

ON THE SLATE

Sunday, March 20

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Eastern Oregon 1, Southern Oregon 0  
Southern Oregon 8, Eastern Oregon 0

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Oregon Tech 6, Eastern Oregon 5  
Oregon Tech 3, Eastern Oregon 0

Monday, March 21

(Games not completed by print deadline)

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech (2), 11 a.m.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

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

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

Friday, March 25

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Providence at Eastern Oregon (2), 2 p.m.

PREP SOFTBALL

La Grande vs. Timberline, Eagle, Idaho, 11 a.m.

Warrenton at Union/Cove, noon  
Burns at Union/Cove, 2:15 p.m.

La Grande vs. Skyview, Eagle, Idaho, 3 p.m.

Saturday, March 26

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Bushnell at Eastern Oregon (2), 11 a.m.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Providence at Eastern Oregon (2), 11 a.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Eastern Oregon at Puget Sound, 1 p.m.

PREP SOFTBALL

La Grande vs. Rocky Mountain, Eagle, Idaho, 1 p.m.

Bonanza at Union/Cove, 1 p.m.  
La Grande vs. Eagle, Eagle Idaho, 3 p.m.

PREP TRACK & FIELD

La Grande, Powder Valley at Hawk Invite, College Place, Washington, 10 a.m.

Sunday, March 27

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Bushnell at Eastern Oregon (2), 11 a.m.

IN BRIEF

Ultimate Frisbee league begins March 26

LA GRANDE — A Union County ultimate frisbee league will begin conducting games at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 26, at the La Grande Church of the Nazarene field, 109 18th St.

The league is for men and women and boys and girls of all ages from middle school age and up. Members of the league will meet at 10 a.m. each Saturday this spring and summer to play ultimate frisbee games.

For additional information visit the Ultimate Frisbee of Union County's Facebook page or call Essie Lee at 541-786-6435.

— The Observer



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer, File

Powder Valley's Kaden Krieger, second from left, and Reece Dixon, far right, sprint around the final turn as the duo competes in the 200-meter dash Saturday, May 22, 2021, at the Oregon 1A track and field championship at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande. Dixon placed eighth while Krieger finished as runner-up.

At the **STARTING LINE**

Local track and field teams commence 2022 spring season

By DAVIS CARBAUGH • The Observer

UNION COUNTY — As the temperature begins to rise and winter sports season concludes, local athletes are gearing up to take the track and begin the 2022 track and field season.

Several teams are up and running, opening their seasons last week. With a full season set in place after two years of pandemic-altered schedules, local track and field is back in Union County.

Tigers look to utilize strong turnout

La Grande head coach Matt Wolcott will not have an issue filling out entries this year. The Tigers have roughly 70 total participants this season, giving the team flexibility across all events.

“Traditionally, La Grande has been strong in track. It’s a good track town,” Wolcott said of the turnout this year.

The La Grande girls team is coming off a strong showing in 2021, placing third overall at the 4A state championship. A strong core of distance runners leads this year’s La Grande girls team, coming off a fourth-place finish at the 4A cross-country state championships this fall.

Emily Tubbs, the individual champion in cross-country, will look to lead the way for the Tigers in the 3,000 meters and 1,500 meters. Tubbs, a sophomore, opened the season winning both events at the Ontario Icebreaker on Thursday, March 17. Just behind Tubbs in both events was freshman Cecilia Villagomez, a freshman who placed ninth in her first ever cross-country state championships. Sophomore Faith Calhoun will add strong depth in distance, while sophomore teammate Kiah Carlson looks to lead the way in middle-distance events.

“We’re going to try to utilize them the best we can for the team,” Wolcott said of the girls distance runners.

Freshman Kayle Collman will look to contribute for La Grande in short distance events this season. Collman won the 100-meter sprint with a time of 13.49 seconds at the Ontario Icebreaker, and helped La Grande take second in the girls 4x100 relay.

On the boys side, several key upper-classmen lead the charge. Senior Jarom Huntsman won both the 300-meter hurdles and triple jump at the Ontario Icebreaker.

“He’s definitely a leader of the team, both by his performance and his attitude,” Wolcott said. “Jarom is a great teammate.”

Senior Carter Perry and junior Caleb Murie will both be two of the team’s anchors in long distance for the Tigers, while junior Maxon Huxoll leads the way in the pole vault. After picking up the event for the first time last year, Huxoll qualified for the state meet at the conclusion of his junior year — Huxoll set a personal record at the Ontario Icebreaker, placing second in the event with a height of 11 feet.

