

ON THE SLATE

Saturday, Jan. 29

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Corban at Eastern Oregon, 5 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Corban at Eastern Oregon, 3 p.m.

COLLEGE MEN'S WRESTLING

Eastern Oregon at Clackamas Open, Oregon City, 9 a.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S WRESTLING

Big Bend Community College at Eastern Oregon, noon

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Eastern Oregon vs. Oklahoma Panhandle State, Glendale, Arizona, 9 a.m.

Eastern Oregon vs. Benedictine Mesa, Glendale, Arizona, 1 p.m.

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Nixyaawii at Powder Valley, 3:30 p.m.

Cove at Joseph, 4:45 p.m.

Enterprise at Union, 5:30 p.m.

Imbler at Griswold, 5:30 p.m.

Wallowa at Pine Eagle, 5:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Nixyaawii at Powder Valley, 2 p.m.

Cove at Joseph, 3:15 p.m.

Enterprise at Union, 4 p.m.

Imbler at Griswold, 4 p.m.

Wallowa at Pine Eagle, 4 p.m.

PREP SWIMMING

La Grande, Cove at Madras, TBA

PREP BOYS WRESTLING

La Grande at Reser's Tournament of Champions, Hillsboro, 10 a.m.

Elgin at Monroe Invitational, TBA

PREP GIRLS WRESTLING

La Grande at HRVHS Tourney, Hood River, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Jan. 30

COLLEGE MEN'S WRESTLING

Eastern Oregon at Clackamas Open, 9 a.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S WRESTLING

Eastern Oregon at Washington State, 3 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 1

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Powder Valley at Wallowa, 6:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Powder Valley at Wallowa, 5 p.m.  
Enterprise at Stanfield, 5:30 p.m.

# Bowen set to continue softball career at OSU

By DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

LA GRANDE — A La Grande softball player is taking her talents to Corvallis. Kinzy Bowen, an outfielder for the Tigers, officially signed with Oregon State University to join the Beavers next year. After picking up softball at age 7 and dedicating years to the sport, Bowen is set to continue her career at the NCAA Division I level.

"It's a dream, really," Bowen said. "I'm excited and nervous. It's definitely going to be hard work, but I feel like I'm prepared for it and ready."

Bowen will be joining a Beavers team that competes in the Pac-12, one of the NCAA's most competitive divisions. Oregon State is coming off a 20-26 season in 2021, but went 17-9 in 2020 and 26-19 in 2019.

For Bowen, the leap from high school athletics to Division I has been a goal since her childhood.

"To play at the next level, I've pushed myself over and over every day," she said. "I just knew I needed to make it a goal early on to play D1 softball."

Oregon State is coached by Laura Berg, one of the most suc-



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

Kinzy Bowen, center, sits with her family and coaches at La Grande High School on Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022, after signing a letter of intent with Oregon State University to play for the university's softball team.

cessful softball players in the history of the NCAA and Team USA. Berg won three gold medals and is the most decorated softball athlete in Team USA softball history. Beyond the accomplishments, Bowen found an instant connection with Berg's program at Oregon State.

"Really it took one camp," Bowen said. "I didn't have my eyes on Oregon State at all until

I went down there. I met the coaches and they were amazing. I just clicked with the whole team and the campus right away."

Bowen noted that she started sending out emails to Oregon State and that once she heard back, the connection continued to bloom. She also competed alongside current Oregon State freshman short-stop Kiani Nakamura with her travel ball team.

Like many high school athletes, Bowen's recruiting process was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, incoming OSU freshmen will have to compete for playing time against a handful of five-year seniors who are coming back next year due to COVID-19 extended eligibility. Bowen aims to continue improving as she worked her way up the roster.

"My freshman year, just being able to play with those girls is a great opportunity to learn more from them and the coaches," she said. "Playing against other teams that are amazing will be an experience. I'm excited."

Bowen was a cornerstone on the Tigers' roster the last three years, helping the team go 10-0 in the regular season last spring. La Grande was eliminated in the second round of the 4A playoffs.

The outfielder averaged a .536 batting average over 39 plate appearances, tallying 14 RBIs, 16 runs, 10 walks and four home runs. Bowen is eyeing a strong finish this year with La Grande before competing in summer ball — after the summer-league season ends, Bowen will head to Corvallis and begin training.

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Eastern Oregon men's wrestling falls two spots in latest NAIA poll

LA GRANDE — In the latest national poll, the Eastern Oregon University men's wrestling program continued to earn a spot among the top 20 teams in the NAIA.

The Mountaineers came in at No. 19 in the latest NAIA Coaches' Top-20 poll, which was released on Thursday, Jan. 27. The ranking is two spots behind where the team found itself in last week's poll.

Eastern received 44 votes, earning a tie with Embry-Riddle at No. 19. The Mountaineers saw three wrestlers earn individual national rankings.

Senior Noel Orozco came in at No. 4 in the 285-pound division, and sophomore Kyle Knudtson

was also ranked No. 4 at the 184-pound level. Senior Keegan Mulhill earned a No. 11 ranking in the 174-pound weight class.

Orozco is coming off a strong showing at the Missouri Valley Invitational last weekend, placing second overall in his division. The senior went 4-1 on the weekend and scored 20 points for a limited Eastern squad.

Eastern is one of four Cascade Collegiate Conference teams ranked in the top 20, with Montana State-Northern and Menlo College both earning rankings in the top 10. Embry-Riddle and Eastern rounded out the rankings for conference schools.

The Mountaineers are back in action on Jan. 29, competing at the Clackamas Open in Oregon City. Wrestling is set to begin at 9 a.m. Eastern has a road dual against Southern Oregon on Feb. 5 before

traveling to Havre, Montana, for the Cascade Collegiate Conference Championships on Feb. 18.

### EOU women's wrestling ranked No. 17 in latest NAIA poll

LA GRANDE — The NAIA released its latest weekly Coaches' Top-20 poll on Thursday, Jan. 27, ranking the Eastern Oregon University women's wrestling program at No. 17 in the nation.

The Mountaineers dropped one spot from their No. 16 ranking last week.

Five individual wrestlers on the team ranked in the top 20 in the NAIA. Sophomore Olivia Robinson led the way with a No. 5 ranking at the 170-pound level, while senior Dempsey Talkington came in at No. 6 at the 155-pound level. Junior Morgan Shines (130)

and sophomore Stephanie Blankenship (109) were both ranked No. 13 in their respective weight classes. Senior Macy Higa earned a No. 13 ranking at the 123-pound division.

Eastern received 52 votes as a team, the fourth highest ranking for a Cascade Collegiate Conference program. Southern Oregon is slated at No. 3, Menlo College is ranked No. 6 and Providence came in at No. 12. Corban is just a few spots behind Eastern at No. 20.

The Mountaineers have not wrestled since the Oregon Wrestling Classic on Jan. 15 but are gearing up for one of the team's biggest duals of the season. Eastern will travel to face No. 3 Southern Oregon in Ashland on Feb. 5. Wrestling is slated to begin at 6 p.m.

— The Observer

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