

EOU baseball roster loaded as team works through fall practice

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The COVID-19 pandemic meant Eastern Oregon University head baseball coach Mike McNerney had less time for in-person recruiting as he would have liked.

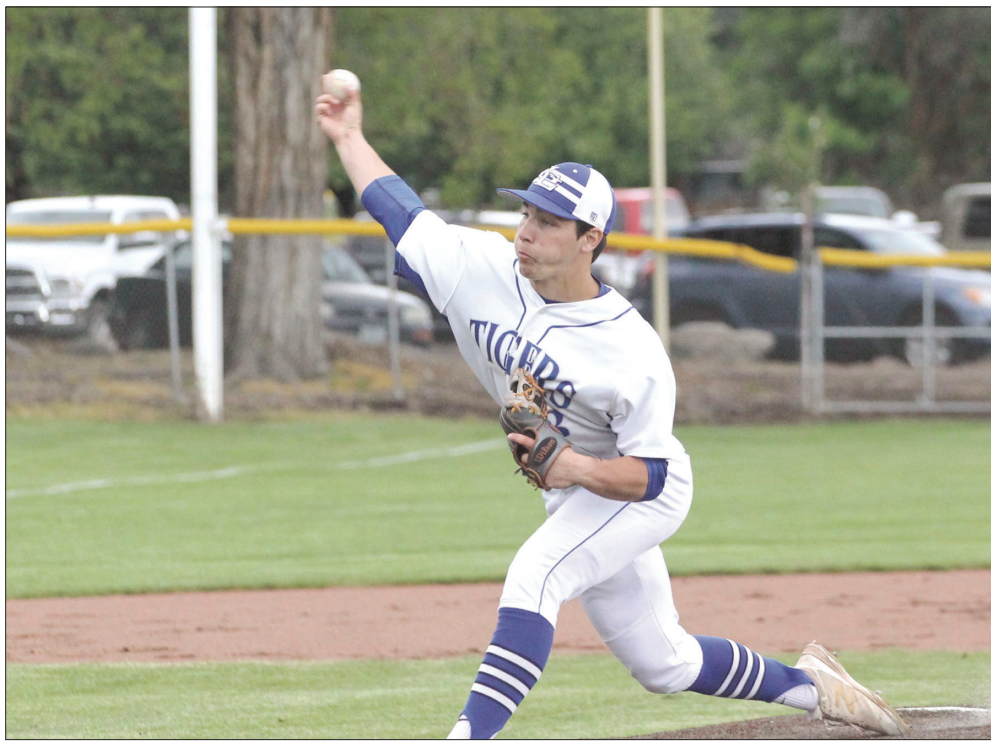
If there is a silver lining, though: He brought more players to the squad.

McNerney's roster for the upcoming season for the resurrected baseball program will have 43 players — eight more than he set out to bring in when he was named baseball coach earlier this year.

"Thirty-five is your typical roster. I wanted to get that no matter what," he said. "As COVID started happening, you're trying to protect (players) and make sure if you have five guys in a house and they had to quarantine (that you still have enough players). I decided to bump it up. I signed a guy really late that we needed. I settled on 43. Felt it was a good roster."

The program's first signee was La Grande Tiger Justin Frederick, and McNerney added three more La Grande High School athletes to the roster: pitcher Parker Robinson, infielder Isaac Chamberlain — a transfer from Columbia Basin College — and former LHS infielder Jon Gonzalez.

"Isaac, when he's been in, he looks awesome. He's done really good. Parker has the same thing," McNerney said. "He's super talented. He can play at the college level, no doubt."



Ronald Bond/The Observer, File

La Grande's Parker Robinson delivers a pitch during the 2019 baseball season. Robinson is one of four former La High School baseball players signed to the Eastern Oregon University roster for the upcoming season.

The early stages of fall practice, McNerney said, have brought some surprises.

"Easton Watterson, an outfielder from Treasure Valley (Community College) — we saw him as a versatile guy who could be small-ball and handle the bat and bunt, (but) he has shown some power, so he has balanced out the lineup," the coach said. "He and Austin Gerding are a couple outfielders that will have some double or home run threat."

The coach said there will be a lot of small-ball with the roster, but there also are "four or five with power potential."

"We've been super demanding of all the players. They continue to bring it every single day," McNerney said of the early practices. "We tried going slow at first. Some of these guys haven't played baseball in spring or summer, and some have been locked away (in quarantine). We tried to go slow (and) we avoided most of the injuries. Once we got everybody in shape, we have been pushing them hard."

