



Eastern Oregon University's Rachel Fielder attempts a layup Friday during the first half of Eastern's 73-64 home victory over Northwest University.

Staff photo by Ronald Bond

Eleven and counting

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The shots weren't falling in the first half Friday for the Eastern Oregon University women's basketball team.

The Mountaineers, though, found their rhythm after the break to extend their winning streak and stay in a tie for first in the Cascade Collegiate Conference.

Jane Nelson scored 15 points to lead three Mountaineers in double figures, and EOU shot 59% in the second half to rally for a 73-64 home victory over Northwest University, the team's 11th win in a row.

"Tonight we just had to grind," EOU head coach Anji Weissenfluh said. "We just kept on working at it and we got going in the third quarter."

Rachel Fielder added 14 points, and Kylie Smith had a double-double with 11 points and 10 rebounds.

"Recently we've really found what works, and we're able to play together a lot better," Smith said.

Neither team was particularly sharp in the first half, but EOU was the worse for wear, shooting 30% in a first half that saw it trail by as much as 11 points before going into the break down just 30-27.

"We struggled at the beginning just to make shots," Weissenfluh said. "We got the open shots but couldn't knock them down, and then when we didn't knock them down it got us out of our rhythm."

The shots started to fall after the break, and the defense helped trigger a couple of key runs to put Eastern ahead for good.

Nelson and Smith scored to pull EOU within 32-31 early in the third, and EOU took the lead 34-32 a couple minutes later when Fielder's steal led to a 3-pointer by Taylor Stricklin.

Sam Van Loo and Smith traded buckets before Stricklin grabbed a steal that led by a layup by Nelson, and back-to-back 3s by Fielder and Madison Crews after Northwest misses put Eastern ahead 44-34 with 3:47 to play in the third, the team's largest lead at the time.

"What we've been hanging our hat on is defense and rebounding," Weissenfluh said.

Lexi Biggerstaff's layup — her only points in the second half after 11 in the first — capped a 10-2 run to get the Eagles within two, but Smith's 3-point play off a missed free throw put the Mountaineers ahead 50-44 after three.

"When we're not having a great

shooting night overall, those little things, like getting offensive rebounds, looking for the ball off free throws any time you can to get us another opportunity to score, those things were key to keeping us ahead," Smith said.

Baskets by Emma Logan and Fielder before a Nelson 3-pointer put Eastern ahead 57-46 with 8:10 to play, and Northwest got no closer than six the rest of the way.

The hot-shooting second half lifted EOU to a 44% clip from the floor on the night, and Eastern was 4-for-6 from the 3-point line in the second half after going just 5-for-17 in the first half.

Van Loo and Maya DuChesne each had 14 points to lead Northwest.

Eastern (20-7 overall, 14-3 CCC), which reached the 20-win mark for the ninth year in a row, hosts Evergreen State College Saturday.

Men take down Eagles at home

Brandon Porter led the Eastern Oregon University men's basketball team with 17 points Friday as the Mountaineers claimed their third win in a row, downing Northwest at home in Cascade Collegiate Conference play, 73-63.

EOU led nearly the entire night, taking the lead for good less than six

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Large local contingent in title contention

Observer staff

UNION — Eighteen local 2A/1A wrestlers are still in the running for a district title after reaching the semifinals Friday at the District 4 tournament in Union.

Both Gabriel Hasbell of Elgin and Garrett Burns of Imbler are into the 113-pound finals. Each had early-round byes, then picked up pins in the quarterfinals to advance to Saturday's semifinals.

Elgin's Kenny Terry and Union/Cove's Jaxon Blackburn are in the 126 semifinals, after wins by fall in the quarters, and will square off Saturday for a berth in the district title match.

Elgin's Joe Lathrop won two

matches by fall at 132 to reach the semifinals, while Enterprise's Trace Evans won his quarterfinal bout by forfeit at 138.

At 145, Carter Blackburn of Union/Cove and both Kennisen Knifong and Zeb Ramsden of Joseph/Wallowa are into the semifinals. Blackburn had a bye and won his quarterfinals by 4-0 decision, Knifong won two matches by fall, and Ramsden had two wins by forfeit. Blackburn and Ramsden will meet in Saturday's semifinals.

Imbler's MyKail Foster won by fall in the 152 quarterfinals, as did Elgin's Clayton Hammond in his quarterfinal match at 170.

Charlie Evans of Enterprise and

Joseph/Wallowa's Ronny Morello both won by fall to advance at 182, with Morello winning in just 16 seconds. Union/Cove's Damon Nipper earned a pin at 195 to reach the semifinals.

Jonah Staigle of Joseph/Wallowa, Drew Widener of Enterprise and Michael Day of Union/Cove advanced at 220 — Staigle and Widener both picking up byes and Day winning by fall.

Tyler Gray of Enterprise advanced to the 285 semifinals after earning a win by medical forfeit.

The tournament continues Saturday in Union, with the top two wrestlers in each weight class qualifying for the state tournament Feb. 28-29.

LHS sending large group to district final

Observer staff

MOLALLA — The La Grande girls swim team had three preliminary victories Friday and is sending 27 athletes or relay teams to Saturday's championship finals of the 4A/3A/2A/1A Special District 2 swim meet in Molalla.

