

Smith, Davis earn weekly CCC honors

TJ Davis earns track honor, Amanda Smith named softball pitcher of the week

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — It was a productive week of spring sports for Eastern Oregon University, capped off with two athletes earning conference accolades.

Track and field athlete TJ Davis and softball pitcher Amanda Smith took home Cascade Collegiate Conference player of the week honors in their respective sports, as announced by the conference on Monday, April 4.



Davis



Smith

Smith was named conference pitcher of the week after a strong showing over three outings. Her highlight of the week was throwing a five-inning no-hitter against Warner Pacific in an 11-0 victory on April 1, the first no-hitter of her career.

The senior went 2-1 on the week, throwing complete games in each outing. Throughout the three contests, Smith tallied 19 strikeouts and allowed just two runs over 20 innings. Smith kept the Mountaineers close against No. 5 College of Idaho, but the Mountaineers ultimately fell 1-0. Eastern took two wins over Warner Pacific with Smith in the circle, sweeping the Knights in a four-game road series.

Smith is now 12-3 on the year with a 1.75 ERA across 14 starts — she is second in the conference in wins and third with 85 strikeouts. The Mountaineers are third in the conference standings at 14-4 in conference play and 25-10 overall.

On the men's track team,

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ON THE GREEN



Julie Steinmetz, of Moses Lake, Washington, tees off on Thursday, March 31, 2022, at the Wildhorse Golf Course. Wildhorse hosts the Wildhorse Ladies Classic on Sept. 2-4, which will be the 17th stop on the Epson Tour's 2022 schedule, welcoming professional female golfers from all over the United States and more than 30 countries.

Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Officials expect Wildhorse Ladies Classic to have impact on the region this summer

By **ANNIE FOWLER** • East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Gary George never played a round of golf until he was in his 30s. Now George, the CEO at Wildhorse Resort & Casino and a big golf fan, is bringing an LPGA qualifying tournament to the Pendleton area.

The Wildhorse Ladies Classic, which is an Epson Tour event, will be Sept. 2-4 at Wildhorse Golf Course.

"We have been following the Symetra Tour (now the Epson Tour) for a while," George said. "Last year, the Circling Raven Casino in Coeur d'Alene brought the event to their place. We went up and checked it out. The cost was something we could afford to do as one of the annual events that we do. I asked to meet with the tournament director."

Most of the Epson Tour events are east of the Mississippi, but George pitched the idea of a second Northwest event to the Epson Tour directors.

"They thought it was a great idea," George said. "We will be after the Circling Raven event this year. It's a two-year (plan) with an option for a third year. The players will be able to go from one event to the other without a lot of travel."



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

The Wildhorse Resort & Casino, which has 300 hotel rooms and is near the Wildhorse Golf Course, will not be able to accommodate all 2,000 professional golfers, volunteers and fans who come to town Sept. 2-4, 2022, for the Wildhorse Ladies Classic, an LPGA tournament.

The event will be the 17th stop on the Epson Tour's 2022 schedule, welcoming professional female golfers from all over the United States and more than 30 countries. The tournament will feature between 133 and 144 players, but the final roster will be announced a couple of weeks before the event.

Next year, the Wildhorse Ladies Classic will be in August.

Wildhorse is the fifth tribal venue to sponsor an Epson Tour event. Circling Raven and Morongo Golf Club in California are two others.

The Wildhorse Ladies Classic is one of three new events on the Epson Tour schedule this season. The others are in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"The Epson Tour has the core values we want to promote," George said. "We want to promote the game of golf in our region, with the focus on our youth, especially girls golf. It's a sport that really hasn't attracted a lot of support in our area. A lot of high schools don't even have a girls

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SPORTS SHORT

La Grande track and field program to host annual invitational

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande's track and field program is gearing up to host its annual home invitational, with schools from around the region traveling to compete.

Roughly 20 teams are set to take the track in La Grande on Friday, April 8, at the Tigers' annual La Grande Invitational. The event is hosted at the high school track at the corner of H Avenue and Sunset Drive.

La Grande will welcome in Union County schools Cove, Elgin, Powder Valley, Imbler and Union to compete at the event.

Joseph and Enterprise will be traveling down from Wallowa County, while Baker will travel north to compete as well. Pendleton, Stanfield/Echo, Griswold and McLoughlin will be attending the meet from Umatilla County.

The Powder Valley boys team is coming off a first-place finish at last weekend's Carnival of Speed at McLoughlin High School, scoring 63.5 points. The Baker girls team enters the La Grande Invitational after placing first at the meet with a team score of 90.43. La Grande placed third on the girls side and fifth on the boys.

The Imbler girls team will head into the meet looking to

build off a seventh-place finish out of 24 teams at the Carnival of Speed, while the Union boys team placed ninth out of 27 teams.

At last year's La Grande Invitational, the Tigers swept both the boys and girls competitions. The Tigers scored 209 points on the boys side and 166.5 points in the girls standings, with Baker right on La Grande's heels in both groupings.

This year's competition includes a larger field of competitors, compared to eight schools competing at the 2021 rendition. Field events begin at 10 a.m. on April 8, while running events are set to begin at noon.



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

The La Grande High School track is set to be the host site of the La Grande Invitational on Friday, April 8, 2022. Roughly 20 schools from around the region will travel to the area to compete in the annual competition.

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