

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Sports shorts

Boheim to give it three more years

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — Jim Boheim became the face of Syracuse University over the past five decades, first as player, then as coach — revered for wins and delivering a national title to a struggling city in 2003. But the coda to his decorated career has become tinged with undeniable blemishes, laid out in harsh penalties for violations the NCAA says show Boheim and the university lost control of athletics.

Boheim and Syracuse officials acknowledged the unwanted ties Wednesday in announcing he will retire after three more seasons, while insisting they don't agree with parts of the scathing NCAA report and will appeal to try to save scholarships and wins.

Oden training for another comeback

PORTLAND (AP) — Ohio State coach Thad Matta says former Buckeyes star Greg Oden has been training on campus and could attempt another NBA comeback.

Matta spoke Wednesday in Portland, where Ohio State is preparing to face Virginia Commonwealth in the NCAA Tournament's round of 64.

This is the same city where the Trail Blazers selected Oden with the top pick in 2007, but the 7-foot center was constantly sidelined with knee injuries.

Matta said Oden has been doing "high-level training" the past 6 months with coaches at Ohio State and weighs about 280 pounds.

"Quite honestly, I haven't seen Greg look this good since when he played for us back in the day at Ohio State," Matta said.

Oden played 82 games in five seasons for Portland. He last appeared in a game for the Blazers in December 2009 and played 23 games for the Miami Heat last season.

"I felt like I need a little something extra in that game to go in there with a little more confidence playing a team like that. And so I decided to keep with it the rest of the year."

— **Bobby Hurley**
Buffalo men's basketball coach on choosing to wear the 1992 NCAA championship ring he won as a player at Duke when his team played No. 1 Kentucky earlier this season. Buffalo lost 71-52, but the ring stayed and has been Hurley's charm as the team went 23-9 to earn its first-ever NCAA tournament berth.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS
2006 — Tennessee's Candace Parker is the first woman to dunk in an NCAA tournament game, jamming one-handed on a breakaway 6:12 into the second-seeded Lady Vols' 102-54 victory against an Army team making its tournament debut.

Contact us at 541-966-0838 or sports@eastoregonian.com

Men's College Basketball

Gonzaga extends NCAA streak

17th straight tourney appearance not to be scoffed at

By **TIM BOOTH**
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Mike Roth knows there will always be the doubters and critics that will poke holes in what Gonzaga has accomplished during a run that is getting closer to lasting two decades.

Often those criticisms revolve around the quality of competition the Bulldogs face during the conference season or their inability thus far — for all their regular-season dominance — to reach a Final Four.

But what should not be disputed is the streak Gonzaga has put together of reaching the NCAA Tournament.

When second-seeded Gonzaga takes the floor Friday night at KeyArena in Seattle to face No. 15 seed North Dakota State it'll be the 17th straight NCAA Tournament appearance for the Bulldogs. It's tied for the fourth-longest active streak in the country and tied for sixth-longest NCAA streak of all-time.

To put that in context, only Kansas, Duke and Michigan State have longer active streaks. The Bulldogs' streak is equal with Wisconsin's. And this tournament appearance will bring Gonzaga somewhat full



AP Photo/Gregory Bull, File

In this March 20, 2014, file photo, Gonzaga forward Angel Nunez dunks during practice at the NCAA college basketball tournament in San Diego. For all the criticism it sometimes receives, Gonzaga will make its 17th straight NCAA Tournament appearance on Friday night, March 20, 2015, when it takes the floor against North Dakota State.

circle. The run of consecutive appearances began in 1999 when the Bulldogs played their first two games in Seattle.

"Seventeen in a row, that is a run," said Roth, Gonzaga's athletic director since 1998. "(And) doing

that at a school that we're not in a power conference. That's something that we take pride in. A lot of that is our guys going out there and winning games in tough places that sometimes people don't give those places credit as being tough places

to win games."

What Gonzaga has accomplished since that first run in 1999 that made them darlings of the tournament by pulling a trio of unlikely upsets to reach the Elite Eight, is impressive.

See **GONZAGA/2B**

Eastern Washington confident for upset

By **ANTONIO GONZALEZ**
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Say this for Eastern Washington coach Jim Hayford: he's confident about his Eagles heading into the NCAA Tournament against Georgetown.

So confident, in fact, that Hayford predicted on a national radio show Wednesday that his team would win. He told listeners of The Jim Rome Show on CBS Sports Radio they could advance the Eagles in their brackets and ended the interview by telling the host: "We're gonna win. Talk again, Jim."

