

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

WEEKEND, JULY 23-24, 2016

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1B

MLB

Griffey Jr., Piazza ready for Cooperstown

By JOHN KEKIS
Associated Press

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — When they were drafted nearly three decades ago, one was on everybody's baseball radar, the other a blip at best, picked almost as an afterthought in the final round thanks to a recommendation by an important family friend.

That their baseball paths started so differently — the Seattle Mariners made Ken Griffey Jr. the first pick of the 1987 amateur draft and a year later the Dodgers selected Mike Piazza on the 62nd round with the 1,390th pick, ahead of only five other players — in the end

2016 MLB Hall of Fame Inductions

- Today, 10:30 a.m.
- Cooperstown, New York
- TV: MLB Network, or online at BaseballHall.org.

didn't matter one bit. Two players who wore their hats backward a lot — one for fun, the other because he had to — and left indelible imprints on the game will be rewarded Sunday with induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

"It's incredibly powerful," said

Piazza, by far the lowest draft pick in history elected to the Hall. "This whole year for me has been so euphoric. It's such an honor."

Dubbed "The Natural" for his effortless excellence at the plate and in center field, Griffey, the first No. 1 pick to be selected for enshrinement, hasn't followed form since his selection in January. He's been feted in Seattle, which likely still has a major league team because of his tenure there, served as honorary starter for NASCAR's biggest race, the Daytona 500, and played a lot of golf to avoid thinking or talking about his induction.

When he visited Cooperstown in See HALL OF FAME/2B



In this Oct. 3, 2009 file photo, Seattle Mariners' Ken Griffey Jr. hits a solo home run during a game against the Texas Rangers in Seattle.

AP Photo/John Froeschauer



Nitro into the Blues

A rider takes off during the first day of the Nitro in the Blues hillclimb Friday in Rieth. Action continues today 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Little League Softball

Oregon opens regional with tough loss

Defensive struggles in fourth inning lead to tournament-opening loss

East Oregonian

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — The Pendleton 11/12-year-old all-star team got off to a rocky start at the Little League Softball West Regionals on Friday, falling to Montana by a score of 10-4.

Pendleton, playing under Team Oregon for the tournament, was undone by a series of miscues on defense as the team recorded six errors for the game. Only four of the 10 runs allowed by Oregon starting pitcher Mackenzie Burke were earned because of the errors.

Montana (1-0) struck first in the bottom of the first inning on an Oregon error and an RBI single to take a 2-0 lead. Oregon responded in the top of the second inning with an RBI single from Sauren Garton to bring home Daisy Jenness to cut the lead in half at 2-1.

See LITTLE LEAGUE/2B

PENDLETON

Diamondjaxx's season ends at districts

La Grande sweeps Pepsi in district final doubleheader

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pepsi Diamondjaxx watched their 2016 season come to a close on Friday afternoon with back-to-back losses to La Grande in the district tournament at Bob White Field.

The tournament was originally scheduled to be a two-day event with three teams, however Milton-Freewater dropped out which left La Grande and Pepsi to duel it out with a trip to the state tournament on the line. La Grande came out and made a statement in the first game, earning a 16-2 victory in five innings and then controlled the second game as well to the tune of a 7-1 victory.

Miscues on the pitching mound and in the field hurt the Diamondjaxx on Friday, as th team combined to make 10 errors in the two games and the pitchers allowed 21 hits and walked 11 La Grande batters. Of the 23 total runs given up to La Grande on the day, only 14 of those runs were earned.

Blake Swanson was the lone Diamondjaxx player to record multiple hits on the day, going 2-6 at the plate. Quinn Doherty had one of the team's two RBIs with a run-scoring double that he blasted to center field to bring in Matthew Demianew in

See PEPSI/2B



Pendleton's Chris Large throws from the mound in the Diamondjaxx's game against La Grande on Friday in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

MLB

Paxton pitches M's to win over Toronto

Seattle improves to 14-6 versus AL East teams this season

By IAN HARRISON
Associated Press

TORONTO — By lifting his arm a little, James Paxton got a big lift from his curveball.

Paxton pitched seven strong innings to win for the first time in three starts, Seth Smith doubled home the go-ahead run in the sixth inning and the Seattle Mariners beat the Blue Jays 2-1 on Friday night, snapping Toronto's winning streak at three.

"I know he and (pitching coach Mel Stottlemyre Jr.) have been working on a couple of things and it certainly was evident tonight with his ability to spin it," manager Scott Servais said of Paxton. "That was the best curveball he's had all year."

Paxton (3-4) allowed one run and three hits. He walked one and struck out nine, one shy of his season-high.

"Before these starts I was creeping down a little bit and getting too sidearm, getting on the side of the ball," Paxton said. "It wasn't allowing me to get on top of

See MARINERS/2B

	Seattle
	2
	Toronto
	1

Sports shorts

Straily picks up win No. 5 as Reds beat Diamondbacks 6-2

CINCINNATI (AP) — Joey Votto extended his post-All Star break surge with a three-run homer, and Dan Straily pitched six innings on Friday night, leading the Cincinnati Reds to a 6-2 victory over the slumping Arizona Diamondbacks.

Straily (5-6) made his fourth straight quality start, settling down after a rough first inning. Jean Segura opened the game with a homer, and Michael Bourn doubled and scored on Wellington Castillo's sacrifice fly. Straily gave up five hits in six innings.

"The second inning was big for me," said Straily, who gave up only three more hits during his six innings. "I went out there with a lead. It helped me settle in."

FACES



Straily

"When Rick (Hendrick) said to me 'Are you coming to Indianapolis?' I said 'Yes I am. He said, 'Well, you better bring your uniform ... This is certainly the last thing I thought was going to happen, but I knew it was Indianapolis.'"

— Jeff Gordon

The retired NASCAR driver speaking to the media on Friday as he prepares for a fill-in start for Dale Earnhardt Jr., who will miss the next two races with a concussion.

Team USA thwarts Argentina in Olympic exhibition game

LAS VEGAS (AP) New team. Same old result.

Full of new star power, the U.S. men's basketball team opened its bid for a third straight Olympic gold medal with a 111-74 exhibition romp over Argentina on Friday night.

A U.S. team that hasn't lost a game in 10 years had little trouble with Argentina, which some consider a medal contender in Rio. Paul George scored 14 first-half points, Kevin Durant added 12, and the U.S. blew open the game early before an appreciative crowd on the Las Vegas Strip.

The game was the first of five exhibitions the U.S. will play before traveling to Rio to defend the gold medal. The U.S. team has spent the last week practicing in Las Vegas in preparation for the tour and the games.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1960 — Betsy Rawls becomes the first woman to win the U.S. Women's Open golf title four times.

2009 — Mark Buehrle pitches the 18th perfect game in major league history, a 5-0 win over Tampa Bay.

2012 — Penn State is all but leveled by penalties handed down by the NCAA for its handling of the allegations against former coach Jerry Sandusky. The NCAA imposes an unprecedented \$60 million fine, a four-year ban from postseason play and a cut in the number of football scholarships it can award.

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