

EOU softball has rough weekend at Simpson Triangular

Observer staff

REDDING, Calif. — The Eastern Oregon University softball team had a tough weekend at the Simpson Triangular in Redding, California, dropping four games to the host Red Hawks and also falling twice to William Jessup.

EOU tried to rally Saturday in its first game against Simpson before falling 8-6. The Mountaineers cut a 4-0 deficit in half on an RBI

single by Glori Cheever and an RBI groundout by Haley Ebner, then were down 7-2 before Taylor Dow’s sacrifice fly, Amanda Smith’s RBI single and Madison Parker’s run on an error cut the margin to 7-5 in the fourth. Brittney Bertrand added a late RBI single in the sixth inning.

Later Saturday, the Mountaineers fell to William Jessup 12-4.

Smith’s three-run home run and Payton Pocklington’s RBI single

put EOU ahead 4-0 in the first inning, but the lead was short-lived. The Warriors followed with three runs in the first and four runs in the second to take the lead, then added on in the third and fourth.

EOU and WJU met again Sunday morning with the teams playing to an identical 12-4 final score. This time, the Warriors scored the game’s first five runs and never trailed. RBI singles by Alaina Carson and Katie

Silvestri made it 5-2 in the second, and Ebner’s sacrifice fly in the third cut it to 5-3, but EOU got no closer.

Later Sunday, EOU and Simpson squared off twice, with the Red Hawks winning 5-3 and 8-0.

In the first game, the Mountaineers fell behind 5-0 after six innings before rallying in the seventh on Pocklington’s RBI single and a two-run single by Bertrand. In the second contest, EOU managed just

three hits — two from Carson — in a shutout loss.

Monday, Simpson and Eastern wrapped the weekend with the Red Hawks scoring the game’s first 11 runs on the way to an 11-1 win.

The Mountaineers’ lone run came in the fifth on a sacrifice fly by Carson.

EOU (0-10 overall) faces Providence Friday and Saturday for its first home and Cascade Collegiate Conference games of the season.



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

La Grande’s Riana Scott, shown in a meet earlier this season, was on a winning relay team and won two individual races Saturday.

TIGERS

Continued from Page 6A

athletes qualify in the 11 races, and almost all of them reached state in multiple events.

Among the second-place finishes for La Grande were the 400 freestyle relay team of Kennedy Kruse, Laramie Ricker, Reagan Kruse and Scott with a time of 3:50.40.

Romayne Ricker was one of three state qualifiers in the 200 individual med-

ley as she took second in 2:07.24, joined in the race by fourth-place finisher Riley Weigand (2:26.39) and fifth-place Chloe Lynch (2:27.64). Ricker also was second in the 100 breaststroke in 1:06.33.

Jensen and Capra qualified in both the 50 freestyle and the 100 butterfly. Capra was second (25.64) and Jensen third (25.87) in the 50 freestyle, while in the very next girls final, the 100 butterfly, Jensen placed second

(1:00.16) and Capra placed third (1:01.25).

Kennedy Kruse reached state by taking third in both the 200 freestyle (2:04.82) and in the 500 freestyle (5:32.61). Weigand also made state in the 500 freestyle, taking fifth in 5:50.83.

Reagan Kruse (58.35) and Laramie Ricker (59.38) took fourth and fifth respectively in the 100 freestyle to round out the qualifiers for LHS.

The girls team will head to



Contributed photo by Amanda Welch

Cove’s Tim Koza won the district title Saturday in the boys 500 to reach state and is one of two Leopards who will compete at the state meet.

state as part of what figures to be a three-team race for the state title, with Catlin Gabel and Sweet Home the Tigers’ main competitors.

On the boys side, LHS won the 200 medley relay as T.J. Clay, Adam Remily, Glenn Ricker and James Thurman posted a time of 1:47.81, and Gabriel Zamora, Levy Brembach, Remily and Devin Ingram won the 400 freestyle relay in 3:54.54.

Ricker added two indi-

vidual titles and automatic state berths by taking the 100 butterfly (55.16) and the 100 breaststroke (1:03.45), and Clay won the 100 freestyle in 54.40 and also placed third in the 100 backstroke (59.74) to reach state.

