

EAST OREGONIAN

SPORTS

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1B

Sports shorts

Durant’s buzzer-beater lifts Thunder

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — With the ball in Kevin Durant’s hands in the final seconds, Oklahoma City coach Billy Donovan didn’t call a timeout. Instead, he let one of his superstars do his thing. Durant made that decision pay off. He hit a 3-pointer with just a half-second on the clock to give the Thunder a wild 117-114 win over the Orlando Magic on Wednesday night. Durant’s buzzer-beater capped his 37-point outing for Oklahoma City, which has won five straight and 12 of its last 13. Durant extended his streak of games with 20 or more points to 36, the longest run in the NBA. Oklahoma City’s other superstar, Russell Westbrook, posted his third straight triple-double with 24 points, a career-high 19 rebounds and 14 assists. He has eight triple-doubles this season, five coming in the last 11 games.

Warriors’ Curry lights up Wizards

WASHINGTON (AP) — Stephen Curry scored 36 of his 51 points in the first half to offset a monster offensive game from John Wall and the Golden State Warriors pulled away to beat the Washington Wizards 134-121 Wednesday night for their eighth straight victory. Curry made 13 of his first 14 shots and finished 19 of 28 from the field and 11 of 26 from 3-point territory. His 11 3s tied a career high. The defending-champion Warriors (45-4) continued on their run by tying the 1966-67 Philadelphia 76ers for the best 49-game start in NBA history. Along with Curry’s 51, Klay Thompson scored 24 points and Draymond Green had 12 points and 10 rebounds.

FACES



Curry

“Every year is different. The world situation, the threat picture is different every February. ... We learned from events of the past but we have to protect against events of the future. So, we try to anticipate things that can happen from multiple different directions.”

— **Jeh Johnson**
Homeland Security Secretary, who added that at this time there are no known credible threats to security at Super Bowl 50, which will be played Sunday in San Francisco.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS
1861 — The Philadelphia Athletics beat Charler Oak 36-27 in New York in a baseball game played on frozen Litchfield Pond in Brooklyn with the players wearing ice skates.
1991 — The doors of Cooperstown are slammed shut on Pete Rose when the Hall of Fame’s board of directors votes 12-0 to bar players on the permanently ineligible list from consideration.

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

PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Gary Alger, of Pendleton, thought he had lost out on his chance at a world championship when he retired from pro rodeo after a 21-year career. However, he came out of retirement to join the senior circuit in 2015 and fulfilled a lifelong dream by winning the saddle bronc world title.

Alger makes triumphant return to rodeo

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

For any athlete, it’s difficult to walk away from their respective sport. After spending thousands upon thousands of hours studying, training, and practicing and after all the blood, sweat, and tears poured into perfecting their craft, naturally there is a feeling inside to keep going. Former professional cowboy Gary Alger, Jr. is one of those athletes. Involved in rodeo since he was nine years old, the now 46-year-old Pendleton resident competed professionally for 21 years before deciding to call it quits in 2010. But after a few years away, Alger started getting the itch to compete again. And last year, with some persuasion from his wife, Alger got



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The gold buckle Gary Alger won as the 2015 National Senior Pro Rodeo Association Saddle Bronc World Champion.

back on the horse — literally — competing in the National Senior Pro Rodeo Association (NSPRA) in saddle bronc.

“When we started our rodeo bible camp here in town ... being around that pushed me to go get back on some horses,” Alger said.

“I always enjoyed being around it, and I really missed the competitiveness.” In just his first year on the circuit, Alger earned the saddle bronc world championship to fulfill a lifelong dream. But his road to winning the title was not the way he probably envisioned when it began. Alger was born and raised in Bend and attended Mountain View High School, which is where he developed his interest and passion in rodeo. He started out riding bulls and dipped his toe into bareback riding, but after a while he finally settled on saddle bronc. “As I watched other people do it, I was always intrigued and always wanted to ride saddle bronc,” he said. “Then after getting on and going a few times, I fell in love.” He competed in high school See ALGER/2B

College Football

Mountaineers sign four locals

Pendleton, Heppner standouts to join EOU

By MATT ENTRUP
East Oregonian

Four of Eastern Oregon’s top football players have signed National Letters of Intent to continue their careers in the region that spawned them. Pendleton’s Kai Quinn and Jacob Banks and Heppner’s Patrick Collins and C.J. Kindie all made their commitment to Eastern Oregon University official when they put pen to paper on Wednesday. “It was something I’ll remember forever,” said Collins, the two-time OSAA Class 2A Defensive Player of the Year. “I got to sign in the town that I’ve grown up in, the school that I’ll never forget, surrounded by all the people that have supported me throughout the years. Oh, and I got to do it with my best friend (Kindie) right beside me. I’m proud to say that I’ll be a Mountaineer and I’m proud to be able to grow and learn under the leadership of Coach Tim Camp.” Going into his ninth season at EOU, Camp’s 47 wins puts him two shy of becoming the all-time winningest coach in program history. All four players said the personal approach Camp used during



EO file photo/E.J. Harris

In this Oct. 9, 2014, file photo Pendleton quarterback Kai Quinn runs with the football in a game at the Round-Up Grounds. Quinn was one of four locals to sign letters of intent with Eastern Oregon University on Wednesday. He’ll be joined at EOU by Pendleton’s Jacob Banks and Heppner’s Patrick Collins and C.J. Kindie.

their recruitment played a large role in winning them over. “I first talked to him (when) we had a game in La Grande and he came into the locker room before — he’s a very good guy — and he greeted me, told me who he was and he was going to be watching,” said Quinn, one of four quarterbacks signed by the Mountaineers. “After the game he came up to me and said he wanted to talk to me a little bit more later on in the year after the season was over. Last Friday I went there on a visit, talked with him and we both thought it would be a good place for me to fit in.” Collins said he got the feeling EOU’s coaches were looking out for his best interest,

which ultimately swayed his decision. “I had lots of contact with lots of different college coaches, but Eastern really took the time to get to know me, and they understood what I was looking for,” he said. “Other coaches looked and me, and said he’s a good athlete, so we will give him a shot. But Eastern looked at me and saw a good person with a strong work ethic with discipline. “They took the time to get to know me as a person before a player, and I really respected that. It was a tough decision, but I knew that EOU really wanted what was best for me See MOUNTAINEERS/2B

Neal inks with Eastern Washington

Hermiston lineman signs with 2010 FCS national champ Eagles

By SAM BARBEE
East Oregonian

To say it was a certainty wouldn’t be accurate. Hope is a better word, but even so, likely would probably be the best fit. Two years after a tall and lanky — yet strong and explosive — Tre Neal transferred from eight-man football at 1A Ione to the 11-man game at 5A Hermiston, he has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football at Eastern Washington University, which competes in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS). See NEAL/2B



Staff photo by Sam Barbee

Hermiston senior Tre Neal (right) smiles with Bulldogs head football coach David Faaeteete after the 6-foot-3 255-pound defensive lineman signed a National Letter of Intent Wednesday to play football at Eastern Washington University.