

EOU sits 27th in Learfield IMG College Directors' Cup standings

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University's 2020-21 fall and winter sports programs currently sit 27th overall in the Learfield IMG College Directors' Cup for the NAIA, according to a press release.

The Mountaineers, who have a total of 280.5 points, are the second highest ranked team out of the Cascade Collegiate Conference

behind Lewis-Clark State College (Idaho) at 16th.

In the fall portion of the standings, the Mountaineers racked up 141.5 points overall between the two postseason sports of women's soccer and volleyball. Women's soccer garnered 68.5 points en route to finishing ninth in the Learfield Cup standings, while volleyball led the way with 73 points and ranked fifth.

For the winter por-



Samantha Flett/Eastern Oregon University Athletics, File
The Eastern Oregon University volleyball team celebrates April 3, 2021, in La Grande after defeating Lewis-Clark State College to win the Cascade Collegiate Conference Championship.

tion of the Learfield Cup standings, the Mountaineers earned 139 points total between three sports. The track and field program for the indoor season had 83 combined points. The men led the way with 48.5 points, while the women secured 34.5 points. Making up the final 56 points for the Mountaineers in the winter was men's wrestling, which finished 18th in the standings.

The final release of the NAIA Learfield IMG College Directors' Cup standings will come out July 2 and will include spring sports. The Learfield IMG College Directors' Cup was developed as a joint effort between the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics and USA Today. Points are awarded based on each institution's finish in the NAIA Championships.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Maggie Ledbetter has eyes set on school records, national championships

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University track and field thrower Maggie Ledbetter took the title in two events at the Cascade Collegiate Conference Outdoor Championships, but that wasn't the end of her success this season.

In a difficult year for all student-athletes due to COVID-19, Ledbetter concluded her season with national honors in two events. The Cove native who was a three-time state champion at Cove High School scored eighth in the shot put (45 feet, 2-1/4 inches) and finished seventh in discus (145-6) to be named All-American in both events.

Ledbetter qualified and competed in all three throwing events at nationals, with hammer throw being the first event of the weekend. She placed 21st in the event.

"I was just trying to use hammer to get my kinks out for shot and discus," Ledbetter said. "For shot put I knew I had to (throw a) personal record to make finals but I really wanted to get All-American."

Shot put presented a bigger challenge as Ledbetter faced a difficult field of competitors from across the country.

Ledbetter started off with a 44 feet, 3/4 inch throw and scratched on her second throw. It was on her third attempt that she scored high enough to place in the top eight and earn All-American honors.

Ledbetter's 45 feet, 2-1/4 inch toss sets her at second all time in the EOU outdoor track record book behind only April Haney, who set the overall record in 2001. However, Ledbetter holds the indoor track record with a mark of 47-5.

NAIA COVID-19 eligibility rules allow her to compete in

See, Business/Page 7A



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Maggie Ledbetter stands on the throwing area at Banner Bank Track at Eastern Oregon University Wednesday, June 2, 2021, following her success at the NAIA Outdoor National Championships Thursday, May 27, and Friday, May 28, 2021, in Alabama. Ledbetter, a graduate of Cove High School, became the first Mountaineer in EOU women's track and field program history to earn All-American honors in the discus.

SB5 clears hurdle

Bill would allow college athletes to be compensated for name, likeness

By JAMES CREPEA
The Oregonian

SALEM — The state Senate passed the proposed legislation to permit college athletes in Oregon to be compensated for their name, image and likeness starting July 1 and the legislation now heads to the House.

Senate Bill 5, which also would allow college athletes in Oregon to retain representation related to name, image and likeness opportunities, passed the Senate 23-6 with one member excused Thursday, July 3. Senators Lynn Findley, Fred Girod, Bill Hansell, Dallas Heard, Dennis Linthicum and Kim Thatcher, all Republicans, were the dissenting votes and Sen. Bill Kenemer, R-Canby, was excused.

"This isn't just a bill, this is a movement," Sen. Peter Courtney, D-Salem, a co-sponsor of the bill, said in a statement. "Our college athletes have not been treated fairly. They sacrifice their bodies week after week but don't even earn enough to send their mother a birthday present. Meanwhile, the NCAA and universities make millions off the names, images, and likenesses of their athletes. This bill is about giving back to our athletes what is rightfully theirs."

If the House passes it as well, the bill will go into effect immediately, with Oregon college athletes able to earn NIL compensation beginning July 1, the same day similar laws are to go into effect in five other states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia,

See, Bill/Page 7A

SPORTS SHORT

Nuggets bounce Portland from playoffs

By ANNE M. PETERSON
The Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Denver Nuggets were undaunted, even when down 14 points in the third quarter and facing an antagonistic Portland crowd.

Nikola Jokic had 36 points and the Nuggets eliminated the Portland Trail Blazers in six games with a 126-115 victory Thursday, June 3.

"Nobody can take the fight out of us," Jokic said. "We will just go out there and fight and that's what we have been doing. We're never going to quit. Quit is not in our vocabulary."

Michael Porter Jr. added 26 points, including 22 in the opening quarter, for the third-

seeded Nuggets. Denver will take on Phoenix, which eliminated the Los Angeles Lakers in Game 6, 113-100. Game 1 in the series is Monday in Phoenix.

Denver advanced to the Western Conference semifinals for the third straight season.

Damian Lillard finished with 28 points and 13 assists for the sixth-seeded Blazers. They led by 14 points in the third quarter but couldn't stave off elimination.

Monte Morris hit a buzzer-beating 3-pointer to close Denver to 101-98 heading into the last period. Jokic hit a 3-pointer to put Denver ahead 108-106 and the Nuggets stretched it to 117-108 on Austin

Rivers' 3 with 3:52 left.

Portland tried to catch up, pulling to 121-115 on CJ McCollum's layup, but Aaron Gordon hit a corner 3-pointer that all but sealed it for Denver with less than a minute to go.

"I think the key was when they were going on runs and we weren't playing our best every huddle was positive, staying engaged, demanding guys to be better, but staying together," Denver coach Michael Malone said. "I think we've shown as a group that every time we hit adversity, most times, we never run from it. We buckle down, we embrace it, we find a way."

Portland crumbled in the final quarter, outscored 28-14.



Craig Mitchell/Associated Press

Portland Trail Blazers forward Norman Powell, left, dribbles past Denver Nuggets guard Facundo Campazzo during the first half of Game 6 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series Thursday, June 3, 2021, in Portland.