

## EOU softball hauls in all-league honors

Smith, Gaither earn first-team nods

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Coming off one of the most successful regular seasons in program history, the Eastern Oregon University softball program was well represented in the Cascade Collegiate Conference award selections.

Five Mountaineers earned all-conference honors, while two players were named to the conference first team.

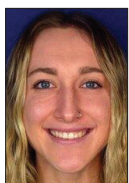
Eastern pitcher Amanda Smith, who finished the regular season second in the conference with 17 wins, earned a first-team nod after an excellent season in the pitcher's circle.

Infielder Grace Gaither, who started in all 52 games for the Mountaineers, also earned a first-team selection. Gaither hit .300 on the year, with 21 RBIs and 27 runs scored.

Infielder Caitlin Crist earned a spot on the second team after leading Eastern with 41 runs scored in the regular season. Crist also was tied with Hannah Tyree and Kayla Berg for most RBIs on the team with 30. The junior led the way with 82 total bases and crushed six home runs.

Outfield duo Shelby Starr and Karsyn Zaragoza both earned honorable

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Smith



Gaither



Crist



La Grande High School golfer Sydney Cox lines up a putt at the La Grande Country Club on Tuesday, April 26, 2022. The Tigers placed first overall at the La Grande Invitational, with a team score of 428.

Davis Carbaugh/The Observer, File

# ON THE GREEN

Well-rounded team effort propels La Grande girls golf team into district, state contention

By DAVIS CARBAUGH • The Observer

LA GRANDE — With a stellar regular season in the rearview mirror, the La Grande High School girls golf team is aiming high in the postseason.

A well-balanced one-through-five led the way for the Tigers, who have won every team-scored tournament this regular season. As the 4A/3A/2A/1A Special District 4 tournament in Pendleton on Monday, May 9, approaches, La Grande is hoping for sustained success with the season on the line.

"I think they're pretty confident, seeing the scores this year," La Grande head coach Bill Waldrop said. "I think they're all expecting to make it to state and do well."

The Tigers have relied on a team effort, with the team's top four golfers averaging under 110 this season. Marissa Lane has led the way, averaging 102, while Emma Bell was right

behind at 105. Sydney Cox averaged a 107. Dylann Justice put together a season average of 108, and Natasha Lane averaged 120.

La Grande concluded the regular season with a strong showing at the Ontario Invite, totaling a 437 team score — the Tigers were 57 strokes ahead of second-place Ontario.

Marissa Lane, a junior, remarked that the team has shown vast improvement from the start of the season through now.

"We've gotten better as the season goes on," she said. "Our best score this year was 411, which is way down from what it was at the beginning of the

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La Grande golfer Dylann Justice attempts a putt during the La Grande Invitational on Tuesday, April 26, 2022. The LHS girls team enters the postseason after placing first in each match this regular season.

Davis Carbaugh/The Observer, File

## SPORTS SHORT

### Hair rules updated for high school basketball and wrestling

Changes allow for diversity of styles as long as safety is maintained

By NIK STRENG  
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has altered a couple of hair rules that will allow for more participation and increase a diversity of hairstyles in basketball and wrestling.

In its May meeting, the NFHS Board of Directors approved a recommendation that will allow hair adornments that are made of hard material as long as they are

securely fastened close to the head and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates or opponents.

The NFHS said the hair rule was changed to be more inclusive of hairstyles among student-athletes.

"It was extremely important to the rules committee to create rules language that supported diversity of hair trends while minimizing the risk of injury to the athlete, teammates and opponents," said NFHS Director of Sports Lindsey Atkinson in a news release.

For wrestling, the NFHS has altered a long-standing rule and will now allow facial hair as long as that facial hair does not impede a skin check.

Previously, the only facial hair that

wrestlers were allowed was a mustache (trimmed above the lip line) and sideburns. Now, wrestlers will be allowed to keep hair that covers the chin and neck.

This rule change is one of many changes to wrestling that have taken place to increase participation nationwide. In recent years, wrestling has allowed an optional two-piece uniform to be worn in competition instead of the classic singlet. There have also been changes to weight classes to allow for more participation.

The rule also makes it so any wrestler who has facial hair for religious purposes does not have to feel separated. In the past, any wrestler who had facial hair had to wear a face covering.



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.

East Oregonian, File

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