they're from this community, and the community has supported them for a long time, and they recognize that," he said. "That's part of why they want to stay here. They love it here."

Below is the rest of the signing class: Jeffrey Ledezma, Jerome, Idaho Braden Draper, Nampa, Idaho Coby Williams, New Plymouth, Idaho Joshua Potter, Chubbuck, Idaho Lucas Shepard, Boise, Idaho Kobe Roberts, New Plymouth, Idaho Carson Bohning, Boise, Idaho Dallas Hagler, Middleton, Idaho Miki Ah You, Middleton, Idaho Trace Laird, Ammon, Idaho Jonah Blackham, Boise, Idaho James Grey, Pullman, Washington Sebastian Godina, Zillah, Washington Derek Chilcoate, Adna, Washington Jason Chilcoate, Adna, Washington Tre Davis, Spanaway, Washington Jadinn Sylve, Yakima, Washington Gratian Dawson, Winnemucca, Nevada.

LHS girls bury Ontario at home



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

La Grande senior Brooklyn Hutchins, right, battles with Ontario's Melissa Jagelski for a rebound Friday.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Brian Wright's message to the La Grande Tigers girls basketball team Friday night was to not overlook visiting Ontario.

"Basically we gotta win every league game," Wright said.

The LHS head coach was happy with what the Tigers showed him.

Ella Dunlap had a strong start and finished with a double-double, and the Tigers opened the game on a 25-4 run on the way to a 68-25 home beatdown of Ontario in Greater Oregon League play.

"We talked about before the game (how) sometimes you get a team that's not as good as you and you look past them to games on down the line," Wright said. "I thought the kids came out, we played really good defense in that first half, kept them in front of us, and we were able to get out and run. Kids were working hard."

Dunlap scored eight straight points early with a pair of putbacks and a top-of-the-key jumper as La Grande scored the first nine points. The lead reached double figures when Brooklyn Hutchins hit a pair of jumpers. Alexyss Chamberlain wrapped the first quarter with a 3-pointer for an 18-4 lead, and the rout was on.

Camryn Collman's first 3-pointer, a field goal by Grace Neer and another basket from Dunlap capped the extended early run and pushed the lead to 21, which was the margin at the half at

36-15 when Dunlap scored again down low in the closing moments.

"She really did (play well)," Wright said of Dunlap, who finished with a game-high 17 points and 10 rebounds. "Good night for her."

It was a good night across the board for La Grande, which was able to get 10 players in the scoring column. Collman finished with 14 points and hit a trio of 3-pointers. McKaylee Orton added eight points, including a late field goal to give La Grande a 49-22 lead after three quarters. Orton also had a pair of fourth-quarter 3-pointers. Luran Rinker added six points for the Tigers.

La Grande (13-6 overall, 3-2 GOL) visits Powder Valley Saturday.

Also Friday

Union 59, Enterprise 34: Callie Glenn scored 23 points and hit four 3-pointers Friday, and the Bobcats moved one step closer to a Blue Mountain Conference title with a blowout road win.

Glenn scored 16 points in the first half as Union took a 30-20 lead at the break. Kylie Marriott, who added 12 points, scored six in the third to help the Bobcats push the lead to 44-24 after three quarters.

Jada Gray scored nine points to lead the Outlaws.

Union (20-3 overall, 10-0 BMC) hosts Heppner Saturday, while Enterprise (14-4, 6-3) hosts Stanfield Saturday.

Elgin 48, Cove 41:

Jayden Palmer connected on five 3-pointers and finished with 15 points Friday as the

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Staff photo by Ronald Bond

Eastern Oregon University head football coach Tim Camp, right, speaks Thursday at a signing ceremony for La Grande's five athletes who will play at EOU.

EOU wrestling downs Corban

Observer staff

SALEM — The Eastern Oregon University men's wrestling team won all but one contested match Friday on the way to a 36-9 dual victory on the road against Corban.

After forfeiting the opening match, EOU got on the board with Nathaniel Rodriguez's 10-9 decision over Grant Laibin at 133 pounds, the first of six straight wins on the mat for the Mountaineers.

Blake McNall's 13-3 major decision over Joseph Foster (141), and a win by injury

from Daniel Rodriguez (149) helped EOU take a 13-6 lead. John Bittering won by forfeit at 157 to extend the lead to 13, and Jesse Camacho's (165) win by 6-3 decision over Cody Knott and Keegan Mulhill's (174) win by fall against Nick Nelson put EOU ahead for good at 28-6. Marco Retano (184) and Noel Orozco (285) won by major decision, defeating Noah Sikes 14-4 and Jack Farley 11-1, respectively.

The Mountaineers travel to face Southern Oregon Saturday.