

PREP NOTES



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald
Emily Tubbs competes at the Baker Invite on Friday, Oct. 1, 2021. Tubbs, a sophomore, placed first overall with a time of 20:31.55 for her fourth consecutive cross-country first-place finish of the season.

Young core of runners leads the way for La Grande girls cross-country

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

BAKER CITY — It has been all gold this year for La Grande's Emily Tubbs.

The sophomore cross-country runner took first overall in the Baker Invite on Friday, Oct. 1, marking her fourth straight individual win to start the season.

Tubbs has been regularly joined by freshman Cecilia Villagomez, sophomore Faith Calhoun and sophomore Kiah Carlson at the top of the results sheets, creating a strong group of top runners.

Tubbs turned in a time of 20 minutes, 31.55 seconds, to beat the second-place runner by more than 20 seconds, but it was still far from her best performance of the year. The sophomore standout ran a season-best 19:54.72 to win the Payette Open. Tubbs is leading the way and looking like a strong candidate for a top finish at regional and state competitions later in the season.

Villagomez has improved her time during each race this year, clocking in with a career-best 21:16.61 at the Baker Invite. Her third-place finish secured her spot with La Grande's top runners in only the fourth race of her high school career.

Carlson did not compete at the Baker Invite, but she has placed in the top five in every race this year. For Calhoun, a 21:37.31 at the Baker Invite was her second-best time of the year.

The four La Grande's cross-country runners are leading the way for what could be a strong push at the end of the season. While the Tigers have a small varsity roster, its top contenders will look to sustain the success and carry the team's hopes.

Goose egg

ADRIAN — It was far from an ideal weekend for Powder Valley football. In a matchup between

See, **Prep/Page A8**

Back on the gridiron

La Grande's Brody MacMillan overcomes injury to return to play

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Not many athletes have faced the type of adversity that Brody MacMillan has been through.

A gruesome knee injury almost cost MacMillan his playing career, but the line-backer and running back is back on the field for La Grande just six months later. The senior spent months rehabilitating his knee and made his return to the field against Estacada on Friday, Sept. 25.

"Being back out under those lights was just amazing," MacMillan said. "I haven't been out on the home field since my sophomore year, so it was awesome getting back out there."

In a game at Vale during the spring-shortened season on March 19, MacMillan tore his right ACL, LCL and meniscus trying to make a tackle. It was the Tigers' second game of the 2020 season, causing him to miss the remainder of the year and the start of this season. MacMillan sat out the team's only home game of last season, a loss to Baker. After an extensive rehab process, the feeling of getting back on the field in front of the La Grande home crowd was breathtaking for MacMillan.

"My adrenaline was through the roof," he said. "I wanted to get on the field so bad."

Down and out

Just six months prior, MacMillan had doubts if he would ever again perform at a high level.

"I want to play college football, so when it happened I thought I may as well give up," he said. "My family really helped me out, especially my mom."

The injury took a serious toll on MacMillan as he was forced to spend time away from football. He noted that standing on the sidelines was a painful experience, not being able to help his teammates on the field.

"I was pretty depressed. I wasn't having a good time," he said. "I watched a lot of film, just trying to get in the mindset that I could get back out there."

MacMillan credits Caleb



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

In his second game back after a serious knee injury, La Grande's Brody MacMillan (11) looks for running room against Burns at Community Stadium in La Grande on Friday, Oct. 1, 2021.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

La Grande's Brody MacMillan (11) fends off a Burns defender Friday, Oct. 1, 2021, at Community Stadium in La Grande. The senior was a major spark in the Tigers'.

McIlmoil and Justin Hernandez as two important influences that helped him get through the injury. Dr. Benjamin Olson at Grande Ronde Hospital performed the surgery on MacMillan, which took more than five hours.

"I love football," MacMillan said. "Everyone told me my knee wouldn't hold up, but hearing other people's past experiences with the injury helped me through it."

MacMillan said that he read a story about Amari Rodgers, a college football player at Clemson who recovered from similar injuries. Rodgers got back on the field for Clemson in five months and now plays in the NFL for the Green Bay Packers.

"I figured I could be like him and get back as soon as possible if I worked really hard," he said.

Work ethic has never

been an issue for MacMillan, according to La Grande football coach Rich McIlmoil.

"His drive and love for the game is unmatched," McIlmoil said. "I've never seen a kid with that much love for football. He absolutely loves the game and will leave it all on the field."

MacMillan noted that once he could start jogging, about three months after the injury, things started to brighten as his return to the field was in sight.

Back on the field

All the hard work and dedication paid off for MacMillan when he took the field against Estacada in the team's third game of the season. It was a tough loss for the Tigers against one of the top teams in the state, but MacMillan made his presence felt with more than 70 rushing yards and a stout defensive performance at linebacker. "It felt great," he said.

After experiencing such a substantial injury, MacMillan is still trying to get back in rhythm. Playing two of the more physical positions in football can be risky for a player with such serious injuries, but MacMillan says he is still giving it his all.

"A few times when I was running I was a little hesitant, but other than that I'm just getting after it," he said. "I felt slow because I'm still building back up, but my mindset was to just

See, **MacMillan/Page A8**

ON CAMPUS

Offensive woes continue for the Mountaineers

Offense fails to find the end zone in 24-3 loss to Southern Oregon, dropping record to 3-2

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Another low offensive output led to the Eastern Oregon University football team's second-straight loss. After a 3-0 start to the season, the Mountaineers are now 3-2.

In a 24-3 loss to Southern Oregon on Saturday, Oct. 2, the Mountaineers actually out-gained the Raiders in total yardage. With that being said, the offense for Eastern struggled mightily and failed to find the end zone. The Mountaineers have now scored just 20

points in their last three games.

Eastern has totaled less than 100 rushing yards in the team's last four games, mustering just 54 total yards in the loss to Southern Oregon.

Running back Jordan Eggers started the year with a 148-yard performance against Montana Tech, scoring twice in a narrow win. Since then, Eggers has totaled 124 yards in the following four games and has not found the end zone.

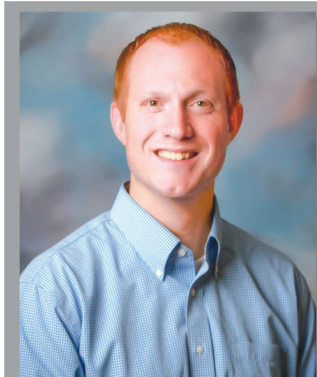
Quarterback Kai Quinn struggled mightily in last week's loss to the College



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Eastern Oregon quarterback Kai Quinn throws a pass during the College of Idaho game at Community Stadium in La Grande on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021.

See, **Campus/Page A8**



Turning 65?
We're here to help!

Joel Myer
jmyer@valleyinsurance.com



1603 Washington Ave, La Grande
(541) 963-3121

Let us take the
mystery out of
Medicare for you!

Kathy Rienti
krienti@valleyinsurance.com

