

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## College Football

# Helfrich out at Oregon

## Ducks coach fired after 4-8 season

By ANNE M. PETERSON  
Associated Press

Oregon has fired coach Mark Helfrich after a disappointing 4-8 season, and just two years after getting the Ducks within a victory of the program's first national

championship. Helfrich was head coach of the Ducks for four seasons, leading the team to the first College Football Playoff championship game after the 2014 season. But Oregon faltered this year with a five-game losing streak, and finished at the bottom of the Pac-12 North with just two conference wins. Helfrich was 37-16 record after taking over from Chip Kelly in 2013. He had an \$11.6 million buyout on his contract with the Ducks.

Helfrich met with athletic director Rob Mullens on Tuesday night and was told he was being dismissed. Helfrich issued a statement saying he was honored to have served at Oregon. "Plain and simple — we didn't win enough games this season," Helfrich said. Oregon had not fired a head coach since 1976, when Don Read was let go after three seasons. Ducks started this season ranked



Oregon head coach Mark Helfrich looks on in the first half of an NCAA college football game against Oregon State, in Corvallis, Ore., Saturday Nov. 26, 2016.

AP Photo/Timothy J. Gonzalez

## Prep Basketball

# Buckaroos, Bulldogs open season at home

In this file photo from Feb. 2, 2016, Pendleton's Caden Smith drives the baseline past a Hermiston defender during a basketball game in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris



## Pendleton girls only team on the road as three new head coaches make debuts

By MATT ENTRUP  
East Oregonian

Forty-four weeks have come and gone since the Pendleton boys basketball team lost to Springfield on its home court in the first round of the OSAA state playoffs to end the 2015-16 season.

Buckaroos senior Caden Smith has used every one of them to prepare for tonight's 7 p.m. tip-off at Warberg Court against Baker to open the 2016-17 season.

"I think that toward the end of last year being that we didn't make the state tournament (final site), he really took that as a challenge to himself," said second-year Bucks coach Kyle Tedder. "He didn't play baseball and he spent a lot of time in the gym, a lot of time playing, whether it be AAU or on his own, and obviously that paid off."

"He's worked hard on his game, he's a better finisher, better attacker, he's making decisions quicker. I think he's kind of taken it on himself to take this program over and I feel comfortable allowing him to be an extension of this coaching staff."

He's the only returning starter for the Buckaroos, who will be hoping to follow the reigning Columbia River Conference Player of the Year to a third-straight league title, a playoff victory and a return to the final bracket in Corvallis.

They aren't the only local squad with high aspirations, though, and two more tip off their seasons tonight on the other side of the county at The Dawghouse when Hermiston welcomes Walla Walla (WA) for back-to-back games.

Coming off a fourth-place finish and its seventh consecutive qualifi-

cation for the final tournament site in 2015-16, Hermiston's girls will take the court first at 5:45 p.m.

Noticeable differences on the court for the Bulldogs will be the graduation of CRC Co-Players of the Year Jansen Edmiston and Sara Ramirez, and Juan Rodriguez will make his debut at head coach after four years as an assistant for former coach Steve Hoffert.

"The transition hasn't been as drastic I think as people would (expect)," Rodriguez said. "Having coached with Steve for four years a lot of what Steve did and what I do are going to be the same. Steve was so good at letting me be a big part of the program when I was an assistant that you won't see many changes."

With three returning starters including junior post Maddy Juul (an All-CRC first-team selection as a sophomore), the Bulldogs certainly aren't changing any of their goals for the season.

"That's the conversation that we've had with the girls," said Rodriguez, who will also have senior forward Kynzee Padilla and senior guard Rileigh Andreason back in the starting lineup. "The expectation is always there. Playing girls' basketball at Hermiston the expectation is that you win league and that you go to the state tournament."

The bar isn't quite as high for the boys which finished 13-13 last season, but first-year coach Casey Arstein is hoping a strong commitment from players to the program will pay off with wins down the road.

"Running a program at the 5A level it starts with you want teach the kids about commitment and becoming young men and everything goes from there as far as philosophy," he said.

