

# La Grande's season ends with slugfest against Estacada

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

SANDY — After a highly successful season, things came to an end for the La Grande football team in the state quarterfinals.

The Tigers were bested 44-22 at the hands of Estacada on Friday, Nov. 12, a team that has proven to be La Grande's Achilles' heel this season. La Grande concluded the season 7-2, with both losses coming to the Rangers. The Tigers held their own throughout the matchup against the undefeated powerhouse, but ultimately saw the game slip away in the second half.

"In the end, they just kind of outlasted us," head coach Rich McIlmoil said. "Our boys put up a good fight. I was really proud of them for the way they fought the whole game long."

Both offenses ignited in the first half, exchanging blows back and forth early on. La Grande came out flat with three straight three-and-outs to start the game,



La Grande quarterback Logan Williams (2) looks to pass Friday, Nov. 12, 2021, during a 44-22 loss to Estacada in the quarterfinal round of the OSAA Class 4A state football tournament at Sandy High School.

while the Rangers built up a 16-0 lead.

Senior Coby Hibbert provided a big spark when La Grande desperately needed offensive production, breaking loose for a 57-yard run early in the second quarter. Senior Brody MacMillan ran in a 29-yard touchdown to give the Tigers their first points

of the game.

Estacada would continue to respond to La Grande's scores throughout the first half, moving the ball effectively through its triple-option offense. Down by three scores, junior quarterback Logan Williams connected with junior Jace Schow for a 55-yard touchdown to cut the lead to 24-14 with just

over six minutes left in the first half.

Stopping Estacada's two-point conversion attempts proved to be crucial for La Grande, as the Tigers were able to climb within one score heading into halftime. A deep completion by Williams set up a two-yard touchdown run by MacMillan to cut the lead to

30-22 at halftime.

"Offensively we had a few hiccups, but then we really got rolling. We were feeling really good at halftime down 22 to 30," McIlmoil said. "I knew we were in a pretty good spot coming into halftime, but we were just a little beat up in the second half. It just kind of wore us down."

In the second half, Estacada's ground-and-pound offensive style wore down La Grande as the Tigers were held scoreless. The Rangers rattled off 14 points unanswered to walk off with the quarterfinal victory. La Grande had its chances in the second half, highlighted by a fumble at the Estacada 32-yard line in the fourth quarter that proved costly.

"I think that turnover late in the third quarter really hurt us," McIlmoil said. "We were toe-to-toe with them and I think they really had a good shot of winning it. We just didn't quite get it done."

Estacada improved to 11-0 on the year and will face Marist Catholic in the

semifinals on Nov. 20.

For La Grande, the loss concludes a strong season that ended 7-2. On the heels of a state championship in 2019 and a 3-1 COVID-19 season in 2020, the team found its identity with solid defensive play and a hard-nosed rushing attack led by MacMillan. Williams stepped up in his first season as the varsity starter at quarterback, improving his mix of rushing and passing abilities with every game this season.

La Grande's defense was stout all season, holding opponents to an average of 19.9 points per contest. Excluding the two matchups against Estacada, no opponent scored more than 25 points against the Tigers this season.

The Tigers ended the regular season on a four-game winning streak, which was capped off by a rivalry victory over Baker to take the Greater Oregon League title. La Grande will lose several crucial seniors, but will look to build on a strong junior class next year.

## Powder Valley cruises past Myrtle Point

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

NORTH POWDER — The Powder Valley High School football team is on to the OSAA 1A semifinals, thanks to a dominant effort in a win over Myrtle Point. The Badgers came away with a 36-0 win over the Bobcats in the quarterfinals at home on Friday, Nov. 12.

"That was the best football game we've played all season on both sides of the ball," head coach Josh Cobb said.

Powder Valley started the game on a high note, scoring on a five-yard quar-

terback keeper from senior Reece Dixon early in the game.

After both teams exchanged possessions, the Badgers were able to add two late touchdowns in the second quarter and hold a 22-0 lead heading into halftime. While the game still felt in reach for Myrtle Point through the first two quarters, the Badgers silenced any doubts in the second half.

Early in the third quarter, a 63-yard run by Dixon set up a first down at the Myrtle Point 15-yard line. Dixon finished the drive with a seven-yard touchdown run to extend

the lead to 30-0 with 7:38 remaining in the third quarter.

Cobb noted that the team prepared for the weather conditions, switching to a stronger emphasis on the run game.

"The field was a little muddy, so our receivers were a little slow on their cuts," he said. "We just practiced our ground game because it's really hard to win in November if you can't run the ball."

Powder Valley's defense was strong throughout the game, holding the Bobcats scoreless. Holding a 30-0 lead at the end of three quarters, it was Powder

Valley's game to lose.

"We had a custom-made defensive plan for this team because they're so prolific in their passing," Cobb said.

Senior running back Case Olson put the icing on the cake with a 22-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter to give the Badgers a 36-0 lead. Powder Valley would go on to hold on to the 36-point deficit and ride off with a quarterfinal victory.

The Badgers are set to meet St. Paul, a team that Powder Valley bested 50-40 on Sept. 17, in the semifinals Saturday, Nov. 20, in Bend.

### ON THE SLATE

Friday, Nov. 19

#### COLLEGE CROSS-COUNTRY

Eastern Oregon at NAIA National Championships, 10:30 a.m.

#### COLLEGE MEN'S WRESTLING

Simpson at Eastern Oregon, 7 p.m.

#### COLLEGE WOMEN'S WRESTLING

Simpson at Eastern Oregon, 5 p.m.

#### COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL

Eastern Oregon at NAIA tournament, TBD

Saturday, Nov. 20

#### COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Eastern Oregon vs. Montana Western, Caldwell, Idaho, 2 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 21

#### PREP FOOTBALL

Powder Valley vs. St. Paul, Caldera High School, Bend, 6 p.m.

#### COLLEGE MEN'S WRESTLING

Eastern Oregon at Spokane Open, Spokane, Washington, TBA

#### COLLEGE WOMEN'S WRESTLING

Eastern Oregon at Spokane Open, Spokane, Washington, TBA

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