



Observer file photo Eastern Oregon University running back Victor Dias (44) carries the football in a Nov. 2, 2019 game against College of Idaho. The NAIA announced Friday, July 31, that it is moving its football championship to the spring of 2021.

NAIA moves football championship to spring

Eastern Oregon looks at playing an independent schedule for sport

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics voted to move its football championship to the spring of 2021, just as it did with the rest of its fall sports.

The vote from the NAIA’s Council of Presidents came down Friday, July 31. Just three days earlier, the council voted to move the NAIA’s other fall sports — women’s volleyball, men’s and women’s cross-country, and men’s and women’s soccer — to the spring.

“The decision regarding the football championship required additional attention since the sport often operates outside of the regular conference structure,” said Dr. Arvid Johnson, COP chair and University of St. Francis president, in a press release from the NAIA. “The extra time allotted was to ensure that the COP representatives had adequate opportunity to gain feedback from their conference colleagues.”

As it did with the earlier ruling this week, the NAIA left the door open for schools or conferences to still compete in the fall if they elect to do so.

“It definitely is in line and makes sense for health and safety of all student athletes to move our fall sports to spring,” said Anji Weissenfluh, EOU athletic director.

The EOU football team — along with College of Idaho and Southern Oregon University — already had made a decision to move their football schedules to the spring, even though the Frontier Conference — which the schools play in for football — was planning to play in the fall.

Previously, The Observer reported the three schools were still slated to play with the other Montana-based FC universities.

The Frontier in a press release late Friday afternoon stated it is still planning for an eight-game schedule among the five Montana schools.

That decision by the FC, Weissenfluh said, means Eastern, C of I and SOU all will be looking at options to play an independent schedule.

“We will be reaching out to the NAIA and seeing what the avenues are to declare as an independent,” she said.

Weissenfluh added if the FC does elect to move its fall slate to the spring, she hopes the other three schools could be readded to the schedule.

“If the Frontier Conference decides to delay their regular season, hopefully they will let us be a part of

the Frontier Conference,” she said.

It would not be the first time EOU has played an independent schedule. The school began the 21st century playing independently, and did so until it joined the Frontier for the 2006 season.

Weissenfluh said as the school presses forward with a plan for an independent slate, it will work with SOU and C of I and look for other NAIA schools that have made a decision to go independent, and from there look at scheduling NCAA Division II or III schools, if needed, to fill a schedule that could give it an option to contend for a playoff berth.

“We’ll move ahead with that understanding and do what’s best for the three of us,” she said, referring to EOU, SOU and C of I. “We’re in this together.”

Weissenfluh anticipates that the NAIA will announce what its championship dates for the fall will be in the next couple of weeks.

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Legends 18U team tops Baker, 16U squad sweeps Pendleton

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande Legacy Ford Legends 18U baseball team used a six-run sixth inning to pull away for a 9-1 victory Monday, July 27, over Baker, while the 16U squad swept Pendleton in a doubleheader Tuesday, 7-5 and 17-1.

The 18U team already led 3-1 entering the sixth before quickly doubling the lead to four runs on back-to-back bases-loaded walks. Cesar Rodriguez made it 6-1 with an RBI single, and Devin Bell knocked in two with a single for an 8-1 lead before Riley Miller capped the scoring with a sacrifice fly.

Nick Bornstedt’s RBI groundout put La Grande ahead 1-0 in the first and Bell, who had four RBIs and went 3 for 4, drove in two runs with a triple in the third for a 3-0 lead.

Wyatt Earp shut down Baker on the mound, allowing one unearned run on two hits in six innings and striking out seven.

Tuesday, the 16U team nearly let a 7-0 lead slip away before escaping with the win in the opener, then won the nightcap in a rout.

In the first game, the Legends scored three



Contributed photo by Michelle Bell La Grande’s Devin Bell dives into third base after hitting a triple Monday, July 27. The La Grande Legacy Ford Legends 18U squad took down Baker on Monday, 9-1.

times in the fourth on Cole Shafer’s RBI single, a bases-loaded hit batter and an error, and added four more runs in the fifth on Sam Tsiatsos’ RBI single, a passed ball, a sacrifice fly by Sergio Staab and Owen Rinker’s RBI single.

Pendleton scored four runs in the sixth and brought the tying run to the plate in the seventh, but fell short in its rally.

La Grande left no doubt in the second game with a seven-run first inning and an eight-run fourth highlighting the easy win.

Jarett Armstrong’s two-run triple put the Legends ahead for good early. Ryan Jones later swiped home, Staab and Eli Bise-

nus hit RBI singles, and runs scored on a passed ball and a wild pitch for a 7-0 margin.

Shafer’s RBI groundout and another passed ball led to two more runs in the second. In the fourth, Armstrong capped a four-RBI game with a two-run single and Shafer drove in a run with a groundout for a 12-1 lead. Rinker singled home the 13th run of the night, and a hit batter and error led to two more runs before Tsiatsos ended the beatdown with a two-run single.

Armstrong, in addition to driving in four runs, tossed three scoreless innings for the win.

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Players describe abusive environment on Oregon State team

Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Athletes and others have accused Oregon State University’s head volleyball coach of running a program so abusive 11 players quit or transferred since 2016 and two team members contemplated suicide, with one attempting an overdose.

The Associated Press reported athletes and people with ties to the program in interviews with the AP and complaints to the university said fifth-year head

coach Mark Barnard pits players against each other in team meetings, threatens to revoke scholarships for struggling players and pushes team members past health warnings in practice as punishment.

They said they were perplexed by the administration not taking decisive action against Barnard after repeated complaints about the program, some of which triggered what university officials called a “full and impartial” investigation.

Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics proudly welcomes: Brooke Davis, DO

To the GRH Regional Medical Clinic team as a Primary Care Provider (PCP)

Dr. Brooke Davis joins the GRH Regional Medical Clinic from Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, where she served as a family physician and clinic medical director for the past three years. Dr. Davis is a four year veteran of the US Air Force, a graduate of the A.T. Still University School of Osteopathic Medicine, and completed her residency at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis, Oregon. She is a 4th generation Oregonian, and is happy to be near family here in Eastern Oregon. Dr. Davis loves full-spectrum family medicine, especially geriatric and lifestyle medicine, and uses Osteopathic Manipulative Treatments (OMT) in her daily practice as part of a whole-person integrated approach to treating her patients. In her free time, she enjoys outdoor activities like hiking and camping, watching football, and spending time with her husband and two sons. Join us in welcoming osteopathic physician Brooke Davis back to the Grande Ronde Valley!



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