With just two returning starters — all-CRC first-team senior Chance Flores, and sophomore Andrew James — Arstein said he'll

See SEASON OPENS/2B

## MLB

# Mariners keep busy in trade market, acquire two pitchers from Braves

## Seattle parts with former top-10 draft pick Alex Jackson

By CHARLES ODUM  
Associated Press

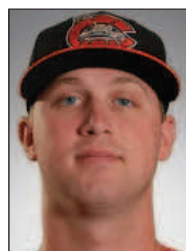
ATLANTA — The Seattle Mariners acquired right-handers Rob Whalen and Max Povse from the Atlanta Braves on Monday night for outfield prospect Alex

Jackson and a player to be named. The 20-year-old Jackson was the sixth pick in the 2014 amateur draft. He has hit .233 in three minor league seasons, including .243 with 11 homers and 55 RBIs for Class A Clinton of the Midwest League this year.

"We value upside, and we believe Alex has a lot of it," Braves general manager John Coppolella told The Associated Press. "We believe in the potential and the person, and we are excited for his future with our organization."



Whalen



Povse

Jackson was a catcher at Rancho Bernardo High School in San Diego. Adding depth at catcher is an offseason priority for

Atlanta. Coppolella would not say if Jackson might be given a look behind the plate in 2017.

Whalen, 22, was 1-2 with a 6.57 ERA in five starts for Atlanta this season and was Double-A Mississippi's pitcher of the year. Povse, 23, had a combined 3.36 ERA at Mississippi and Class A Carolina.

Whalen was placed on the disabled list Aug. 25 with right shoulder fatigue. He was a 12th-round pick by the Mets in 2012 and was traded to the Braves

with right-hander John Gant on July 24, 2015, for Kelly Johnson, Juan Uribe and cash.

"This move gives us two young, polished pitchers who immediately bolster our starting pitching depth, while adding to our roster flexibility," Mariners general manager Jerry Dipoto said in a statement.

Right-hander Ryan Weber was designated for assignment to clear a spot on Seattle's 40-man roster. He was claimed off waivers from Atlanta on Nov. 2.

## Sports shorts

### Cespedes gets 4-year deal from Mets

NEW YORK (AP) — Yoenis Cespedes is staying with the New York Mets again.

After testing free agency for the second straight offseason, the slugging outfielder agreed to a \$110 million, four-year contract with New York, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

A two-time All-Star, Cespedes gets \$22.5 million in 2017, \$29 million in each of the following two seasons and \$29.5 million in 2020.

The 31-year-old had 31 homers and 86 RBIs in 132 games this year, slowed after injuring his right quadriceps on July 8. The deal's \$27.5 million average annual value ties former Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez for the second-highest among position players, trailing only Miguel Cabrera's \$29.2 million with Detroit.



Cespedes

"Yeah, there's nerves, of course, because I care. I care about what I do out there."

— Tiger Woods

14-time major golf champion and former world No. 1 on returning to competition following a 15-month break to heal from back surgeries. Woods, 40, is ranked a career-low No. 898 headed into Thursday's first round at the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas.

### Eastern Washington teammates finalists for Payton Award

(AP) — Eastern Washington teammates Gage Gubrud and Cooper Kupp, along with Sam Houston State quarterback Jeremiah Briscoe, are the finalists for the Walter Payton Award, given to the top player in the Football Championship Subdivision.

Kupp, a record-breaking receiver, won the Payton award last season and will try to become the second player to win two. Appalachian State quarterback Armanti Edwards won the Payton Award in 2008 and '09.

Gubrud is Kupp's quarterback at EWU. He leads the country in total offense at 412.2 yards per game and is on pace to set a Big Sky Conference record.

Kupp, a senior, holds FCS career records with 402 receptions, 6,061 receiving yards and 68 touchdown receptions.



### THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1979 — Sugar Ray Leonard wins the WBC welterweight title with 15th-round knockout of Wilfred Benitez in Las Vegas.

1991 — San Diego State's Marshall Faulk becomes the first freshman to capture the national rushing and scoring titles after gaining 154 yards on 27 carries in a 39-12 loss to top-ranked Miami. Faulk finishes the season with 1,429 yards in nine games.

2012 — NBA Commissioner David Stern fines the San Antonio Spurs \$250,000 for "a disservice to the league and our fans" when they don't bring Tim Duncan, Tony Parker, Manu Ginobili or Danny Green to Miami for the final game of a six-game trip.

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