

La Grande sweeps doubleheader against Baker

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande High School Tigers baseball team on Saturday, May 8, won both games of the doubleheader against the Baker Bulldogs. La Grande dominated game one 18-0, while fighting back from behind to win game two 11-4.

Starting pitcher Riley Miller found himself in a bases-loaded jam in the top of the first inning, but struck out two in a row to avoid giving up any runs. He pitched five scoreless innings, allowing four hits while striking out seven.

"I think that's the senior mentality," said head coach Parker McKinley. "Situations like that are not too big for our upperclassmen."

The Tigers scored eight runs in the first inning of Saturday's first game, all but securing a victory right from the start. Catcher Cole Jorgenson opened the scoring with an RBI double that scored Payton Cooper. Later in the inning, Jorgenson hit a two-RBI double to extend La Grande's lead to 8-0.

La Grande stayed hot at the plate throughout game one, scoring 18 runs in four innings. Jorgenson went three-for-three with four



La Grande High School Tiger Payton Cooper (8) brings the heat across home plate as he throws against Baker High School Bulldog Silas Carter (26) during a game Saturday, May 8, 2021, at Optimist Field in La Grande. The Tigers fought a doubleheader against Baker, winning 18-0 and 11-4.

Alex Wittwer/The Observer

RBI and one run in game one, while adding another three RBIs in game two.

After a blowout loss in game one, Baker came out stronger in game two. The Bulldogs took a 1-0 lead in the first inning after Conner Chastain's RBI single.

The second matchup was neck-and-neck through the first four and a half innings, at which point Baker led 4-3. Facing a deficit late in the game, the Tigers needed a major momentum swing.

"Get a bunt down and get a guy on base, move some guys over," McKinley said. "That team offensive mentality is a good one to be able to build on to start generating momentum."

Nick Bornstedt tied the game at 4-4 in the fifth inning with a sacrifice fly to left field that scored Devin Bell. Third baseman Logan Williams hit a deep fly ball to left that scored three RBIs and put the Tigers up 9-4 in the fifth.

Jace Schow relieved starting pitcher Payton Cooper and threw two scoreless innings. Cooper got the win and Schow earned the save.

The Tigers added some insurance runs late in the game to defeat the Bulldogs 11-4. La Grande's record is 9-1 on the season.

The Tigers play again May 11, a doubleheader against Ontario. Opening pitch is set for 3 p.m.

Local sports roundup

FRIDAY, MAY 7

PREP BASEBALL

Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii/Ukiah on the road defeated Union/Cove 11-7, 7-1.

PREP SOFTBALL

Wallowa Valley at home defeated Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii 10-1, 9-0.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Corban University defeated EOU at the 2021 Cascade Collegiate Conference Softball

Championships, Ashland, 2-1.

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

SOU defeated EOU at La Grande, 93-76.

SATURDAY, MAY 8

PREP BASEBALL

La Grande at home defeated Baker/Powder Valley 18-0, 11-4. Wallowa Valley at home defeated McLoughlin, 15-0, 9-2.

PREP SOFTBALL

Pendleton at home defeated La

Grande 10-0.

La Grande at Pendleton defeated Ridgeview 12-11.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

College of Idaho defeated EOU at the 2021 Cascade Collegiate Conference Softball Championships, Ashland, 4-0.

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

SOU defeated EOU at La Grande, 95-93.

Mountaineers part ways with men's basketball coach

East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University men's basketball coach Carlito Labarda Jr. are parting ways, according to an announcement by Director of Athletics Anji Weissenfluh.

In four seasons leading the Mountaineers, Labarda Jr. posted a 61-49 overall record and was 36-34 in Cascade Collegiate Conference play. His best finish came in his first season, when he led EOU to a 21-8 overall record.

"I would like to thank Carlito for his service to Eastern Oregon University and to the men's basketball program," Weissenfluh said. "Carlito has been a positive presence in the La Grande community and an ambassador of EOU."

The coach expressed his gratitude for the time he spent in La Grande.

"I want to thank the La Grande community. I tried to give back all that I could. I think this experience was huge for me," he said.

While at the helm of Eastern Oregon, Labarda Jr. helped guide the Mountaineers to a 2020-21 season that saw multiple delays before finally being able to compete in late February for the spring season. His group was 8-12 overall and went 3-9 in



William McLaughlin/Eastern Oregon University

Eastern Oregon University has parted ways with men's basketball coach Carlito Labarda Jr., the school announced Monday, May 10, 2021.

CCC spring play.

"Maybe I didn't win enough. But I had the highest winning percentage and highest team GPA out of all the mens sports in the last four years," he said. "I wasn't in the plans, which I accept, and I (will) move on."

Labarda Jr. was hired in June 2017 and was the 16th head coach in the program's history. Prior to taking over the Mountaineers, Labarda Jr. spent four previous seasons as an assistant coach at Carroll College where the Saints posted a 79-45 record during Labarda's four-year career in Helena, Montana.

"A national search for our next men's basketball coach will start immediately," Weissenfluh said.

Labarda Jr., who said he is "in a good place," began

his coaching journey at Purdue University, where he was the team's manager and student assistant coach from 1994 to 1999 under Purdue legend Gene Keady.

Labarda called the past season his best coaching job, even if it didn't elicit his best win-loss record on the court, citing the challenges of coaching during a pandemic and dealing with COVID-19 cases and injuries within the team.

"With protocol, keeping guys safe was higher on my priority list," he said. "Relationship was built to an all-time high to where I truly had a (strong) relationship with all 10 of my guys. They understand the business, (but) they were all shocked it happened so fast."

Local sports schedule

TUESDAY, MAY 11

PREP BASEBALL

Ontario at La Grande, 3 p.m.

PREP SOFTBALL

La Grande at Ontario, 2 p.m. Wallowa Valley at Union/Cove, 4 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12

PREP BASEBALL

Wallowa Valley at Baker/Powder Valley, 6 p.m.

PREP SOFTBALL

Grant Union/Prairie City at Baker/Powder Valley, 3 p.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 14

PREP BOYS TENNIS

La Grande at Four Rivers Dual in Ontario, 3 p.m.

COLLEGE TRACK & FIELD

CCC Track & Field Championships, La Grande, 11 a.m.

Online

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