



La Grande's Camryn Collman tracks down a stealThursday during the first half of theTigers' 52-29 win over McLoughlin in the Greater Oregon League district tournament. Collman scored 26 points to move past 1,000 in her prep career.

Staff photo by Ronald Bond

Playoff berth secured

■ Tigers sink Pioneers again; Collman reaches 1,000 career points in win

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande girls basketball team secured a state playoff berth Thursday night, its top player reached a major milestone, and the Tigers now get one more crack at Baker. The Tigers never trailed as they ran past the McLoughlin Pioneers for the third time this season, 52-29, in the semifinals of the Greater Oregon League district tournament in La Grande. “It is hard to play a team three times, and we’re kind of hoping that works in our favor Saturday against Baker,” head coach Brian Wright said. Individually, it was a big night for Camryn Collman, who took control on offense early and often to help La Grande build the lead. The junior scored 26 points and added eight rebounds to lead the Tigers. She netted her 1,000th career point, becoming just the third player in the history of the

girls program to reach the milestone. “It’s always been a goal of mine since I was little,” Collman said of the 1,000-point club. “I’ve always wanted to get there.” The junior, who entered the night needing just 14 points, hit the mark during a second-quarter offensive run that saw her score 13 straight points for La Grande to help put the game away. Midway through the second quarter, she grabbed an offensive rebound, then stepped back for a 3-pointer that gave La Grande a 24-10 lead and made her a member of that club. “Most of it is the aggressiveness,” Wright said of Collman. “Good players look for opportunities to score. Yesterday in practice we worked on some stuff where we need to spread the floor more, and she’s one where she can thrive in that environment.” Collman, who finished with 19 in the half as La Grande took a 31-15 into the break, said she looked to get going early on the offensive end to ramp up the team’s pace. “I notice that when the team is struggling to score a little bit I want to get that tempo going. I want to get some-

thing set up so I can start going off and then bring everyone else in,” she said. The Tigers put the game well out of reach in the third quarter. Collman’s rebound and putback, and one later by Brooklyn Hutchins, extended the lead to 23 midway through the period, and it reached as much as 45-18 on Josie Reagan’s layup early in the fourth. The Tigers used defense to trigger a quick burst of offense late in the first, as a layup by Kenzie Williams off a McKaylee Orton steal and an Alexyss Chamberlain steal and layup — both in the final 30 seconds of the period — gave La Grande a 14-8 lead after one. That keyed a 9-0 run that spilled into the second, with Ella Dunlap’s layup and Collman’s 3-point play — which started her string of 13 straight points — making it 19-8. She got in on the act defensively, with a steal and layup late in the half extending the Tigers’ lead to 29-15 before Grace Neer, who added five points, scored late for the 16-point margin at the half. The Tigers (17-6 overall) visit Baker at 6:30 p.m. Saturday for the GOL district tourney title.

Tigers’ turnaround nets spot in state

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — From 1-10 to the playoffs. The La Grande Tigers boys basketball team’s second-half turnaround continued Thursday night as they led wire-to-wire and allowed their fewest points in a game in more than three years with a 47-26 home win over the McLoughlin Pioneers in the semifinals of the Old Oregon League district tournament — one that locked up a state playoff berth. “Super proud of the boys,” head coach Mark Carollo said. “They were persistent all year. I tried to stay on them about getting better each and every day through practice, through games. You gotta learn from things. To their credit they’ve maintained positive attitudes and that ready-to-work mentality, continued to (buy) into what I’m preaching here. I really appreciate their overall attitudes. It’s a very deserving group just for how nice the kids are. I’m really happy for them.” The win, the Tigers’ eighth in their last 10 games, came on a night when points were at a premium. La Grande held Mac-Hi to just five first-half field goals, but went through a lull itself in the



La Grande junior guard Cristian Mendoza scored 18 pointsThursday in theTigers' win over McLoughlin.

Staff photo by Ronald Bond

second quarter by scoring just five points to go into the half leading 20-14. “They did a good job of putting it at their own tempo,” Carollo said of the Pioneers. “They were very deliberate on the offensive end. They didn’t force any shots. A couple times (that) just lulled us to sleep in the first half. We didn’t have the focus we maybe needed.” A stout defensive effort in the second half — combined with Mac-Hi’s slower style of play — allowed La Grande to pull away after the break. The Tigers held the Pioneers scoreless for the first 5:38 of the second half, extending their margin to

28-14 on a jumper by Zach Wiggins, and taking a 32-16 lead into the fourth on Wiggins’ putback with a minute to go in the period. “We definitely didn’t have our best scoring day, but on the defensive end every night I feel like we’re coming and playing,” LHS junior guard Cristian Mendoza said. Mendoza, who led all scorers with 18 points, helped put the game away for good in the fourth. His jumper and 3-pointer a minute apart — both of which were second-chance buckets after a couple of big hustle plays from Brady Hutchins — extended the lead to 39-19, and Nick DuVernay’s field goal

with 4:05 on the clock made it a 23-point lead. “We found a groove,” Mendoza said. “We got buckets when we really needed to get buckets. I’m really happy.” Two late 3-pointers from Isaac Earls — who led McLoughlin with 10 points — were all that kept the Pioneers from scoring less than the 24 points allowed by La Grande in a 64-24 win over Grant Union on Dec. 22, 2016. The 26 points matched Mac-Hi’s season low. La Grande held Mac-Hi to just 9-for-39 shooting and forced 19 turnovers, holding its opponent under 50 points for the fifth straight game — all wins. Mendoza had the hot hand early as La Grande appeared it would run away with an easy win. He had seven first-quarter points, including a steal and layup that put the Tigers ahead 15-6 after one. The Tigers went more than four minutes without a field in the second as the Pioneers crept within 16-12 on a Francisco Flores basket, but Lukas Schelin’s jumper and a floater by Mendoza helped keep the margin at six at the half. The Tigers (9-12 overall) travel to Baker for the district title at 8 p.m. Saturday.