The roster includes 14 pitchers, two of whom will be two-way players who can also step into a different position on the field.

"We feel good with that. As long as everyone stays

healthy, we should be in a good spot," he said.

McNerney also noted Frederick, Gonzalez, Jamie Powell, Adrian Roa and Nick Jennings are players who have stepped up during the fall.

Locking down player positions will be a focal point for McNerney before the team begins game action in early 2021.

"We're still figuring that out," he said. "I recruited three or four shortstops. Obviously you're shuffling them around and evaluating. It's a footwork thing. Sometimes you can be an incredible shortstop and not be able to play second. It's different footwork. We're a

EOU BASEBALL RECRUITING CLASS

- PLAYER — Town (Previous School) — Position
- Kolbe Bales — Dufur (Western Oregon University) — LHP
- Garrett Beckman — Lewiston, Idaho — 1B
- Matt Bennett — Portland (Brescia) — C
- Austin Brown — Salem (Chemeketa Community College) — RHP
- Isaac Chamberlain — La Grande (Columbia Basin College) — 3B
- Trevor Curl — Newcastle, Washington (Yuba College) — 1B/3B
- Brooks Dyer — Vancouver, Washington (Benedictine U) — SS
- Turner Edwards — Walla Walla, Washington (Walla Walla Community College) — RHP
- Connor Fajardo — Tigard (Chemeketa CC) — SS
- Justin Frederick — La Grande — 2B
- Austin Gerding — Philomath (Chemeketa CC) — OF
- Payton Hamilton — Boise, Idaho (Treasure Valley Community College) — 2B
- Cooper Hewett — Hillsboro (Century High School) — 2B
- Nick Jennings — Vancouver (Lower Columbia) — RHP
- Kagen Kennedy — Las Vegas (Barstow Community College) — OF
- Kyle Knudtson — Prineville (Crook County) — RHP
- Blake Loftus — Kennewick, Washington (Eastern Washington University) — OF
- Cooper Lund — Lewiston, Idaho (TVCC) — LHP
- Elliott Marks — Walla Walla (WWCC) — C
- Carsten Manderbach — Benton City, WA (BMCC) — SS
- Noah Owens — Kuna, Idaho (Cole Valley Christian) — C
- Adam Plant — Bend (La Pine HS) — INF
- Jamie Powell — Las Vegas, NV (Centennial HS) — 1B/3B
- Jordan Rios — Moses Lake, WA (Wenatchee Valley) — RHP
- Adrian Roa — Irrigon (BMCC) — SS
- Cooper Roberts — Pendleton — RHP
- Parker Robinson — La Grande — RHP
- Dominic Smith — The Dalles — INF
- Lukas Tolan — Walla Walla (WWCC) — RHP
- Kaden Walker — Winters, California (Pangos High School) — 1B
- Brooks Wann — Nampa, Idaho (Canyon High School) — C
- Easton Watterson — Ontario (TVCC) — OF
- Mason Wirth — Tangent (Santiam Christian) — C
- Tyler Worwood — Wilder, Idaho (Caldwell High School) — INF
- Jaydon Yancey — Meridian, Idaho (Blue Mountain Community College) — RHP
- Mike Bennett — Portland (Corban University) — OF
- Miles Norman — Portland (Chemeketa CC) — OF
- Jacob Farnsworth — La Pine (Feather River College) — LHP
- Jonathan Gonzalez — La Grande (College of Idaho) — OF
- Laken Young — Spokane, Washington (University High School) — OF
- Stephen Wade — Victoria, B.C. (College of Southern Idaho) — LHP
- Tristan Fergus — Dayton (Chemeketa CC) — 1B
- Kyle Lund — Eugene (Chemeketa CC) — LHP/OF

month into it. We're literally still evaluating and moving guys around. We'll be evaluating past Christmas."

Seahawks at 5-0 to start season

Associated press

SEATTLE — By this point, Russell Wilson piecing together more late dramatics that ends with the Seahawks erupting in celebration seems almost expected.

Wilson capped a 94-yard drive with a 6-yard touchdown pass to DK Metcalf on fourth-and-goal with 15 seconds left, and the Seattle Seahawks beat the Minnesota Vikings 27-26.

Seattle improved to 5-0 for the first time in franchise history Sunday, Oct. 11, with another late-game

comeback. Wilson finished 20 of 32 for 217 yards and three touchdowns.

It wasn't his best performance — he had a pass intercepted by Eric Wilson on a careless attempt midway through the fourth quarter — but he made the key throws late.

