

ON THE SLATE

Tuesday, Jan. 18

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Elgin at Nixyaawii, 5 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Enterprise, 6:30 p.m.
Powder Valley at La Grande, 7:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Pilot Rock at Enterprise, 5 p.m.
Powder Valley at La Grande, 6 p.m.
Elgin at Nixyaawii, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 19

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

La Grande at Pendleton, 7 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Imbler, 7:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

La Grande at Pendleton, 5:30 p.m.
Joseph at Pine Eagle, 5:30 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Imbler, 6 p.m.

PREP GIRLS WRESTLING

Ontario at La Grande Dual, 5 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 20

COLLEGE WOMEN'S WRESTLING

EOU vs. Southwestern Oregon Community College, Salem, TBA
Eastern Oregon vs. Corban, Salem, 5 p.m.

PREP BOYS WRESTLING

La Grande at Pendleton Duals, 5 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 21

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Oregon Tech at EOU, 7:30 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Oregon Tech at EOU, 5:30 p.m.

COLLEGE MEN'S WRESTLING

EOU at Missouri Valley Invitational, TBA

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

La Grande at McLoughlin, 7:30 p.m.
Union at Stanfield, 7:30 p.m.
Cove at Elgin, 7:30 p.m.
Powder Valley at Wallowa, 7:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

La Grande at McLoughlin, 6 p.m.
Union at Stanfield, 6 p.m.
Powder Valley at Wallowa, 6 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Joseph, 6 p.m.
Enterprise at Heppner, 6 p.m.
Cove at Elgin, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 22

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Southern Oregon at EOU, 5 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Southern Oregon at EOU, 3 p.m.

COLLEGE MEN'S WRESTLING

EOU at Missouri Valley Invitational, TBA

COLLEGE TRACK AND FIELD

EOU at Lauren McClusky Memorial Open, Moscow, Idaho, TBA

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Weston-McEwen at Union, 5:30 p.m.
Pine Eagle at Elgin, 5:30 p.m.
Joseph at Powder Valley, 5:30 p.m.
Cove at Imbler, 5:30 p.m.
Wallowa at Griswold, 5:30 p.m.
Enterprise at Stanfield, 5:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Pine Eagle at Elgin, 2:30 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Union, 4 p.m.
Joseph at Powder Valley, 4 p.m.
Cove at Imbler, 4 p.m.
Wallowa at Griswold, 4 p.m.
Enterprise at Stanfield, 4 p.m.



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group, File

Eastern Oregon University's Paul Pennington (2) makes a layup attempt against defenders Jok Jok (10) and Treyton Paxton (14) during the second half of the match against Montana Western University at Quinn Coliseum, La Grande, on Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021. Via COVID-19 forfeiture, the Mountaineers men's team has earned two victories and the women's team has garnered three, as the Cascade Collegiate Conference remains intent on pushing through the 2022 winter season.

Moving forward

CCC pushing forward with winter season despite influx of cancellations

By DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

CORVALLIS — Fans across the country are crossing their fingers that sports seasons will not be postponed or canceled amid the recent increase in COVID-19 cases.

With forfeited games counting as losses on a team's record, health and safety is of the utmost importance for teams looking to compete for conference titles. In the Cascade Collegiate Conference, Eastern Oregon University's league, officials are intent on moving forward with the season.

"Our goal is to push through to the end, have our tournament and send our representatives on to nationals," Cascade Collegiate Conference Commissioner Robert Cashell said.

Timing and finance

Through Saturday, Jan. 15, the Mountaineers' men's and women's basketball teams have experienced a combined five cancellations. Evergreen State recently canceled its men's basketball games against the College of Idaho on Jan. 14 and Eastern on Jan. 15. The conference has seen more than 20 cancellations between men's and women's basketball, all of which took place from Dec. 18 through this past weekend.

The Mountaineers women's basketball team has three forfeit victories this season, all of which occurred in a span of four scheduled games from Dec. 31 through Jan. 8. After wins against Northwest and Evergreen State, Eastern stands at 9-2 in conference play and 17-2 overall.

The Cascade Collegiate Con-

ference's policy for COVID-19 limitations is that a team unable to field enough players for a contest will receive a forfeit. Cashell noted that the Cascade Collegiate Conference decided to firmly establish forfeits and canceled games rather than postponing contests until further dates due to the logistics of completing a season in time for postseason competition.

