

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Sports shorts

No. 5 Beavers eager to start season

CORVALLIS (AP) — The fifth-ranked Beavers open the 2016 season this weekend with four games in Surprise, Arizona.



With forecasts calling for temperatures in the 80s, OSU's first test will be a noon matchup on Friday against Ball State.

"Saying we're very excited would probably be an understatement," junior catcher Logan Ice said. "Nice weather, a different team, we get to go see some other guys that we haven't been playing for the last six months."

Drew Rasmussen will get the start for the Beavers in the opener. The sophomore right-hander went 7-4 with a 2.80 ERA in 14 starts last year.

Nike cuts ties with Manny Pacquiao

BEAVERTON (AP) — Manny Pacquiao's latest disparaging comments about gays have cost him a contract with Nike.

It may not be the only endorsement Pacquiao loses, even as he and promoter Bob Arum scramble to contain the damage done by a television interview in the Philippines in which the boxer said gay people "are worse than animals."

Nike issued a brief statement Wednesday saying it was severing its ties with the boxer over his comments about gays. The company said it no longer will have any business dealings with the boxer.

Pacquiao, a congressman who is now running for Senate in the Philippines, made the comments to a television station that was asking candidates about their views on same sex marriage.

"It would be like if your employer just said, 'Hey, don't worry about it, you will get paid.' That is kind of where most every driver is."

— **Brad Keselowski** NASCAR driver on how the new association's new charter system has completely overhauled how drivers are paid from their teams and race purses.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1964 — Wilt Chamberlain scores 52 points against Detroit, his second consecutive 50-point game.

1981 — Edmonton's Wayne Gretzky scores five goals and adds two assists to lead the Oilers over the St. Louis Blues 9-2.

1995 — Utah guard John Stockton becomes the first NBA player with 10,000 assists in a 108-98 victory over the Boston Celtics.

2001 — Dale Earnhardt, the greatest stock car star of his era, is killed in a crash on the last turn of the last lap of the Daytona 500 as he tries to protect Michael Waltrip's victory.

2006 — Shani Davis becomes the first black athlete to win an individual gold medal in Winter Olympic history, capturing the men's 1,000-meter speedskating race. Joey Cheek makes it a 1-2 American finish, adding a silver to his victory in the 500 at the Turin Games.

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

Prep Basketball

It's time to win or go home



In this Dec. 30, 2015 file photo, Heppner's Patrick Collins goes up for a rebound flanked by Enterprise's Brycen Locke (34) and Brett Greenshields in the Mustangs' 65-34 win against the Outlaws in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

CBC district tournament offers no guarantees

By **MATT ENTRUP**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — There used to be a huge incentive to winning the regular-season title in the Columbia Basin Conference.

By earning the No. 1 seed to the district tournament, a team knew it had already secured a spot in the championship game and a state playoff berth.

Not anymore. That stipulation went out the window this season, meaning Heppner's reward for earning the regular-season crown is a loser-out match-up with the last team that beat them.

The Mustangs (18-3, 8-2 CBC) play the Weston-McEwen TigerScots (10-11, 5-5) to open the district tournament at 1 p.m. or Friday at Pendleton Convention Center.

The fourth-seeded TigerScots upset the Mustangs 53-51 in Athena on Feb. 5, and could easily do it again according to Heppner coach Jeremy Rosenbalm.

"Even though they're a four seed, they're athletic, they get after you," he said. "We've been talking all year long that, and especially right now too, there's four really good teams that are going to the district tournament."

The winners in Friday's games will move on to the championship and a guaranteed state berth.

After winning a state title in football, the Mustangs are eager to make a deep run in the basketball postseason.

"The boys are extremely focused this week and they know that they've got to come ready to play," Rosenbalm said. "They know they can't have a slip-up like that (last loss), so they've got to come to play."

"They're not satisfied and they're hungry for more. Right now it all comes down to Friday night."

The Mustangs defeated the TigerScots 54-42 in their game in Heppner.

In the other semifinal game, which tips at 7 p.m., the Stanfield Tigers will be trying to beat defending district and state champion Irrigon for the third time this season.

Their last meeting went to overtime where the Tigers pulled out a 52-47 win in Stanfield on Feb. 6. Stanfield also beat Irrigon in their house 66-60.

"I've been told that it's hard to beat a team three times, and so what I told the boys was

See **CBC/2B**

Golden Eagles ready for anything

Small schools to settle district titles this week

By **MATT ENTRUP**
East Oregonian

MISSION — The Nixyaawii girls basketball team doesn't have to look far for a reminder of how little seeds can mean when it comes to the district tournament.

Just last season the Golden Eagles went into the bracket with the top seed, only to lose their two games and fall short of a state playoff berth.

Nixyaawii holds the No. 1 seed again this season, and will have a bye when the tournament begins play today at Baker High School.

The Golden Eagles (21-2,

11-1 OOL) have won their last four in row, which included 20-point victories over both of the teams they may face in Friday's semifinals.

"I feel confident and I know the girls feel confident, but anything can happen," said Nixyaawii coach Jeremy Maddern.

Nixyaawii will wait for the winner of today's game between Echo (12-12, 5-7) and Joseph (10-11, 6-6). Nixyaawii beat Joseph 77-57 in their final regular-season game and topped Echo 44-26 in their last meeting on Feb. 5.

Maddern said it can be a positive and a negative to take a bye in the first round.

"You could look at it both ways," he said. "You're playing a team that just played the day before and got to get all the nerves out, because no matter

See **SMALL SCHOOLS/2B**



In this Jan. 15 file photo, Nixyaawii's Teata Oatman (10) and Griswold's Macey Tullis (20) race downcourt during an Old Oregon League game in Mission.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Men's Basketball

Beavers, Ducks ready for rematch

By **JESSE SOWA**
Corvallis Gazette-Times

CORVALLIS — Oregon State is looking for a repeat of its Pac-12 Conference men's basketball opener, when the Beavers controlled the game against Oregon from nearly start to finish in a 70-57 home win back on Jan. 3 at Gill Coliseum.

On the offensive end, OSU didn't have to lean heavily on senior guard Gary Payton II, as has been the case several times this season.

The Beavers had five players in double figures, the

only time they've done it in Pac-12 play. They also won the boards (37-32), something that's been accomplished just twice since then.

"It's real tough for people to guard us when we get everybody involved," Payton said. "When Drew (Eubanks) is playing well early. We get Drew going off to a good start. You know, Tres (Tinkle), Stevie (Thompson), just coming off the bench. I just try to get everybody involved, and I think I did that game early. Later on I just put the stamp on it."

The Beavers (15-9, 6-7)

will try to make it two straight against their rivals for the first time since 2010 when they travel to Eugene to play the No. 16 Ducks (20-6, 9-4) at 7 p.m. on Saturday.

Payton was third on the team in scoring the first time with 12 points, behind Tinkle (19) and Olaf Schaftenaar (13). Schaftenaar added a career-high and team-best eight rebounds. Five players had five boards or more.

The Beavers did it on defense as well, as Oregon's 35.8 percent from the floor was OSU's best result and UO's worst in Pac-12 play.

Prep Roundup

Rangers hold off feisty Cardinals

Dufur beats Ione boys in district play-in game

East Oregonian

DUFUR — The Dufur boys basketball used a stifling press to build a comfortable lead over Ione, then backed off in Wednesday's district tournament play-in round.

The Cardinals were able to take advantage of the extra room and battled back into the game at the end of the third quarter, only to see the press reapplied to cut off their hopes of completing the comeback.

Dufur advanced to the district bracket in See **PREPS/2B**