

# Bucks look to chase down another crown

Pitching will key PHS repeat title aspirations

PENDLETON — The reigning state champs will need to sort out matters in the circle if they hope to contend for a third state championship.

Last year's pitcher Hailey Kline did the heavy lifting, but has moved on to play at Blue Mountain Community College this season. Kline allowed just five runs during four postseason games en route to the school's third state softball championship.

Like Kline was entering last spring, all four potential replacements are green on the rubber. Junior Kiersten Murphy threw sparingly last season, but is the only with varsity experience. Senior Riley Litzinger, junior Gracie Lyon and sophomore Bailey Hillmick round out the group trying to follow in Kline's pitching footsteps.

"What we're faced with this



**Pendleton's Darian Lindsey lays down a bunt during a game last season. Lindsey was the Class 5A State Player of the Year last spring. She enters her senior season with the Buckaroos.**

EO file photo

year is the nice luxury of having some depth there, but being early in the season we're waiting for somebody to clearly rise above the rest," Pendleton coach Tim Cary said. "It's such an important position to winning ball games, so, we're taking our time with that and

trying to give a fair assessment and an equal opportunity to prove themselves."

Cary is not opposed to using a committee of arms this season.

The new pitchers' approach will be made easier with the stalwart infield playing be-

hind them. Two-time Class 5A State Player of the Year Darian Lindsey returns at third base. Ellie Richards returns from last year's season-ending knee surgery at shortstop. Richards was an all-state performer as a freshman. Payton Hergert is back at second base.

Senior outfielder Tiah Grass nearly tripled the school's season home run mark last year with 12 bombs. Grass, a Sterling College (Kansas) signee, is not the only returning Buckaroo capable of going yard on any swing. Lindsay, Hergert and left fielder Alexis Morrison all hit multiple home runs.

"We think we have a good group coming back, that's for sure," Cary said. "We have some returners coming back from last year's state championship group and we're hoping for good things."

First base and right field along with pitcher are the only positions hit from graduation from last year's squad.

## BUCKAROOS SOFTBALL

**Coach:** Tim Cary (11th year)  
**Key returners:** Darian Lindsey, sr., 3B, Mykal Wiessenfluh, sr., C; Tiah Grass, sr., OF; Alexis Morrison, jr., OF; Payton Hergert, soph.; 2B.

**2014 record:** 24-6, 10-2 (Columbia River Conference)

**Playoff story:** The third-seeded Buckaroos defeated Putnam 2-1 to win the school's second state softball championship in the Class 5A playoffs.



### 2015 Schedule

Tue., March 17	at Hanford (WA)	4 p.m.
Fri., March 20	at Kamiakin (WA)	4 p.m.
Mon., March 23	at N. Clackamas Tourney	TBA
Tue., March 24	at N. Clackamas Tourney	TBA
Wed., March 25	at Milwaukie	11 a.m.
Tue., March 31	at La Grande	4 p.m.
Fri., April 3	at Walla Walla	4 p.m.
Sat., April 4	vs. Walla Walla	11 a.m.
Tue., April 7	at Mac-Hi	4:30 p.m.
Thu., April 9	vs. La Grande	4:30 p.m.
Tue., April 14	vs. Mac-Hi	4 p.m.
Sat., April 18	vs. Hood River (2)*	Noon
Tue., April 21w	at Hood River*	4:30 p.m.
Sat., April 25	vs. The Dalles (2)*	Noon
Tue., April 28	at The Dalles*	4:30 p.m.
Fri., May 1	at Hermiston* (2)	3 p.m.
Tue., May 5	vs. Hermiston*	4 p.m.
Fri., May 8	at Hood River*	4:30 p.m.
Tue., May 12	at The Dalles*	4:30 p.m.
Fri., May 15	vs Hermiston*	4 p.m.
Mon. May 18	vs Baker	4:30 p.m.



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