



BREAKING BARRIERS

Audrey Garlitz scores the first goal of a Nov. 5, 2019, playoff contest against Molalla. La Grande won 3-1 behind a hat trick from Garlitz.
Ronald Bond/The Observer, File

Local athlete to compete for USA Deaf Women's National Soccer Team in Brazil

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

COVE — A hearing impairment has not stopped Audrey Garlitz from achieving a successful athletics career.

The Cove senior who recently signed to play college soccer at NCAA Division II University of Mary has excelled on the soccer pitch, on the cross-country course and on the basketball court despite having a hearing impairment. In addition to her high school sports accolades, Garlitz is a member of the USA Deaf Women's National Team and will be competing with the team at the 2022 Deaf Olympics in Brazil.

"It's an amazing opportunity to bring deaf and hard-of-hearing players together to represent the United States, especially for me personally coming from a small town in Eastern Oregon with not a lot of competitive playing opportunities locally and even less chance to play with other deaf teammates," Garlitz said. "I'm very grateful for this opportunity."

Garlitz is a multisport standout, competing at a high level in soccer, cross-country and basketball. After three years at La Grande High School, Garlitz transferred to Cove for her senior year where she competed in cross-country and is currently playing basketball, in addition to her club soccer team.

In cross-country, Garlitz helped Union/Cove place third at the 3A/2A/1A state championships by finishing in 26th overall with a time of 22:09.7. Last spring, she was named 4A first-team all-state in soccer after helping La Grande finish the season 7-2.

A new home

At the conclusion of a stellar high school and club soccer career in high school, Garlitz signed with the University of Mary in North Dakota in early November to continue on her soccer career. Upon visiting the Marauders for a practice on a recruiting trip, Garlitz quickly felt at home with the team.

"I was able to connect with the players and train at a high level on my

first visit which made me want to be a part of their program," Garlitz said. "UMary's focus on academic success for their student-athletes and their strong Catholic faith and identity drew me in even before my first visit."

University of Mary is coming off a 9-7-3 season in 2021 in which the Marauders placed sixth in the Northern Sun Conference. The team is just two years removed from an 11-4-3 finish in 2019.

"I feel like I'm just getting started on my sports career and am very grateful to continue beyond high school," Garlitz said. "Going to college so far away from home is a little intimidating, but it's helpful and exciting to know that I'll be surrounded by an instant family with the team and coaches."

Stars and stripes

Garlitz has represented the United States with the USA Deaf Women's National Team since the summer of 2019. The team trains during the summer and either in the winter or spring. This year, Garlitz and the USA

team will train in Viejo, California, in January to prepare for the Deaf Olympics in Brazil.

Each player is asked to raise \$6,000 for the 14-day trip abroad, which Garlitz said will be her first time out of the country.

"Our team is funded entirely by private donations, and the USA Deaf Sports Federation is continuing to grow with attention from the athletes," Garlitz said. "I definitely hope the fundraiser and trip to Brazil will raise awareness for people who might not be familiar with the 'Deaflympics.' There are 21 other sports participating in the summer Deaflympics too and there are also winter Deaflympics that don't get a lot of attention."

Through playing on the Deaf Women's National Team, Garlitz has been able to make close friendships with teammates who have similar hearing impairments. Interacting with the team over the past few years has provided an outlet to share similar obstacles that come along with being hard

See, *Barriers*/Page A8

SPORTS SHORT

Former Auburn quarterback announces transfer to Oregon

By **JAMES CREPEA**
The Oregonian

EUGENE — Oregon is adding a veteran quarterback from the SEC.

Bo Nix, the former Auburn quarterback who began his college career by beating the Ducks in the 2019 season opener, announced he's transferring to Oregon.

The 6-foot-3, 214-pound Nix just finished his third-year sophomore season at Auburn, where he completed a career-high 61% of his throws for 2,294 yards with 11 touchdowns and three interceptions and ran for 168 yards and four scores in 10 games before suffering a fractured ankle.

Oregon offensive coordinator Kenny Dillingham was in the same role at Auburn in 2019, when Nix won SEC Freshman of the Year.

Last week, Nix explained his decision to transfer from Auburn,

where his father, Pat, also played quarterback, and what he would be seeking in a new team.

"I think when you look at it from afar the main thing is to go somewhere that needs a quarterback and can kind of make ends meet to what a great team is going to look like," Nix said during his weekly appearance on The JBoy Show. "I'm excited to go and find a new team that is eager to continue to have success and I would like to go into a place to where, like I said, they're just missing a quarterback to the piece of the puzzle for them to be really good. With that being said, it's not everywhere — not everywhere needs a quarterback. There's a lot of places out there with great quarterbacks and then there's a lot of guys that are about to land great quarterbacks, a lot of guys like me in the transfer portal that are good and going to go and play somewhere."

In 34 career games, all starts,

Nix completed 59.4% of his passes for 7,251 yards with 39 touchdowns and 16 interceptions and rushed for 869 yards and 18 touchdowns. He played for two head coaches (Gus Malzahn and Bryan Harsin) and three different offensive coordinators (Dillingham, Chad Morris, Mike Bobo) during his time at Auburn.

In 2020, Nix completed 59.9% of his throws for 2,415 yards with 12 touchdowns and seven interceptions and ran for 388 yards and seven scores in 11 games.

Nix was the first true freshman QB to start a season opener for Auburn since 1946, which he did against the Ducks in a 27-21 win in Arlington, Texas when he threw the 27-yard game-winning touchdown to Seth Williams with nine seconds to go. Nix completed 57.6% of his passes for 2,542 yards with 16 touchdowns and six interceptions, all Auburn freshman records, and ran for 313 yards and seven scores that season.



Ron Jenkins/The Associated Press, File

Former Auburn quarterback Bo Nix announced he's transferring to Oregon. The addition of Nix, who has two years of eligibility remaining, gives Oregon four scholarship quarterbacks entering 2022, with Ty Thompson, Jay Butterfield and Robby Ashford all freshmen in terms of eligibility.