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The Observer

## Shaughnessy is EOU's first lacrosse signee

**By Ronald Bond** The Observer

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University has signed its first lacrosse athlete — and it's an individual who already has experience

being part of a start-up program. The Mountaineers an-

nounced Tuesday in a press release they have inked Meridian, Idaho, senior Sydney Shaughnessy to the newly founded women's lacrosse program.

Head coach Monica Plut said Shaughnessy brings a blend of natural talent and drive and is the kind of athlete she wants in her program.

"She has great skill and she's the hardest worker in the room," Plut said.

Shaughnessy is coming off a junior season last spring where she netted 49 goals and six assists for Meridian High School, according to the EOU press release.

She's also relatively new to the sport. Shaughnessy has been a basketball player throughout middle and high school, but her sophomore year decided to join the school's new lacrosse program.

"I went out and tried it and fell in love with it," Shaughnessy said.

She said joining EOU's new program "was a really cool opportunity," and called it "something that I'm used



Meridian, Idaho, senior Sydney Shaughnessy has signed with the Eastern Oregon University women's lacrosse team.

to, in a way," given she was part of the new MHS program.

Plut pointed to Shaughnessy's experience being part of a prior start-up as a positive.

"She loves lacrosse. She's so passionate about it," Plut said. "She got people to join her high school team. She's going to be a walking, talking, marketing person for our team."

Plut and Shaughnessy met about a year ago when Plut, who also is a US Lacrosse Level 1 and 2 trainer, met her at a tournament in Boise, and later at a clinic at Adams State University in Colorado, where Plut coached prior to coming to Eastern Oregon.

"She's similar to my (high school) coach now," Shaughnessy said of Plut. "She's a great person. We connect so well together. We relate on many things."

Shaughnessy said she was about to put her lacrosse career aside and focus solely on her education at college — she nearly put down a

deposit for Northern Arizona University — when she learned the school was putting her major online. It left her in a spot where, as she put it, "for a week I didn't know what I was doing."

She visited EOU, fell in love with the school and signed immediately, Plut said.

"When she came to EOU she loved it. She signed on the spot that day," the coach said.

Shaughnessy said the support she felt for the sport when she visited — even with it coming to a region where it's previously been nonexistent - was part of what sold her.

"All I heard was positive things about it. They're all so excited about it," Shaughnessy said. "Half of them said they don't know what (lacrosse) is but they want to support it. Having that just feels right."

When asked what stood out about her, Plut said that on the visit, Shaughnessy asked why Plut was recruiting her.

"I answered that you're the hardest worker in the room. Her mom started tearing up (and said), It's nice that she's getting recognized for it." Plut said. "Her passion, her willingness to help — her high school coaches said she's the first one to practice, last one to leave. I think I scored a really great player."

Shaughnessy pointed to her coaches — Jeff Einfalt, Tom Welsh and Lacey Porter — and her parents — Ray and Whitney — as integral to helping her reach this point.

"I wouldn't be where I am without them," she said.

## The future is now for **Seattle Mariners' young pitching staff**

By Jose M. Romero The Associated Press

PEORIA, Ariz. — The future of the Seattle Mariners' starting rotation is now, with left-hander Justus Sheffield virtually assured of a spot and fellow rising prospect Justin Dunn a top contender to join the group.

Both got a taste of the big leagues last season when they made their Mariners debuts. This season they figure to be a major part of Seattle's rebuilding process as it enters its second year following a 68-94 season

"Every year's a step forward, but mainly this year I'm looking forward to going out there and competing and changing this thing around," said Sheffield, who was 0-1 in eight games, including seven starts, and posted a 5.50 ERA over 36 innings.

The club appears to have set expectations for Sheffield, which he appreciates. "As they should," he said. "As anyone should. Everyone has a sense of responsibility of going out there and proving what they can do."

Sheffield, 23, is in his second spring training with the Mariners. He's learned from last season that baseball is a game of failure, he said, and that he has to get past the bad outings and move forward.

"I'm going to continue to fight. I'm never going to back down from any challenge, any obstacle that's in my way," Sheffield said. "I'd love to stay here. I love the organization and I love the direction that they're going so I'm excited to be a part of this.

The Mariners are largely a young team, but with 42 pitchers seeing major league action and a number of prospects called up as the team struggled last season, there's a level of familiarity with each other in spring training. Many players have already been minor-league teammates and bonded over having been traded from other organizations, Dunn said.

Dunn, 24, and Sheffield were teammates at Double-A Arkansas last season, and Dunn was a September call-up for Seattle and pitched in four games.

Each outing was purposely shortened. He never pitched more than two innings in a start, but came away with the sense that he belongs at the major league level.

"I have the ability to have success here," he said when asked about what he took from last season's outings. "Second, is that it's the same game. Once you slow the heart rate down and get back to playing baseball, the same game you were playing since you were young, it's the same type of game."

Dunn, who did not register a decision last season but overcame a rocky major-league debut to compile a 2.70 ERA, is aware of the competition to be in the rotation.

"Hopefully, at the end of the (spring) I'm getting on a flight to go to Seattle," he said. "But all that's out of my hands. I just have to go out there and be me and put myself in a good position."

Mariners manager Scott Servais said Sheffield and Dunn learned a great deal from their brief big league experience, noting Sheffield "made some huge strides going forward."

"Everybody wants to bolt them together but they really are different in where they're at with their development plan," Servais said. "Both of them have a chance to really impact our future. We'd love to see it happen as soon as possible, but understand there's a timeline, you have to be patient."

Servais is looking for consistency from his young starters in 2020.

"Is that going to be there every time out? We hope over time," he said. "But being realistic, there's probably going to be some really good outings, maybe some where they struggle."

Notes: The Mariners held their first full squad workout Tuesday with 70 players taking the field, the most since Servais took over as manager before the 2016 season. Only Dee Gordon wasn't in camp as he awaits the birth of his child. ... Servais accepted some players' challenge to taste some Louisiana hot sauce Monday, and said he paid the price. "It didn't go so well," he said with a laugh.





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