Wolcott noted that field events are an emphasis this year, working to build numbers in throwing events. Junior Myer Whitmore enters the season as the Tigers’ top thrower in both shot put and discus.

“Overall, I think we’re happy with where we’re at. We’re looking forward to continuing to improve this season,” Wolcott said. “The goal is always to win our league in districts. If we can place at state that would be great.”

Powder Valley hoping for best with small roster

Just one year removed from a boys 1A state championship, the Badgers will be looking for similar success in 2022. However, Powder Valley will have to do so with another small roster.

The Badgers have seven boys and seven girls on the roster, split between experienced seniors and newcomers.

“It’s going to be an interesting year, because we do have some athletes coming back and some athletes that did not come out,” Powder Valley head coach and athletic director Brad Dunten said.

On the boys side, seniors Kaden Krieger and Reece Dixon will look to lead the way in short-distance and field events. Junior Jackson Chandler is a strong competitor in middle distance, while Ayla Bingham leads the girls team in a variety of events.

“I think there’s going to be quite a few multi-event athletes,” Dunten said. “Not having the ability to have a four-by-one and four-by-four, that’s the only option we have.”

In distance, the Badgers will look to Hunter Bingham and Allen Bedolla to replace Justin Ash. The distance star was a key component of last year’s team and is a current member of the Eastern Oregon University team.

Despite limited numbers, Powder Valley will be hoping for the same success as last season.

Union sees solid turnout

With strong numbers in 2022, the Union track and field team will be hoping for a productive season.

Junior Bo Ledbetter enters the season as a multi-event athlete, competing in hurdles, pole vault and triple jump. The Bobcats have a strong group of field events competitors, led by sophomores Mason Droke and Evan Cloutier in the high jump and triple jump.

On the girls side, freshman Kaelyn Shoemaker is coming off a first-place finish in shot put at the Diana Thurmond Invitational on March 18. She placed sixth in discus and will look to contribute points in the throwing events.

With five competitors in the javelin at the team’s opening meet, the Bobcats will look to earn valuable points in field events.

Sophomore Emma Burtch will anchor the middle-distance, taking second place in the 400 at the Diana Thurmond Invite and helping Union’s 4x400 relay team take first place.

Cove builds on strong cross-country season

Coming off a stellar cross-country season, junior Taylor Fox will be poised for a strong season in distance events for Cove. Fox won the 1,500 meters at the Diana Thurmond Invite with a time of 4:26.96 and earned a second-place finish in the 400 meters.

Senior Skyler Perkins, freshman Nathaniel O’Reilly, sophomore Eli Williams and freshman David McDonald will look to translate a strong cross-country season into a solid year on the track.

On the girls side, senior Rachel Baird placed first in the 200-meter sprint at the Diana Thurmond Invite. Sophomore Autumn Dobbs won the 400 meters, freshman Hailey Davis won the 800 meters and Danielle O’Reilly took top marks in the 1,500 meters. Coming off a quality cross-country season, senior Audrey Garlitz will be a key contributor in long-distance races.

Imbler looks to bounce back

The Imbler Panthers take the track this year after placing eighth in the girls 1A state championships and 22nd on the boys side.

The Panthers will be looking to replace key departures in Wyatt Frost in boys throwing events and Erin Coston in girls pole vault — both athletes took home top-three finishes in last year’s 1A state championship.

On the boys side, senior Carter Crook and sophomore Clinton Tarvin lead the way in sprints. Sophomore Trevor Treat is the team’s top hurdler, while sophomores Jeremiah Martin and Henry Treat will look to replace Frost’s production in throwing events.

In the javelin throw, sophomore Dallin Rasmussen placed second at the Diana Thurmond Invitational. Rasmussen enters the season looking for key points in the field event.

On the girls side, Imbler is led by sophomore Austyn Turner in the sprints and long jump. The Panthers have solid numbers in the sprint events, including freshman Kiana DeLint in the 300-meter hurdles, who took second at the Diana Thurmond Invitational.

Elgin turns the page

The Elgin girls team will be tasked with replacing last year’s star runner Aaliyah Burton, who won two individual state titles and one runner-up finish at last year’s state championships.

The Huskies also lost seniors Wyatt Hallgarth, Andres Schmittle, Clay Wilhelm, Noble Craig and Kaden McClure on the boys side.

Sophomore Parker Caldwell is coming off a 13th-place finish in the 300-meter hurdles in last year’s state meet, while sophomore Joe Lathrop will also look to be a key contributor in sprints and javelin.

In addition to Burton, Elgin lost Madison Harvey and Jocelyn Palmer from last year’s roster — Charlee Morehead competed in last year’s 1A state championships and will look to build on that experience this year.