"It comes down to the distance that we have to travel in our league, the fact that we don't have bye weekends or anything like that and that we have deadlines with the NAIA," Cashell said. "So really, it's a balance between timing, finance and academics. We also want to keep people in school as much as possible."

Eastern's men's team has seen the impacts of COVID-19 limitations, with two of its opponents forfeiting contests so far this season.

The Mountaineers dealt with COVID-19 shortages themselves, relying on freshman Cooper Lumsden to step up with 32 points in a 102-93 win over Multnomah when key players were

missing. After a single-game weekend, the Mountaineers dropped to 11-8 on the year and 5-6 in conference play. With the Mountaineers men's team fighting for every win this year, forfeits could go a long way in determining the outcome of Eastern's season.

Cashell stated that the NAIA hands strict limitations to each conference when it comes to its post-season policies. The Cascade Collegiate Conference has little wiggle room for canceling games or moving the schedule around in order to meet those deadlines, hence the forfeit rule.

"At this point, we have not said anything about putting a pause on anything," he said. "We're beholden to some deadlines to complete our season and have our representatives make it to the NAIA national tournaments, so you kind of have to work backward from those deadlines."

The three forfeit wins received by the Eastern women's team will count toward head coach Anji Weissenfluh's career record as she pursues 500 career wins. The

Mountaineers moved to second in the Cascade Collegiate Conference standings after recent forfeiture victories.

"Basically the rules in the NAIA state that forfeits do count towards overall stats," Cashell said. "They do count towards your win-loss record as a team and as a coach."

Attendance policy

The Cascade Collegiate Conference has no conference-wide policy for a potential limit on fan attendance, relying on member schools to make the best decision based on their location and the current status of COVID-19 in each community.

"That is a school-to-school policy, so it's all kind of depending on what's happening at that particular location in terms of caseload and what the school feels comfortable with," Cashell said.

Cashell also noted that there is not currently a minimal threshold if multiple teams were dealing with COVID-19 shortages at the same time.

"Ultimately, we don't know week in and week out what the virus is going to do," Cashell said. "Trying to reschedule things is problematic then, because you have no idea if we'd even get to that point."

It remains to be seen if COVID-19 cancellations will continue to plague the winter sports season, now midway through. Fortunately for the Mountaineers, all five of the school's involved cancellations have resulted in wins for Eastern.

With that being said, the pandemic is hardly predictable, and the script could quickly flip.

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— Robert Cashell, Cascade Collegiate Conference Commissioner

Oregon lawmakers going big with new sports bills



JOHN CANZANO
TALKING SPORTS

Turns out Oregon lawmakers are tuned into the sports scene in our state. I just hope they follow through and get a couple of bills they're currently writing turned into laws in the upcoming legislative session.

State Sen. Peter Courtney called me on Friday, Jan. 14. It was a highly entertaining and blustery call. Anyone who has ever interacted with the

78-year-old Senate President knows he could read the phone book and make it entertaining. But it's what he shared that got my attention.

Here are the details:

- Lawmakers are proposing a bill that would allow student-athletes to collect royalty payments from a merchandiser (e.g., Nike, Adidas, etc.) makes a college jersey with their number on it. It would include royalties for video games makers that use their likeness and extend to trading card companies. Essentially, it boosts current name-image-likeness legislation and puts Oregon

at the opportunistic front in an ever-shifting college landscape.

The bill mirrors legislation in Pennsylvania and would give athletes in those two states more flexibility and opportunities vs. college athletes in other states. Courtney brought up former Oregon Ducks standout Sabrina Ionescu as an example. The Nike-issued jersey featuring her number was a huge hit while she was in college and under this legislation Ionescu could have received a pile of royalties while playing.

- Sen. Courtney confirmed that his office is also writing a

bill that would clear the path for bettors in our state to gamble on college sporting events. Prior legislation outlawed it, but attitudes nationally have shifted and the Supreme Court legalized sports wagering nationally a couple of years ago.

The NCAA used to frown on states that allowed sports wagering and avoided holding championship events in those locations. But that stance has moved dramatically in the last five years. What remains, though, is outdated legislation in Oregon that outlaws gambling on college events.

Who knows if lawmakers will adopt and pass both bills, but I like that sports is top of mind right now. Oregon and Oregon State, particularly, are in a race against other universities for competitive advantages in the new world of Name-Image-Likeness.

The first bill is a home run move that gives Oregon an advantage.

The second feels like a no-brainer.

The upcoming legislative session begins Feb. 1 in Salem.

John Canzano is a columnist for The Oregonian.