Contributed photo by Iain Dexter/EOU Athletics

Eastern Oregon University's Megan Bolton, shown during an EOU photoshoot, has broken program records in the indoor 60-, 400- and 600-meter races in the last month.

A Bolt(on) of lightning

Speedy Eastern Oregon sophomore shattering records

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Megan Bolton has drawn comparisons — and understandably so — to a record-setting sprinter who bears a similarity in name.

"All the time," she said of how often Jamaican Usain Bolt has been brought up to her, adding friends would add a dash or an ellipse in her name — Bolt-on or Bolt…on. "I got used to it. I think it's kind of funny. It's a cool reference."

Her name, though, is not the only thing she has in common with Bolt, as the sophomore sprinter is rewriting the record books for the Eastern Oregon University women's track and field team.

And, appropriately, she's doing it quickly.

In the last month, Bolton has set program records in the women's indoor 60-meter dash, the 400 and the 600. She broke the school record in the latter of the three races — which, she said, is her favorite indoor race — twice in as many weeks, and set both the 60 and 400 marks last weekend.

"I haven't sat back and thought about it," she said of the records. "I just don't think of myself as anything special. Anybody could break the records. Some of it is luck. The 60 was just more ambitious, just wanting to do better anytime I ran the event.

"I think about my races, but I think about what I can do better in the next one."

The 600, a race in which she is currently ranked second in the nation at the NAIA level, is a perfect example. She originally broke the record on Jan. 18 with a time of 1:35.95, but said in that first race, the middle lap on Boise's 200-meter indoor track was her slowest. A week later, her goal was to be more consistent on each of the three laps.

"The second time we ran it we decided to get out hard, maintain hard, finish hard," Bolton said.

That race she posted a time of 1:33.61, which resulted in her meeting the goal of positioning herself better in the national race in early March, which she had qualified for the prior week.

"I've been saying since last year I was going to be a national champ in the 600. I just wanted to set myself up for a better position and get more experience in the 600 so when I do go to nationals in it I have an idea of how I want to run it," she said.

She most recently set records in the 60 in 7.82 seconds, and the 400 in 56.19 seconds.

Running is in Bolton's family, as both her father, James, and her brother, Cade, competed in track and, like Megan, were sprinters.

She transitioned to the sport fully in high school after spending 10 years as a gymnast, though during middle school she both ran track and did gymnastics.

The skill built up as a gymnast aided a natural transition to being a sprinter.

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Contributed photo by Connor Bracken/EOU Athletics

Bolton, a sophomore at EOU, broke program records in both the indoor 60 and 400 last weekend in Boise.

Bobcats finish perfect in BMC

Observer staff

The Union Bobcats girls basketball team finished a perfect Blue Mountain Conference season Tuesday as it used a big second quarter to pull away from the Stanfield Tigers for a 55-45 road win.

"It's kind of surreal. You start out with a vision and a mission and a goal, (and) to see it (realized) is satisfying," head coach Rhondie Rickman-Johansen said. "We focus truly on ourselves. We focus on one game at a time."

Union finished its first perfect league run since going 14-0 in the BMC in the 2008-09 season, breaking the game open with a 20-point second quarter to take a 32-15 halftime lead. Taylar Daggett, who scored 13 points, hit three 3-pointers in the period.

Kylie Marriott had 15 points to lead Union, and Callie Glenn added 12 points.

"These girls, they're on a mission," Rickman-Johansen said. "They are determined, they're focused, and they are hungry for what lies ahead. I couldn't be more proud of them. They're just a dynamic group of young ladies."

The Bobcats (22-3 overall, 12-0 BMC) are off until Feb. 22 when they play either Stanfield or Enterprise in the BMC title game in Pendleton.

Joseph 44, Imbler 22: Sabrina Albee scored 15 of her game-high 23-points in the third quarter Tuesday to help the Eagles earn an Old Oregon League win on the road.

Albee hit three 3-pointers and Joseph outscored Imbler 23-4 in the third to turn a 12-10 halftime lead into a 35-14 margin after three.

Madelyn Nelson added eight points for Joseph and had a pair of 3s in the third.

Imbler was led by Kenna Whitmore, who scored 13 points.

Joseph (16-6 overall, 9-1 OOL) visits Wallowa Friday, while Imbler (1-18, 1-8) hosts Nixyaawii Thursday.

Heppner 38, Enterprise 37: The Outlaws saw a nine-point lead with 1:47 to play vanish Tuesday in a heartbreaking Blue Mountain Conference home loss to Heppner.

Sydney Wilson scored 13 points in the fourth for Heppner to spark the comeback.

Ashlyn Gray and Carsyn Miller scored eight points apiece for the Outlaws.

Enterprise (15-5 overall, 7-4 BMC) finishes the regular season Friday at Pilot Rock.

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