EOU softball picks up first victories

Observer staff

PENDLETON — The Eastern Oregon University softball team got into the win column for the first time in 2020 Friday with a pair of Cascade Collegiate Conference victories over University of Providence in Pendleton. The Mountaineers scored early and often in the opener, a 14-6, six-inning victory. EOU scored three times in the first on an error and on two bases-loaded walks, then plated five runs in the second to go ahead 8-1. Brittney Bertrand scored on a fielder’s choice, three more runs scored on bases-loaded walks and Alaina Carson scored on a fielder’s choice. RBI singles by Jordan Henley and Bertrand made it 10-2 in the fourth, and EOU walked off with the win in the sixth on Bertrand’s RBI single, Madison Parker’s RBI groundout, Amanda Smith’s RBI single and Abby Giles’ run-scoring double. EOU finished with 11 hits and took advantage of nine walks by Providence pitchers. Bertrand, Parker, Carson and Katie Silvestri each had two RBIs. Smith

gave up two earned runs on three hits in four innings and struck out two batters for the win. Eastern took the night-cap later Friday, 7-5, after scoring the game’s first seven runs then holding off a late rally by the Argos. Haley Ebner’s RBI double, Carson’s RBI single and sacrifice flies by Shelby Starr and Henley put EOU ahead 4-0 in the second. The Mountaineers added three more runs in the fourth, plating two runs on an error and the third on Smith’s RBI double. Providence scored four times in the fifth to get back in the game, getting within 7-4 on Taylor Mathews’ RBI double, then inched closer in the sixth on McKenna Montgomery’s RBI double. But Brianna Zweygardt shut the door on the Argos in the seventh, and earned the save after allowing one run on one hit in 2-1/3 innings. Ashton Kazmierski tossed 4-2/3 innings and allowed four runs, walked two and struck out three for the win. EOU (2-10 overall, 2-0 CCC) continues its series with the Argos Saturday.

Eastern hoops falls at Corban

Observer staff

SALEM — The Eastern Oregon University women’s basketball team saw its 12-game winning streak come to an end Friday after a 67-56 road loss to Corban in Cascade Collegiate Conference play. The Warriors took control of what was a close game early in the second half, turning a four-point halftime lead into a 43-31 advantage on Bri Turner’s layup at the 5:59 mark of the third quarter. Corban’s lead reached as much as 15 in the third quarter, then the Warriors broke the game open when they started the fourth on a 15-4 run to take their largest lead at 67-44 on Rayna Pilgeram’s 3-pointer with 3:26 to play. Jane Nelson was the lone Mountaineer in double figures, finishing with 16 points and hitting 4-of-7 3-point attempts. Whitney Meier added nine points. EOU struggled from the floor, shooting just 28% on the night and hitting 23% from 3-point range. The loss, combined with Northwest Christian’s win over College of Idaho, dropped the Mountaineers (21-8 overall, 15-4 CCC)

into second place in the CCC headed into Saturday’s regular-season finale against NCU. Eastern can force a shared regular-season CCC title with a win. **Men’s team also sees winning streak end** The Eastern Oregon University men’s basketball team had its winning streak halted at four games in a row Friday with a 77-68 loss at Corban in Cascade Collegiate Conference play. Max McCullough scored 23 points to lead the Mountaineers, and Jarek Schetzle added 16 points and nine rebounds. EOU also got nine points from both Brandon Porter and Landon Jones. Corban, which was led by 14 points from A.J. Hodges, took a 39-31 lead into the locker room at the half, and held a double-digit lead much of the second half. EOU, which shot 44% but was outrebounded 42-25 and hit just 35% from 3-point range, got only as close as eight points down the stretch. Eastern (15-13 overall, 9-10 CCC) finishes the regular season Saturday at Northwest Christian.

District basketball tournament scores	Nixyaawii 63, Elgin 38
OLD OREGON LEAGUE DISTRICT TOURNAMENT	BLUE MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE TOURNAMENT
Thursday Girls	Friday Girls
Wallowa 55, Cove 30	Stanfield 43, Enterprise 28
Boys	Boys
Joseph 58, Pine Eagle 39	Union 57, Stanfield 45
Elgin 57, Imbler 33	
Friday Girls	
Powder Valley 42, Elgin 39	
Joseph 52, Wallowa 48	
Boys	
Joseph 51, Powder Valley 48	

Complete coverage of the Blue Mountain Conference and Old Oregon League district tournaments can be found on our website, www.lagrandeobserver.com.