



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Coach Garrett Vaughn, left, and La Grande Legend Brodrick Hood (18) share an embrace after the team's back-to-back shutouts against Hodgens and Baker City at the La Grande American Legion Tournament held at Pioneer Park's Optimist Field on Friday, July 23, 2021.

Pac-12 tackles expansion question

By RYAN THORBURN
Eugene Register-Guard

EUGENE — Three weeks after taking over as the new Pac-12 commissioner, George Kliavkoff posted the following thought on social media:

"Just when I thought my first month on the job could not get more interesting..."

Texas is messing with the world of college football again. The Longhorns and rival Oklahoma are in the process of leaving their home on the Big 12 range for greener pastures in a 16-team Southeastern Conference.

During the Pac-12 media day last week in Los Angeles, Kliavkoff and Oregon athletic director Rob Mullens addressed how another round of major realignment might impact the conference 11 years after an ambitious new Pac-10 commissioner took a swing at creating a super conference.

"We don't think there's any risk at staying at 12 teams," Kliavkoff said.

Mullens added: "We have a strong 12, obviously. In this league, we're all about innovation, about being ahead and evolving. This will be no different than that."

Larry Scott aggressively attempted to execute his bold vision of a Pac-16 in 2010 by inviting Colorado, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech to join existing members Arizona, Arizona State, California, Oregon, Oregon State, Stanford, UCLA, USC, Washington and Washington State.

A football lineup that included the Sooners, Longhorns, Aggies, Ducks, Trojans, Cardinal and Huskies brands and markets would have rivaled the Big Ten and SEC in strength and television contract value.

Colorado accepted its invitation. But Texas spoiled Scott's plan by negotiating a deal to create the Longhorn Network and remain in the Big 12. Nebraska bolted for the Big Ten.

In 2011, Scott settled for giving Utah the call-up from the Mountain West and forming the Pac-12. In 2012, Texas A&M and Missouri left the Big 12 for the SEC. The Big 12 added TCU from the Mountain West and West Virginia from the imploding Big East.

"We have determined that it is in the best interests of our member institutions, student-athletes and fans to remain a 12-team conference," Scott said in a statement 10 years ago.

'Excited to go'

La Grande Legends head to American Legion state tournament

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande Legacy Ford Legends are going all-in for a state title.

La Grande is headed to North Marion High School to compete in the American Legion state championship following a strong showing during the regular season.

The Legends finished the season 19-4 and are slated to compete in the eight-team, double-elimination tournament beginning Wednesday, Aug. 4.

"Everybody's excited to go and everyone's feeling good. We're healthy," head coach Parker McKinley said. "Any time we step on the field, we feel like we can compete with anybody."

La Grande's dominant pitching has been a large factor in the team's success this year. The Legends are limiting opponents to just over three runs per game. Devin Bell, Logan Williams and Riley Miller each compiled 3-0 records on the season, while Nick Bornstedt went 2-0. Williams, Jace Schow and Sam Tsiatsos have also stepped up into big roles on the mound this season.

"I think we have the pitching depth to be able to compete well throughout the week, and we're playing really well defensively," McKinley said. "When our



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Riley Miller (28) throws a pitch against Baker City during the La Grande American Legion Tournament held at Optimist Field on Friday, July 23, 2021.

offense can get firing on all cylinders, we're pretty tough."

The Legends recently wrapped up their regular season at the La Grande American Legion wood bat tournament, finishing 4-0 throughout the round-robin competition. Schow tossed a five-inning shutout in a

10-0 win against Hodgen Distributing on July 23, while Tsiatsos earned a win over Baker the following day, where he struck out nine batters.

"Pitching and defense, that's what gets you to this point and allows you to win those games," McKinley said. "Pitching, at any

LEGENDS LINEUP

- #16 Jarett Armstrong
- #3 Devin Bell
- #24 Nick Bornstedt
- #28 Riley Miller
- #8 Payton Cooper
- #26 Cole Jorgensen
- #2 Logan Williams
- #10 Cesar Rodriguez
- #7 Owen Rinker
- #14 Sam Tsiatsos
- #18 Brodrick Hood
- #38 Noah McIlmoil
- #21 Jace Schow
- #33 Sergio Staab
- #13 Aiden Stanton

level, is what has to be on point."

La Grande is riding the late-season momentum into its first-round matchup against the Mountainside Lobos on Aug. 4. The tournament concludes on Aug. 8, with the championship and third-place matchups.

"We've worked on getting mentally tougher, stronger and progressing as a team to connect and build chemistry," Tsiatsos said.

The Legends won state titles in 2001 and 2011. If the trend of winning a state title every 10 years continues, La Grande could be in for another championship in 2021.

"We feel like we can match up well against anybody that we come across, so, hopefully, we'll represent the community well and compete," McKinley said.

SPORTS SHORT

Former Oregon State star may sign with Seattle

By GEOFFREY C. ARNOLD
The Oregonian

SEATTLE — The Seattle Seahawks are expected to sign quarterback Sean Mannion, according to multiple reports.

The free agent and former Oregon State star is expected to sign with the Seahawks after working out for the team during the past week. Mannion had also worked out for the New York Giants.

Mannion, 29, decided to join the

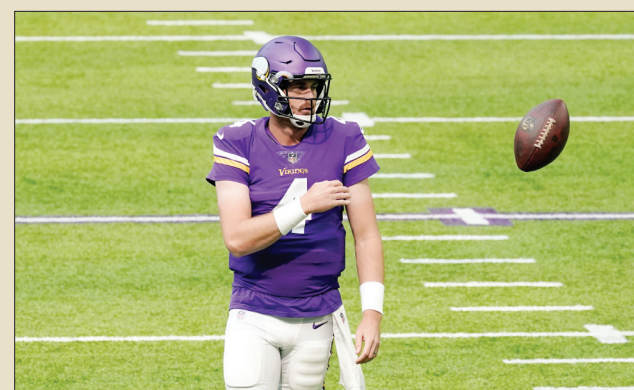
Seahawks and reunite with offensive coordinator Shane Waldron. Waldron was an assistant with the Los Angeles Rams during two of Mannion's four seasons with the Rams. Waldron served as the Rams' passing-game coordinator in 2018, Mannion's final year with the team.

Mannion will compete for a backup position behind starter Russell Wilson. The Seahawks re-signed backup Geno Smith in April to a one-year deal worth up to \$1.21 million. The Seahawks also have quar-

terbacks Danny Etling and Alex McGough in training camp. The Seahawks have usually carried two quarterbacks on the active roster, along with a third on the practice squad, during the regular season.

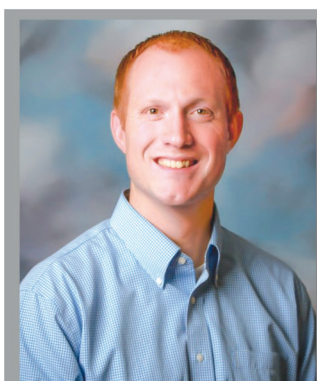
Mannion will be more familiar with Waldron's system than any of the current quarterbacks on the roster.

Mannion was let go by the Minnesota Vikings after spending the past two seasons as the backup to starter Kirk Cousins.



Jim Mone/The Associated Press, File

Free agent quarterback and former Oregon State star Sean Mannion is expected to sign with the Seattle Seahawks, according to multiple reports.



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