

EAST OREGONIAN

SPORTS

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1B

Sports shorts

Hernandez tosses final tune-up for Opening Day

PEORIA, Ariz. (AP) — Seattle ace Felix Hernandez pitched three innings in the Mariners' 7-5 loss to the San Diego Padres on Wednesday in his final start before opening day.

Hernandez allowed four runs — all in the first inning — and four hits. He struck out one and walked one.

Tyson Ross, who is slated to start for San Diego on opening day on Monday against the Dodgers, also pitched three innings and was charged with one run and two hits. He also drove in a run with a fourth-inning single.

Derek Norris doubled in two runs and Matt Kemp had two hits for the Padres, including an RBI double. Mid-game sub Adam Rosales hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning.

Former Seattle Storm star retires

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Lauren Jackson announced her injury-forced retirement on Thursday, ending an illustrious basketball career which saw her star for the WNBA's

Seattle Storm and lead Australia to four Olympic medals. At a Basketball Australia media conference, the 34-year-old Jackson, the

WNBA's most valuable player in 2010, said right knee and left Achilles tendon injuries forced her to end a career that began in 1997.

She had been named on Australia's squad for the Rio Games in August, but recent fitness testing convinced her she would not be able to play in a fifth Olympics.

The 6 foot, 5-inch Jackson spent her entire WNBA career with Seattle, helping lead the Storm to a pair of titles in 2004 and 2010.

"Might as well put us in skirts and back in the kitchen."

— Diana Taurasi

WNBA star for the Phoenix Mercury to ESPNW.com on the idea of lowering the baskets in women's basketball to eight feet instead of the regular 10 feet. Reigning WNBA MVP Elena Delle Donne recently sparked the debate when she told USA Today that she was in favor of lowering the hoops, as it would bring a new aspect to the game and "show off the athleticism of our women."

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1975 — UCLA beats Kentucky 92-85 for its 10th NCAA basketball title under head coach John Wooden. Wooden finishes with a 620-147 career record after announcing his retirement two days earlier.

2013 — In one of the biggest upsets in the history of the NCAA women's tournament, sixth-seeded Louisville stuns defending champion Baylor in the regional semifinals, 82-81. It's the end of a remarkable college career for Baylor's Brittney Griner.

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

PENDLETON

Timberwolves split region opener

Oldham grand slam boosts Blue Mountain

By MATT ENTRUP
East Oregonian

Fragrant blooms, evening sunlight and mailmen in short pants: spring brings us many things.

For the Blue Mountain Timberwolves it has come bearing wins.

The T-Wolves won their sixth game since the vernal equinox to open NWAC East play against Wenatchee Valley in Pendleton on Wednesday. Trevor Oldham hit a grand slam in the third inning and BMCC held on for the 10-7 win in the first half of their doubleheader.

But the T-Wolves couldn't keep it going in the second game and fell 13-3 in seven innings.

T-Wolves coach Brad Baker

Baseball

Wenatchee **7-13**
Blue Mtn **10-3**

said he figures there could be a lot of days like this in the East Region, which leads the NWAC with a .610 winning percentage.

"That's how this region is. There's no bad teams in the region and there's no team that we can't beat either," he said. "It's how we play, and one game we played well and then the other game we didn't."

It was Blue Mountain's ability to one-up Wenatchee Valley that

allowed it to hold on for the win in the opener.

When the Knights (3-11, 1-1 East) scored three in the top of the third, the T-Wolves (7-9, 1-1) answered with four in the bottom of the inning.

The Knights picked up two outs right away, but Jared Rogers, Logan Cordiero and Ben Ross all drew walks to load the bases for Oldham.

He swung at the first pitch he saw, pulling it foul. Two pitches later he hit his second home run of the season to give the T-Wolves a **See T-WOLVES/2B**

Women's College Basketball

Open tryouts to Final Four: Oregon State's dramatic rise



Oregon State celebrates winning 60-57 over Baylor after a regional final of the women's NCAA basketball tournament Monday, March 28, 2016, in Dallas.

Beavers turnaround complete with postseason run

By ANNE M. PETERSON
AP Sports Writer

CORVALLIS — When Oregon State defeated mighty Stanford in January for the first time in 29 tries, Cardinal coach Tara VanDerveer gave credit to Beavers coach Scott Rueck.