Minnesota's Kirk Cousins was 27 of 39 for 249 yards and two second-half TD passes to Adam Thielen. Alexander Mattison rushed for a career-high 112 yards.

But Seattle stopped Mattison on fourth-and-less-

than-a yard at the Seattle 6 with 1:57 left, setting the stage for yet another Wilson comeback.

La GRANDE AUTO REPAIR
975-2000
www.lagrandeautorepair.com



MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE
ACDelcoTSS

Joe Horst

TIME TO PLAN for next year.

Bank of Eastern Oregon offers operating lines of credit and term loans on equipment and land.

Ag & Commercial Loan Officers

Kristy Nelson
David Stirewalt

Call or visit our office on Cove Ave.

New Customers Welcome!


We've been helping ranchers, farmers and businesses grow generations since 1945.

La Grande

Hours: 9 AM-5 PM (M-F)
2514 Cove Avenue • (541) 624-5040



Bank of Eastern Oregon
Member FDIC LOCAL FINANCING LENDER

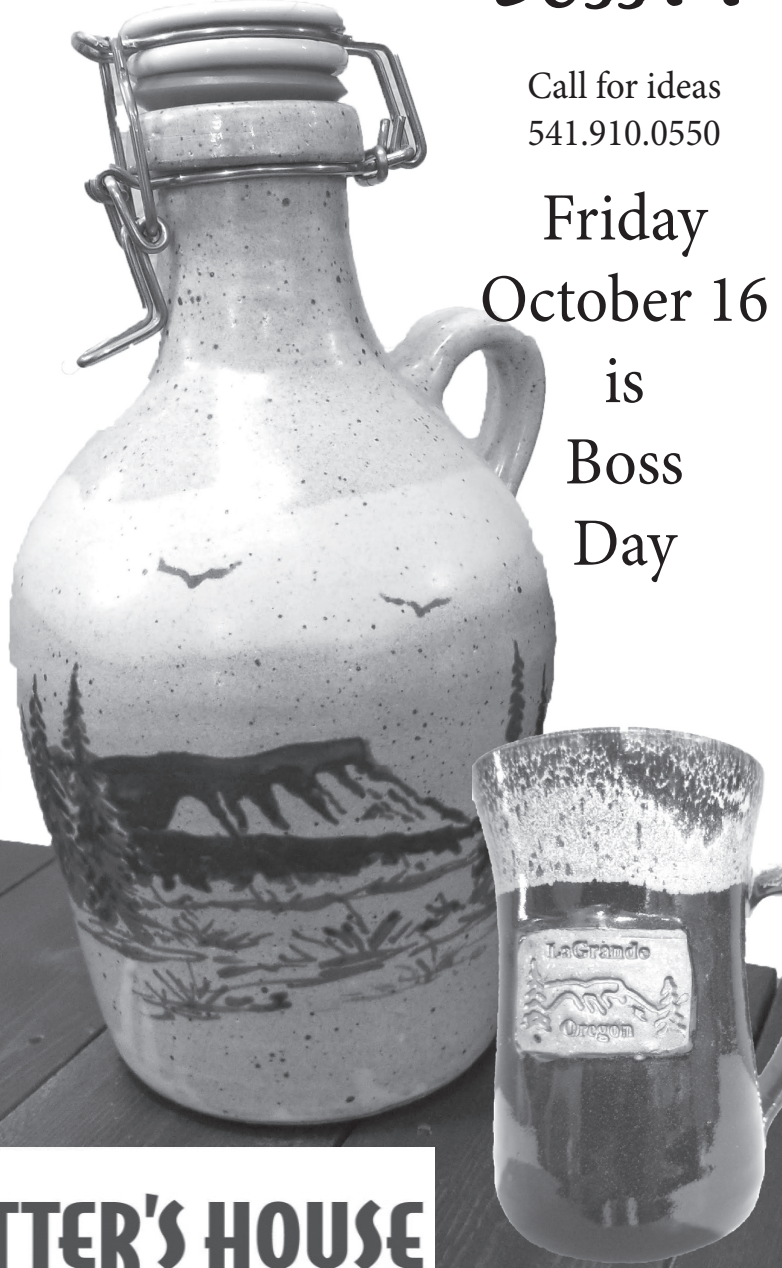


Here is a couple ideas
We have plenty more

What do you get for your Boss??

Call for ideas
541.910.0550

Friday
October 16
is
Boss
Day



The **POTTER'S HOUSE** Gallery

1601 6th Street, La Grande corner of 6th and Penn