The Tigers claimed the top spot in the prelims of the 200 medley relay in a time of 1:55.48, and in the 200 freestyle relay in 1:47.10. Riana

Scott also nabbed an individual win in the 200 freestyle with a time of 2:03.11.

LHS added eight second-place finishes: Kennedy Kruse in the 200 freestyle (2:05.62) and 500 freestyle (5:37.00), Romaine Ricker in the 200 individual medley (2:16.85) and 100 breaststroke (1:11.22), Maria Capra in the 50 freestyle (26.43), Kristal Jensen in the 100 butterfly (1:02.40), Scott in the 100 backstroke (1:03.63),

and the 400 freestyle relay team (3:53.67).

The LHS boys won four events in the prelim round, with individual victories from Glenn Ricker in the 100 butterfly (56.84) and the 100 breaststroke (1:06.49), T.J. Clay in the 100 freestyle (53.53), and the 400 freestyle relay team (4:00.52). Adding second-place finishes were the 200 medley relay team (1:52.99), Gabriel Zamora in

the 200 freestyle (2:11.24), James Thurman in the 100 freestyle (54.60) and Clay in the 100 backstroke (59.38). In all, 14 teams or individuals made the top six to reach the championship finals.

Tim Koza won the boys 500 freestyle in 5:13.65 to lead Cove and was third in the 100 backstroke (59.61). Cove's Taylor Fox was third in the 200 IM (2:18.98).

The finals of the district meet are Saturday.

Elgin, Joseph, Cove and Enterprise girls all pick up victories

Observer staff

The Elgin girls basketball team took a 10-point lead into the fourth quarter Friday but had to hold on to gain a 53-51 Old Oregon League road victory over Nixyaawii.

The Huskies led by six at halftime and were up 43-33 after three before Nixyaawii rallied. Elgin hung on despite shooting just 10-for-24 from the free-throw line in the fourth quarter.

Jayden Palmer and Mariah Wilhelm each scored 12 points to lead Elgin, with Wilhelm hitting four 3-pointers. Jocelyn Palmer added 11 points.

Elgin (18-3 overall, 10-1 OOL) finishes the regular season Saturday at Powder Valley.

Joseph 53, Wallowa 38: The Eagles pulled away in the fourth quarter Friday for a road win over the Cougars in Old Oregon League play.

Joseph led most of the night but was up by just eight after three quarters before outscoring the Cougars 17-10 in the fourth.

Sabrina Albee scored 19

points to lead the Eagles, and Brianna Micka added 12 points.

Kyla Hook scored 11 points to lead Wallowa, while Jamie Johnston added 10.

On Saturday, Joseph (17-6 overall, 10-1 OOL) faces Nixyaawii in Enterprise, while Wallowa (11-11, 6-5) visits Griswold.

Cove 39, Imbler 25: The Leopards rallied from a halftime deficit Friday to defeat Imbler at home in Old Oregon League play.

Imbler led 17-16 at the half, but Cove outscored the Panthers 16-5 in the third to take a 32-22 lead after three and hold on.

Austin Kendall scored 18 points to lead Cove, and Elli Hines-Dunlap added 10.

Kenna Whitmore had 16 points, including 12 in the first half, for Imbler.

Cove (11-10 overall, 4-6 OOL) visits Pine Eagle Saturday. Imbler finishes its season at 1-20, and 1-10 in the OOL.

Enterprise 58, Pilot Rock 31: The Outlaws

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Thursday's prep hoops



Observer file photo

La Grande's Camryn Collman, shown in a game earlier this season, scored 19 points Thursday in the Tigers' win over Jordan Valley.

Tigers use big third to top Mustangs

Observer staff

Camryn Collman scored 16 of her game-high 19 points in the second half, and the La Grande girls basketball team pulled away after the break for a 53-28 home win over 1A Jordan Valley Thursday night.

Collman scored 11 in the third, and the Tigers outscored the Mustangs by 13 in the third quarter to turn a two-point halftime lead into a 38-23 advantage after three. Collman and Ella Dunlap combined for 11 points in the fourth turn the game into a rout.

La Grande outscored Jordan Valley 33-10 in the second half.

Dunlap added 14 points and Brooklyn Hutchins added 10 for La Grande, while Cassity Gluch had 10 points for the Mustangs.

The Tigers (15-6 overall) visit McLoughlin Saturday to wrap up Old Oregon League play.

Nixyaawii 44, Imbler 22:

Lark Moses and Mackenzie Fiona both scored 11 points Thursday as Nixyaawii topped Imbler in Old Oregon League play.

Nixyaawii held Imbler to just one first-half field goal as it took a 19-8 halftime lead, then extended the margin to 32-16 after three en route to the win.

Kenna Whitmore scored 10 points to lead the Panthers.

Boys

Nixyaawii 76, Imbler 38: Nixyaawii scored 23 points in the second quarter Thursday to break its Old Oregon League contest in Imbler open on the way to a win.

The big second gave the Golden Eagles a 42-16 halftime lead. Tyasin Burns, who scored 27 points to lead Nixyaawii, had 22 of those points in the first half.

Jayce Burnette scored 17 points and hit three 3-pointers to lead Imbler, while Noah Insko added seven points.