Also earning spots to state was the 200 freestyle relay team of Clay, Kobe Cooper, Thurman and Ricker, which was second in 1:40.04, and third-place finisher Thurman in the 50 freestyle (24.47).

The Cove boys, who placed sixth with 82 points, sent two individuals to state. Tim Koza won the 500 freestyle (5:07.58) and placed second in the 100 backstroke (57.28), while Taylor Fox earned at-large bids to state by taking third in the 200 individual medley (2:17.65) and fifth in the 100 butterfly (1:01.03).

The state swim meet is Friday and Saturday at Tualatin Hills Aquatic Center in Beaverton.

WRESTLING

Continued from Page 6A

Hood. “I just beat him on my feet and was quicker.”

The junior, who said he has found a rhythm and confidence on the mat this year, will take one of the top rankings into state at 138.

“It’s really compelled me to (reach) the next level,” he said, adding that for state he needs to “just keep doing my thing, keep my confidence up, and maybe come home with a state title.”

Staigle, who himself has posted a 22-1 record, won his 220 title match against Michael Day of Union/Cove by earning a second-round pin. After taking some time in the opening round to size each other up, Staigle scored a takedown and a near fall for a 5-0 lead, then picked up another takedown and shortly after earned the pin.

“Anything can happen, no matter the skill level of the guy, so you



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

Joseph/Wallowa’s Jonah Staigle, top, was the 220-pound champion at Saturday’s 2A/1A Special District 4 tournament in Union.

always want to feel him out and get an idea of what his style is like and go from there,” Staigle said, pointing to his strength, technical skills and speed as what has allowed for the success this season.

“I’m usually a little bit faster than the other guys, so just try to keep a faster pace.”

Staigle, who earlier pinned Culver’s Wylie Johnson in the semifinals, was one of two Eagles to

reach state with an automatic bid after Zeb Ramsden took second at 145 following a 6-1 decision loss to Lane Downing of Culver. Ramsden reached the final with a 5-0 decision over Carter Blackburn of Union/Cove.

Day and Jaxon Blackburn, who took second at 126, both earned automatic berths to state to lead Union/Cove. Day shook off the title match loss to earn a pin over Johnson in one of seven second-place wrestle back matches.

Blackburn, meanwhile, gave Pine Eagle’s Cutter Tanaka all he could handle in the final, but he was visibly affected by a hit to the head during the match and eventually lost the match by fall despite the valiant effort. Blackburn earlier pinned Elgin’s Kenny Terry in the semifinals.

Elgin’s Hammond (170) dropped the championship match against Imani Schaefer of Crane by an 11-5 decision, then had to win a wrestle

back for second place, where he eked out a 8-7 decision over Hepner/Ione’s Conor Brosnan to take second and lock up an automatic bid.

Imbler picked up two second-place finishes, from Garrett Burns at 113 and MyKail Foster at 152. Burns dropped a 9-2 decision to Coy Butner of Pine Eagle, while Foster dropped his match by technical fall to Grant Union’s Justin Hodge. Each defeated Culver wrestlers by fall in the semifinals, with Burns taking down Brody Piercy and Foster downing Hunter Augustynovich.

Elgin finished fifth with 105.5 points. Union/Cove was close behind in sixth with 100, followed by Joseph/Wallowa (88) in seventh, Enterprise (76) in eighth, and Imbler (46) in 11th.

Culver was the district champion with 308.5 points.

The state wrestling tournament is Feb. 28-29 in Portland.

ROUNDUP

Continued from Page 6A

for Wallowa (12-11 overall, 7-5 OOL), which as the No. 3 seed in the OOL-North faces Cove Thursday.

Pine Eagle 36, Cove 28: The Leopards dropped into a tie for second in the Old Oregon League-South following Saturday’s road loss to Pine Eagle.

Stats were not available for Cove (11-11 overall, 4-7 OOL), which owns the tiebreaker over Pine Eagle based on point differential between the team, and will be the No. 2 seed and face Wallowa Thursday.

Boys

La Grande 61, McLoughlin 37: The Tigers dispatched McLoughlin on the road Saturday in Greater Oregon League play to claim a share of the league title.