Of course, the idea isn't that far-fetched.

Since 2009, the Hoyas are just 1-4 in the tournament. All four losses came against teams seeded 10th or worse, and three of those losses came by double digits.

Eastern Washington, seeded 13th in the South Region, will try to be the next overachieving underdog to down Georgetown when they face the fourth-seeded Hoyas on Thursday night in Portland.

The Hoyas (21-10) are well aware of all the chatter surrounding the game. Georgetown coach John



AP Photo/Don Ryan

Eastern Washington forward Venky Jois prepares to shoot during practice for an NCAA college basketball second-round game in Portland, Ore., Wednesday, March 18, 2015. Eastern Washington is to play Georgetown on Thursday.

Thompson III said his players told him of Hayford's headline-grabbing interview, and they're as eager as anybody to show — and not talk — about what they can do.

"We all know what's at stake," said Hoyas guard Jabril Trawick. "We're all Division I basketball players. We're all playing for something. We don't feed into it that

much. We're just happy that we're here. We're just ready to play."

Eastern Washington (26-8) is a popular pick to be one of those surprise teams that pop up every spring for more reasons than Georgetown's recent resume.

The Eagles are a guard-oriented group led by national scoring leader Tyler Harvey (22.9 points per game). They shoot a ton of 3-pointers, and they played a nonconference schedule that included a win at Indiana and close losses at SMU, Washington and California.

Eastern Washington has shown some fight already this March, too. The Eagles rallied to beat Montana in the Big Sky championship for the program's second NCAA Tournament berth and first since 2004, when they lost to Oklahoma State.

For Georgetown, March has been filled with a lot of letdowns lately.

The Hoyas last made it out of the round of 32 in 2007, when they advanced to the Final Four. Georgetown, which plays in the more difficult Big East, settled for an NIT invitation last year after getting up-

See **EWU/2B**

Tallest Duck is short on minutes

The Eugene Register-Guard

Dana Altman noted that Oregon played "the three biggest teams in the league" last week during the Pac-12 Conference Tournament.

The Ducks were not able to play their biggest player for many meaningful minutes during those games when Oregon faced Colorado's 6-foot-10 Josh Scott and 7-footers Jakob Poeltl of Utah and Kaleb Tarczewski of Arizona.

Center Michael Chandler, a highly recruited 6-foot-10 junior from Northwest Florida State, has played only 101 minutes this season because of a knee injury that has bothered him all season as well as an NCAA suspension. Chandler said he thought about how he could match up against those opposing centers last week.

"Most definitely," Chandler said. "I think about it all the time."

Chandler had not been made available by Oregon to the media all season, but every player is required to speak to the press at the Pac-12 and NCAA tournaments, so he spoke publicly for the first time all season after Thursday's victory over Colorado.

Chandler has battled a knee



AP Photo/Jeff Chiu

Oregon's Michael Chandler, left, Dillon Brooks (24) and Jalil Abdul-Bassit (15) celebrate on the bench during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game against Stanford in Stanford, Calif., Sunday, March 1, 2015. Oregon won 73-70.

injury since he arrived at Oregon and sat out the first nine games of the season to heal his knee while serving an NCAA suspension for accepting extra benefits during high school in 2011. Chandler said he has tried to stay upbeat while playing 19 of 26 games he was eligible for an average of 5.3 minutes.

"It's been kind of tough, but I try to stay positive and keep push-

ing and do all I can to make it better," Chandler said.

Chandler played a total of three minutes in two games at the Pac-12 Tournament.

"I'm not thinking about it," he said when asked how tough it has been to watch mostly from the bench. "Whatever opportunity I can get, I try to make the most of

See **OREGON/2B**

Best bets, upset alerts

A look at early NCAA matchups

By **DAVE SKRETTA**
Associated Press

It's been three decades since the NCAA Tournament expanded to 64 teams, and five years since the play-in game model was expanded to create the "First Four."

Adding teams sure hasn't watered down the competition.

Some of the most competitive tournaments have happened in the last few years, at least in terms of average margin of victory. In fact, the 67 games during the 2012 edition were decided by fewer than 10 points per game, making it one of the closest tournaments in history.

This year could trump all of them.

Sure, Kentucky is a juggernaut. But the rest of the field is wide open, and there are plenty of lower seeds that could make a deep March run. And that means plen-

See **NCAA/2B**