

TIGERS

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while also aiming to help younger players on the team improve.

“At the beginning of the season I was pretty nervous because we’re young, but now that we’re on the field getting some work in I really see us going pretty deep in the playoffs,” she said.

In his first full season as head coach, Bowen will be looking to get creative with the team’s roster management. Down on numbers this spring, the Tigers will have to be versatile in the field.

“Our bats will be really strong,” he said. “La Grande has always had a good lineup when it comes to bats. We always hit the ball really well. I’m excited to carry that on.”

Freshman Marti Anderson will likely be a key contributor at catcher, while junior Carlee Jensen will be a key player in the outfield. Austyn Meuser, another freshman, will look to step up defensively and on the mound.

“There’s some younger girls that will really help carry the team,” Cody Bowen said.

Neer enters the season as La Grande’s top arm, while Maya Wilson, Graci Jeffries



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group, File
Grace Neer, center, gets ready in the dugout during a match between the La Grande and Baker softball teams at Sam Marcum Field in La Grande on Thursday, May 6, 2021. Neer will be the Tigers’ ace in the circle in 2022 and play positionally as well.

and Ava Hedden will look to strengthen the pitching rotation.

“It’s definitely about playing for your team, no matter where you are on the field,” Neer said.

The 2022 season marks a return to normalcy for softball around the state. La Grande saw its 2020 season cancelled and 2021 shortened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Players and coaches alike are looking forward to a more consistent season on and off the field.

The Tigers opened their season at Hermiston on Wednesday, March 16, the first of seven road games to start the 2022 season.

La Grande’s first home matchup is a doubleheader against Banks at Pioneer

Park on April 1.

La Grande will travel to face Philomath and Gladstone in a round-robin set of games at Lebanon High School on March 19, before traveling to Eagle, Idaho, on March 25 for four games in the WTP Spring Tournament.

While the Tigers will be short on depth, the team has the talent to make a playoff push. La Grande’s senior core, led by their first-year head coach, will be looking to make noise this spring as softball season kicks off.

“I think we’re capable of getting deep in the playoffs,” Neer said. “I really see a bright future for us. I think we can win the GOL and I do think we have a chance at the state title.”

STANDINGS

COLLEGE SOFTBALL		
Cascade Collegiate Conference		
Team	League	Overall
College of Idaho	9-0	22-2
Oregon Tech	9-0	22-4
Eastern Oregon	6-0	16-5
Southern Oregon	5-1	19-5
Corban	5-5	11-12
Bushnell	4-3	6-12
British Columbia	4-5	5-9
Northwest	2-7	5-14
Warner Pacific	1-8	2-14

Carroll	1-9	3-15
Providence	0-9	0-12
COLLEGE BASEBALL		
Cascade Collegiate Conference		
Team	League	Overall
Lewis-Clark State	0-0	27-1
Oregon Tech	0-0	17-9
Corban	0-0	12-10-1
British Columbia	0-0	12-13
College of Idaho	0-0	12-15
Eastern Oregon	0-0	7-18
Bushnell	0-0	2-19

ON THE SLATE

Thursday, March 17

PREP BASEBALL
La Grande at Hermiston (2), 4 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, Harper, 11 a.m.

Cove at Lewiston Invitational, noon

Saturday, March 19

COLLEGE BASEBALL
Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech

(2), 11 a.m.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL
Eastern Oregon at Southern Oregon (2), 2 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 (2), 11 a.m.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL
Eastern Oregon at Southern Oregon (2), 11 a.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.

Thursday, March 24

PREP BASEBALL
La Grande vs. Shadow Ridge, Surprise, Arizona



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File
Haley Ferry (35), of Salem Academy, and Union's Kaylin Nowak prepare to grab a rebound after a free throw during the state 2A girls championship basketball game on Saturday, March 5, 2022, at the Pendleton Convention Center. Union won the game 52-38.

CLOCK

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Pricing a shot clock can be tricky, Weber said, as it varies based on what scoreboards are already installed at a school. Some schools already have a shot clock feature installed in their gym. But Weber ranged the cost of a shot clock to between \$2,000 and \$5,000.

A total price tag of \$600,000 would be on the low end if the nearly 300 OSAA member schools were to install a new shot clock and every school would be left

footing the bill.

Tom Snook, the athletic director at 3A Vale High School, said the cost isn't his primary concern for a new shot clock. His biggest worry is the logistics of it all. This would include a whole new electrical job in Vale's gym and also the task of finding another person to work at every basketball game — something that's not always easy for small schools.

“At our size of school, it can be difficult to get people to work the games,” he said. “I’m more worried about the logistics of wiring and

having someone to run it.”

Weber said the costs of installation and finding an operator are concerns that other athletic directors mirror, and will be a topic of conversation in the OADA conference in April.

Snook said he does think that the implementation of a shot clock in Oregon is more of a matter of when, not if.

“We know it’s coming in the future. So it’s better if we get on that,” he said.

Weber said he would anticipate the rolling out of shot clocks to be an all or nothing situation, meaning that there would

not be shot clocks set up for the 6A and 5A classifications and not at the smaller schools.

Snook, who was previously a basketball coach at Vale, said that he anticipates that many smaller-school basketball teams will have to make philosophical changes if a shot clock arrives in the state.

In his scheme, the Vikings played a patient style of offense and relied on defense to carry them in games.

The low-scoring affairs may not have succeeded with a shot clock.

“You just have to adjust,” Snook said.

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