

ON THE SLATE

Wednesday, March 16

PREP SOFTBALL

La Grande at Hermiston, 4 p.m.

Thursday, March 17

PREP BASEBALL

La Grande at Hermiston, 4 p.m.

La Grande at Hermiston, 6 p.m.

PREP TRACK & FIELD

Powder Valley, La Grande at Ontario Ice Breaker, 3:30 p.m.

PREP BOYS TENNIS

La Grande at Vale, 3 p.m.

Friday, March 18

PREP SOFTBALL

Union/Cove at Toledo

Tournament, TBA

PREP TRACK & FIELD

Cove, Imbler, Union at Diana

Thurmond Invitational 2022,

11 a.m.

Cove at Lewiston Invitational,

noon

Saturday, March 19

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, 11 a.m.

Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, 2 p.m.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Eastern Oregon at Southern

Oregon, 2 p.m.

Eastern Oregon at Southern

Oregon, 4 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S

LACROSSE

Multnomah at Eastern Oregon, 1 p.m.

PREP SOFTBALL

La Grande at Philomath, 10 a.m.

La Grande vs. Gladstone,

Philomath High School, noon

Union/Cove at Toledo

Tournament, TBA

Sunday, March 20

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, 11 a.m.

Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, 2 p.m.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Eastern Oregon at Southern

Oregon, 11 a.m.

Eastern Oregon at Southern

Oregon, 1 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S

LACROSSE

Whitman at Eastern Oregon,

1 p.m.

Monday, March 21

PREP BASEBALL

La Grande vs. Canby, Surprise,

Arizona, 2 p.m.

Tuesday, March 22

PREP BASEBALL

La Grande vs. Shadow Ridge,

Surprise, Arizona, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, March 23

PREP BASEBALL

La Grande vs. Dakota Ridge,

Surprise, Arizona, 2 p.m.

SPORTS SHORT

Setting the foundation

Eastern Oregon women's lacrosse team continues to build up program

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Building an athletics program involves much more than wins and losses. In the Eastern Oregon University women's lacrosse team's second year as an official program, things are trending up as the Mountaineers continue to build their identity. While Eastern is still looking to improve its record, the Mountaineers have made significant progress under head coach Monica Plut.

"We've definitely made strides. We've recruited some great players and really have a great foundation of what we're building," Plut said. "That was the most important thing for me coming into this year, building that foundation for years to come and making sure it's stable."

The Mountaineers started off the season right, achieving a historic feat. Despite capturing one exhibition victory last season, Eastern entered this season without an official win. That all changed in a 8-6 victory over Whitworth in the team's season opener on Saturday, Feb. 12.

Eastern's two-point victory on the road was achieved in dramatic fashion, as the Mountaineers fought back after falling behind early on. Whitworth gained a 3-1 lead to start off the match, but Eastern strung together a resilient defensive effort moving forward.

The Mountaineers fought back in the next two periods to head into the fourth frame tied at 6-all. Goals from sophomore Samantha Buckley and freshman Claire Bever put Eastern in the driver's seat on the way to the program's first official win.

Buckley was exceptional in the win, scoring a team-high four goals. She is one of four returners on this year's roster looking to lay the foundation of the program.

Goalie Brooklyn Wright, another freshman, recorded 17 saves in the



Madisson Hoyt (2) approaches the Bearcat goal during the match between Eastern Oregon University and Willamette University at Community Stadium, La Grande, on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022.



Claire Bever (14) drives down the field with the ball during the match between Eastern Oregon University and Willamette University at Community Stadium, La Grande, on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022.

team's first win of the season. Wright joined the program after a prep career at Ankeny High School in Iowa.

"I was very impressed with our girls that we pulled it off," Plut said. "Our goalie played amazingly in that game. It was definitely an improved effort and it was really exciting."

The Mountaineers have a large freshman class contributing this year, with nine of the 13 players participating in their first collegiate season. Eastern has leaned on the likes of Wright in goal, Kate McAfee in midfield, Sydney Vopat in midfield and Bever in defense. Buckley, a sophomore, has been an anchor

on offense for Eastern.

Through six games, Buckley and McAfee lead the team with nine goals each.

