

Reed on the list as potential scholarship recipient

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande senior Nathan Reed put together a senior season to remember on the football field as the running back helped the Tigers to an undefeated season and a Class 4A state championship while earning the honor of Class 4A offensive player of the year.

Reed last week was recognized for his work in the classroom, too.

Reed was announced among 10 scholar-athletes at his position — and 40 total — recognized by the Oregon chapter of the National Football Foundation for “Academic, Athletic, and Leadership excellence during the 2019 football season,” according to an email from NFF Oregon executive director George Crace.

“I was super excited,” Reed said. “It’s a really big honor and cool to represent our high school and community of La Grande. I’m honored to be able to represent our school and our community in this way.”

Reed was among 10 players in the “2A-4A Backs” category. The other three categories are “2A-4A Linemen,” “5A-6A Backs” and “5A-6A Linemen.” Being selected as one of the top 10 puts him in



EO Media Group file photo
La Grande running back Nathan Reed was among the state’s top 40 players selected to potentially earn a scholarship from Oregon NFF.

the running to be named among four finalists — one from each group — who will have \$1,000 applied to their college tuition. Additionally, one of the 40 will

be put on display in May at the NFF and College Hall of Fame Building in Atlanta. The Oregon chapter of the NFF, which has existed since 1960, has awarded academic scholarships to Oregon high school football scholar athletes since 1988, Crace said in the email.

“The kid is not just a great athlete but a great student, too,” LHS head football coach Rich McIlmoil said. “He takes care of business anywhere he goes. The kid has a lot more potential than just sport — going to be a great member of our community and society.”

Reed, who will be attending Eastern Oregon University to play football, put up solid numbers in helping La Grande go 12-0 during a season where they were nearly untouchable. He finished with 1,725 yards rushing from the running back position — 143.8 yards per game. He was even better in the playoffs, averaging 154.3 yards per game in four postseason contests. It was rare for the senior to be held to less than 100 yards rushing in a game — and even rarer for him to be in the game after halftime as he was often a spectator in the second half of La Grande’s numerous blowouts.

He has also maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom while balancing three sports, being a two-time state runner-up wrestler and a state runner-up hurdler on the track.

“It was a lot of work sometimes, I was just used to it, I’ve always done the three sports, it was a lot of making my priority straight,” he said, adding a key was getting school work done while in class to allow him the time to focus on athletics outside of class. “Focused in school and worked really hard in the classroom.”

The four award winners, and the winner of the nod as a Team of Distinction member, will be announced this week. Each scholarship winner is determined on a point scale — with a maximum score of 100 points — where the top 10 are awarded points for academics, athletics, and community service and leadership.

“I don’t know how many of those players were offensive player of the year for the district and the state, how many were two-time all-state defensive and offensive (players) and 4.0 students at the same time,” McIlmoil said. “I think he’s got a great shot at getting it.”

Beavers baseball will wait for clarity before making roster decisions

By Jamid Denney
Albany Democrat-Herald

CORVALLIS — When Mitch Canham was managing in the Seattle Mariners system, he and his assistant coaches spent a good deal of time “playing GM.” They would put themselves in the shoes of the general manager and try to predict the upcoming roster moves that would dictate their job that day.

With the college baseball season canceled and the future of the sport constantly shifting, Canham and his Oregon State team have adopted a wait-and-see approach until they find out what exactly the 2021 campaign will look like.

It has been over a month since the Pac-12 canceled all sports for the academic year and the Beavers’ season reached an abrupt end. Since then, plenty in the baseball world has changed, but OSU is still left awaiting answers to many questions as Canham plots the program’s future.

In March, the NCAA Division I Council granted all spring athletes an extra season of eligibility and eased the 35-player roster maximum — a move that was universally celebrated by the players it affects. The Council also left each college program to decide what it will do with its seniors; schools are still able to offer scholarships to seniors, but cannot offer more than what they offered a player in 2020.

Meanwhile, Major League Baseball reached an agreement with its players’ union that gives MLB the option of trimming its amateur player draft as short as five or 10 rounds this summer. The agreement did not include a date for the draft, which could be held anytime between June 10 and July 20. Regardless of when the draft takes place, the deadline for players to sign their pro contracts is August 1.

A five-round draft would ensure that less than 200 players get drafted — an 87.5 percent reduction from the typical 40-round draft. Players who aren’t drafted are still able to sign with pro clubs, but teams are allowed to spend a maximum of just \$20,000 on the signing bonus of any one player.

In 2019, the bonus slot for the 162nd pick was \$318,200. The 311th pick — the last of the 10th round

— was slotted at \$142,300.

So, some of the top college players in the country are now left to decide if they want to take a drastic pay cut to pursue their professional dreams, or go back to school and receive little financial support or, in some cases, pay their entire tuition out of pocket.

While an extra year of eligibility will empower players to take control of their futures, it will also leave many coaches with more players than they can possibly provide playing time for. Oregon State has not yet decided how it will handle the ensuing roster crunch.

“There’s still answers to be had,” Canham said. “We don’t know if there’s five or 10 rounds in the draft, which one that’s gonna be. That could affect some of our guys. We just need to get an understanding of how that works out with the seniors and what us and the university are going to be able to do as far as figuring out scholarships and every-

thing. So we’re still waiting for those pieces to come together.”

Canham will have plenty to think about once more clarity is provided. Oregon State carried just three seniors on its 2020 rosters in Jake Mulholland, Preston Jones and Andy Armstrong. They also had 11 juniors, eight sophomores and 12 freshmen for a total of 34 players. In November, the Beavers announced a 10-player recruiting class, meaning 44 players could potentially be eligible to play next season.

One of those signees, Jesuit High School star

Mick Able, is a consensus top-10 draft prospect and could potentially be the first high school player off the board this summer. But aside from him, Kevin Abel is the only player with Oregon State ties who is considered a top-100 prospect.

With an abbreviated draft in place, several Bea-

vers who would have been sure-fire draft picks any other year could be forced to head back to school.

“Depending on what happens in the draft, we have a handful of guys that I believe are ready to go play at that next level and be very successful there. It’s just a matter of if everything lines up and

they take off. Obviously, if they’re ready to go play at that level, if they wanna stay, you obviously want those guys around because they’re very talented.”

Until the NCAA provides more answers, Canham and the rest of the country’s baseball coaches will be in a holding pattern.


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