In the six seasons since Rueck took over, Oregon State had steadily ticked off the milestones. Beating Stanford was the latest.

There were more to come. "He's put them into the national conversation, which is fabulous," VanDerveer said.

Oregon State's most recent accomplishment is the program's first-ever NCAA Final Four appearance. The Beavers face undefeated defending champion Connecticut in Indianapolis on Sunday for a chance to play for the national championship.

"Did I ever think we could be here in six years?" Rueck said Wednesday. "No way."

To fully appreciate how far the Beavers have come, consider that when Oregon State hired Rueck, the team was down to two players and three recruits who were on the fence.

The Beavers were in disarray amid reports of player mistreatment, including verbal abuse, by the former coach. Oregon State had lost 17 straight at one point during the previous season.



Oregon State forward Samantha Siegner (5) signs an autograph for Ashton Van Velzer, 8, on Tuesday, March 29, 2016, in Corvallis, Ore. Oregon State plays Connecticut on Sunday in the semifinals in the NCAA women's college basketball tournament Final Four in Indianapolis.

Rueck had spent 14 seasons at George Fox, a Division III Christian college in Newberg, Oregon, leading the Bruins to six overall D-III tournaments and the national championship in 2009.

Coaching at his alma mater Oregon State was a dream.

Rueck was able to convince the three recruits to stick with Oregon State despite the uncertainty. But then he was left to build a Division

I roster nearly from scratch. Taking a bold step in holding an open prospect camp for players, he could only promise walk-on status with a chance at earning a scholarship somewhere down the road. Fifty-five young women showed up.

At a rally on campus Tuesday, Oregon State athletic director Todd Stansbury marveled at how far the

See BEAVERS/2B

HERMISTON

Dawgs fall to Falcons

La Salle scores four in the fifth to grab the win

By SAM BARBEE
East Oregonian

MILWAUKEE — The Hermiston Bulldogs baseball team allowed four runs to the La Salle Prep Falcons in the bottom of the fifth inning on Wednesday, letting the game slip away to earn the 5-2 loss in non-league action.

Until that point, the Bulldogs (4-3) and Falcons were deadlocked in a 0-0 tie as both offenses

were struggling to get anything going against each teams' pitchers. Tyler Sexton got the start for Hermiston and was solid through the first four innings, but in the fifth inning he left some pitches up in the zone and the Falcons capitalized for those four runs.

Sexton finished his outing with a respectable line, tossing 4.2 innings while allowing four earned runs on five hits, three strikeouts and three walks. Slade Gritz relieved Sexton in that fifth inning, and allowed one unearned run on four hits over the last 1.1 innings while striking out one and walking two. Gritz also had two hits on offense, leading the team.

"We hit some balls hard and they caught them," Hermiston assistant coach John Christy said of the teams' five-hit offensive performance. "There were too many rollovers and four, five-hoppers right to guys. We need to be more balanced at the plate."

Hermiston next hosts Rex Putnam for a doubleheader on Friday at 4 p.m.

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T. Sexton, S. Gritz (5) and K. Caldwell; O. Arxton and J. Lynch.
W — O. Arxton. L — T. Sexton.

College Football

Prukop thinking big things for Ducks in 2016

Transfer QB has first practices with team

By RYAN THORBURN
The Register-Guard

EUGENE — Marcus Mariota let his game do most of the talking at Oregon.

Moments after the Heisman Trophy winner and current Tennessee Titans star watched

the 2016 Ducks' first spring practice on Tuesday, Dakota Prukop made quite a statement about why he decided to transfer into the program.

It certainly wasn't because the former Montana State quarterback wants to play in the Alamo Bowl.

"I came here because this is a team that expects to win the national championship," Prukop said. "I'm not out here like, 'Oh, we're winning the national

championship!' This is my first practice here. But this is a team that expects to be No. 1. Without that expectation, you can't be No. 1. You can't reach a goal you don't set for yourself.

"That's one of the reasons I came here, and I'm excited to be here. I'm excited to be in a program that expects success. They know how to achieve success, they've been there. They've been in the national

See DUCKS/2B



Oregon quarterback Dakota Prukop speaks on the opening day of spring football workouts, Tuesday, March 29, 2016 in Eugene, Ore. Oregon will open their 2016 season on Sept. 30, 2016 against UC Davis.

Andy Nelson/The Register-Guard via AP