

COLLEGE BASEBALL

EOU releases 2022 slate

Eastern baseball coming off five-win season, opens Jan. 27 in Arizona

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Baseball season is right around the corner in La Grande.

The Eastern Oregon University baseball program is set for its second season after being reinstated in 2020.

The Mountaineers announced their 2022 schedule on Tuesday, Jan. 11, setting the stage for a 51-game slate this season.

Of the 51 games listed, 27 will be nonconference bouts.

Eastern Oregon compiled a 5-31 record in its first season back on the diamond, with the pandemic limiting the scope of a potential full season.

Now heading into 2022, the Mountaineers have a full schedule that includes several top nonconference opponents. Head Coach Mike McInerney and the Mountaineers are set for opening pitch against No. 22-ranked MidAmerica Nazarene at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 27., at the Coach Calderone Invitational in Glendale, Arizona. EOU will face four different opponents over a three-day span at the tournament. After opening with MidAmerica Nazarene, the Mountaineers will face Embry-Riddle (Ariz.), Oklahoma Panhandle State, and No. 23 Benedictine Mesa.

Eastern begins its season with 19 straight games on the road, before returning home to the newly renovated Pioneer Park to host a series against the College of Idaho on March 5.

Prior to returning to La Grande, the Mountaineers will close out the opening road trip with four games against reigning conference champion No. 4 Lewis-Clark State.

The Warriors will face off again with the Mountaineers for a four-game series in La Grande starting on April 8.

Eastern Oregon will play 16 home games and 35 away games. The Mountaineers conclude the regular season with a four-game conference series against Corban at Pioneer Park.

SPORTS SHORT

Eastern athletes earn conference player of the week honors

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Two Mountaineers recently earned Cascade Conference player of the week honors after strong performances this past weekend.

Men's basketball guard Cooper Lumsden and men's wrestler Jay Smith were both named player of the week in their respective sports in an announcement from the Cascade Collegiate Conference on Monday, Jan. 10.

Lumsden was electric in his

first career start against Multnomah on Jan. 8, scoring a career-high 32 points and nine assists. He added five rebounds and converted all 12 of his free-throw attempts.

Lumsden was firing right from the start, going 7-for-16 from the field and 6-for-13 from 3-point range. The freshman only turned the ball over four times despite playing the full 40 minutes and functioning as the team's main source of offense in a 102-93 victory over the Lions.



Lumsden

The near double-double for Lumsden was much needed for a short-handed Mountaineers squad in a solid conference victory. Including a

COVID-19 forfeit by Warner Pacific on Jan. 7, Eastern has earned victories in its last three contests. The Mountaineers currently stand at sixth in the Cascade Collegiate Conference standings with a 4-5 conference record and 10-7 overall record. Up next, Eastern will travel to Kirkland,



Smith

Washington to face off with Northwest (6-8, 3-6) at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 14.

Sophomore wrestler Jay Smith had a strong weekend for the No. 20 Mountaineers, earning two dual wins and helping

Eastern defeat conference opponents Arizona Christian 30-12 and No. 18 Embry-Riddle 36-15.

The 197-pound wrestler defeated Arizona Christian's Va Ili by a 3-1 decision on Jan. 7 to guide Eastern to a come-from-behind victory. The Mountaineers trailed 12-10 midway

through the match but went on to win 30-12. On the following day, Smith defeated Embry-Riddle's Michael Densmore by a 8-4 decision to help the Mountaineers roll past the Eagles 36-15.

Smith is 17-8 on the year, which is a team high in victories for Eastern. This week's Cascade Collegiate Conference men's wrestler of the week will look to lead the Mountaineers to success as the team faces three more conference duals before taking part in the conference championships in Havre, Montana, on Feb. 18 and Feb. 19.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Powder Valley quarterback Reece Dixon breaks loose for a run during the OSAA Class 1A state championship game on Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021. Powder Valley High School was adamant against a proposed nine-man football, with head coach Josh Cobb speaking out after the initial proposals at a December meeting.

BACKING OUT

OSAA committee nixes nine-man football initiative

By RONALD BOND
and DAVIS CARBAUGH
EO Media Group

SALEM — Nine-man football appears to be off the table.

The Oregon School Activities Association's Football Ad Hoc Committee dropped support of a considered move that would have drastically altered the 2A and 1A game and divided the schools into large and small school divisions of nine-man football.

Instead, 2A schools will continue to play 11-man football, while larger 1A schools will remain at the eight-man level.

Backing nine-man football was shelved after the vast majority of eight-man schools — about 95% — said they favored eight-man over nine, according to an Oregonian report last week.

Powder Valley High School was adamant against the proposed nine-man football, with head coach Josh Cobb speaking out after the initial proposals on Tuesday, Dec. 20. Superintendent Lance Dixon and Athletic Director Brad Dunten both spoke at the most recent OSAA meeting, on Jan. 5, and Dunten presented a survey he conducted among 1A representatives.

Dunten noted that the majority of the survey took in results from athletic directors and school officials at the 1A level, with a small number of principals and coaches responding. The survey showed that the majority of the 80 responses from 95 1A schools and one 2A school favored eight-man football over nine-man. Just over 86% of those surveyed were against the six-man/nine-man/11-man



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Imbler's Trevor Treat (2) celebrates after scoring a touchdown against Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat on Friday, Oct. 8, 2021. The OSAA Football Ad Hoc Committee dropped its support of a nine-man football proposal after 1A coaches voiced their opposition to the change.

“Eight-man is the greatest form of football in my opinion, and it is one of the fastest growing forms of football.”

Billy Wortman, Adrian High School head coach

model, while 79.5% voted that 2A through 6A classifications should not have a say on the future of eight-man football.

Dixon noted that the proposal

of doing away with eight-man football united 1A schools and representatives, which is not always common. He also stated that switching to nine-man foot-

ball could have a negative impact on schools on the east side of the state, which would be unable to play non-league games against Washington and Idaho schools that play strictly eight-man and 11-man football. Dixon emphasized his concern over impacts on the school's budget if travel plans were affected by the potential new football alignment.

Dixon further noted that getting rid of eight-man football would force schools with

See, Football/Page A10