"All of our freshmen have so much drive and athleticism and can play all over the field, which definitely helps," Plut said. "Every class that we're bringing in is more and more talented and more and more dedicated."

With a young team looking to improve every day, the Mountaineers measure their success by meeting goals on a shorter-term basis.

"For us the last two years, it's really been week-to-week," Plut said. "We meet every week and talk about what our top four goals are for the

week. Every day at practice we talk about individual and team goals."

As the Eastern lacrosse program grows, so too does the sport in the Pacific Northwest. Most popular on the East Coast, lacrosse is still a foreign sport to many in Eastern Oregon — this idea presents a challenge in recruiting for the Mountaineers.

"Recruiting can be tough," Plut said. "We live in a small town and lacrosse is a suburb or city sport. I push the adventure side of it. I love living here because of the mountains, snowboarding, the views. I focus a lot on that part and the team bonding"

Plut is a USA lacrosse coaching development

trainer, traveling across the country for conventions and recruiting trips, taking every opportunity to spread the word about the program and EOU. She also visits local middle schools and high schools to teach lacrosse in physical education classes.

"There's definitely a push with me to get the sport growing locally, that's what I love to do," Plut said.

The Mountaineers officially stand at 1-5 at the midway point in the season, following two scrimmages at the Boise State Tournament this past weekend. Eastern is set to play five more games on the season, including two against Multnomah and one against Corban. EOU, Multnomah and Corban are the only three schools with women's lacrosse programs in the Cascade Collegiate Conference.

While Eastern is still working toward improving the team's win total, the journey toward success is a day-by-day process.

"We've talked a lot about what success looks like this year. Right now, it's just to have fun and enjoy being around each other while playing our sport," Plut said. "We've really been focusing on making small tweaks and have fun while doing it. Everyone plays better when they're passionate about it and having a blast."

Legendary Blazers broadcaster Bill Schonely retires



Jack Smith/The Associated Press, File Bill Schonely makes the call at the start of his 2,500th NBA broadcast in Portland in 1998. Schonely is retiring in April 2022. He has been a signature voice for the Blazers for over 50 years as a play-by-play broadcaster. He's known for coining popular catchphrases like the Portland nickname "Rip City."

Schonely has been with the team since its beginning in 1970

Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — It's the end of an era in Rip City — the Portland Trail Blazers' founding broadcaster Bill Schonely has announced his retirement.

Schonely, 92, has been a signature voice for the Blazers for over 50 years as a play-by-play broadcaster. He's known for coining popular catchphrases like the Portland nickname "Rip City."

In a Saturday, March 12, press

release, the Blazers said Schonely will be honored at the last home game of the season on Sunday, April 10, against the Utah Jazz.

Schonely was hired in 1970 by team founder Harry Glickman. He became a Blazers ambassador in 2003, making public appearances as part of the team's community outreach.

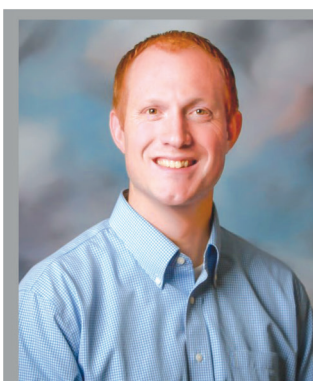
"Bill has been a fixture of the Trail Blazers organization since its inception and will continue to be forever ingrained in this city," Dewayne Hankins, president of business operations, said in the press release. "We thank Bill immensely for his 50-plus years of hard work and everything he has given to our organization, the city

of Portland and the entire NBA community."

Schonely was the sixth employee hired to work for the Blazers. Over his career, he called more than 2,500 games, including the team's NBA championship run in 1977.

During his many decades as a team broadcaster, Schonely stepped away from the desk only once, in the 1980s when he was recovering from heart surgery.

Schonely was inducted into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame for broadcasting in 1999. He also earned the Curt Gowdy Media Award from the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012.



Turning 65? We're here to help!

Joel Myer
jmyer@valleyinsurance.com



1603 Washington Ave, La Grande
(541) 963-3121

Let us take the mystery out of Medicare for you!

Kathy Rienti
krienti@valleyinsurance.com