The Tigers broke the game open in the second half to go ahead 48-28 after three quarters and finish off league play with a 5-1 mark.

Kaleb Myer scored 16 points to lead La Grande, while Devin Bell added 10

points and Cristian Mendoza scored nine.

La Grande (8-12 overall, 5-1 GOL) will be the No. 2 seed headed into the district tournament after dropping a tiebreaker based on OSAA rankings and will host either Ontario or the Pioneers Thursday.

Nixyaawii 67, Joseph 61: The Eagles rallied from a double-digit halftime deficit and gave Nixyaawii a scare Saturday but came up short in the Old Oregon League finale in Enterprise.

Joseph outscored the Golden Eagles 23-11 in the third to trim a 13-point deficit to 51-50, but Nixyaawii held off Joseph in the fourth behind Tyasin Burns and Mick Schimmel, who had 24 and 20 points, respectively.

Joseph was led by Chase Murray, who scored 28 points. Mason Ferre added 11, and Hadley Miller scored nine.

Joseph (18-6 overall, 9-3 OOL), the No. 2 seed in the OOL-North, faces Pine Eagle Thursday in the first round of the OOL tournament in Baker City.

Powder Valley 60, Elgin 57: The Badgers fended off Elgin at home Saturday in an Old Oregon League thriller and the regular-season finale for both teams.

Neither team was able to gain much separation. The squads were tied at halftime at 37-37, and Elgin led 48-47 after three quarters. Moziss Nesser had five key points in the fourth quarter and Ethan Stephens had four in the period as the Badgers held on.

Stephens finished with 14 points, Reece Dixon scored 13, and Roper Bingham had 11 for the Badgers.

Kaden McClure led Elgin with 16 points, Ian Adams added 14, and Tristan Simpson scored 10.

Powder Valley (18-6 overall, 10-1 OOL) finished as the OOL-South champions and will face either Joseph or Pine Eagle Friday in the OOL district tournament in Baker City. Elgin (13-9, 8-4), the third seed in the OOL-North, faces Imbler Thursday in Baker City.

Wallowa 78, Griswold 35: The Cougars ended the season

on a high note Saturday by routing Griswold on the road in Old Oregon League play.

Tristin Bales and Quinten Tillery each had 19 points to lead Wallowa, which put the game away early by racing out to a 24-4 first-quarter lead and adding on from there. Zeb Hermens added 12 points for the Cougars, who finished the season with a 7-15 overall record and at 3-9 in the OOL.

Pine Eagle 64, Cove 28: The Leopards’ season came to an end Saturday with a road loss in Old Oregon League play.

Stats were not available for Cove, which finished the season with a record of 2-20 overall and at 1-10 in the OOL.

Elgin boys get a win back: The Huskies’ Friday night loss to Nixyaawii will instead go in the record books as a win after the Golden Eagles were forced to forfeit the victory. OSAA confirmed on its website Saturday that Nixyaawii had a player exceed his quarter limit of five between the JV and varsity contests.

Hamlin wins in photo finish at Daytona 500

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — New year, another Denny Hamlin win in the Daytona 500.

And Joe Gibbs still has the team to beat in NASCAR.

Hamlin won his third Daytona 500 on Monday, becoming the first driver since Sterling Marlin in 1995 to win “The Great American Race” in consecutive seasons. His win last year was a 1-2-3 sweep for Joe Gibbs Racing and kicked off a yearlong company celebration in which Gibbs drivers won a record 19 races and the Cup championship.

The post-race scene this year was somewhat subdued out of concern for Ryan Newman, who was wrecked as the leader and crossed the finish line with his car on its roof, engulfed

in flames.

Hamlin joined six Hall of Fame drivers as winners of three or more Daytona 500s. He tied Dale Jarrett — who gave JGR its first Daytona 500 win in 1993 — Jeff Gordon and Bobby Allison. Hamlin trails Cale Yarborough’s four wins and the record seven by Richard Petty.

This victory came after just the second rain postponement in 62 years, a visit from President Donald Trump, a pair of red flag stoppages and two overtimes. As he went door-to-door with Ryan Blaney for the finish — the 0.014 margin of victory was the second closest in race history — Newman took a wild ride along the track when he was crashed trying to hold onto the lead.

