

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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MISSION

Golden Eagles sweep Cougars

Nixyaawii boys, girls earn key league victories

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

As outdoor temperatures plunged into the single digits Thursday night, hundreds of people headed indoors at the Nixyaawii Community School gymnasium for a pair of key Old Oregon League match-ups between the Nixyaawii Golden Eagles and Echo Cougars.

The girls game had larger implications, as both the Cougars and Golden Eagles stood with eight victories overall and a 1-0 record in league play. However a unusually cold shooting performance by Echo mixed with a strong first half from Nixyaawii was enough to extend the Golden Eagles unbeaten streak to nine games with a 36-31 victory over Echo on Thursday.

Nixyaawii (9-0, 2-0 OOL) was able to get the victory without star point guard Mary Stewart, who missed the game due to illness. In her place, junior guard Milan Schimmel and Kaitlynn Melton led the way as Schimmel tallied a team-high 17 points and six assists and Melton added 14 points. Nixyaawii coach Jeremy Maddern said he was very pleased with Schimmel's play in Stewart's absence.

"She's (Schimmel) a special talent and I think it kind of shows that we're not a one-person team with just Mary," Maddern said. "We have that double-headed monster there and it will only make us better as we go along. And us playing this game and getting the win without Mary was big for us psychologically because we know we're a good team with or without her, but we're obviously still better with her."

Twelve of Schimmel's 17 points came in the first half alone and Nixyaawii shot 41 percent from the floor. Echo (8-3, 1-1) dug itself into a deep hole with a poor shooting performance in the half, hitting just 1-22 (4 percent) shots from the floor as the Cougars trailed 25-6 at the break.

But in the second half, it was



Kaitlynn Melton (20), of Nixyaawii, grabs the ball as she and Laci Wiggins, of Echo, battle for a rebound during Thursday's game in Mission.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

a much different ball game. Echo found some offense out of the break as Taylor Swaggart nailed three 3-pointers and scored 11 total points in the third quarter to cut the Cougars' deficit to 33-17 at the end of three. Echo coach Michael Swanson said that Swaggart's offense — she finished with

16 points — really sparked his Cougars squad on both ends of the floor.

"Taylor's been hit-and-miss lately, but she was huge tonight and I was really impressed with her and having the courage to hit some shots," Swanson said.

Echo continued to close the

gap in the fourth quarter as the Cougars went 5-11 from the floor, and then held Nixyaawii to just 1-11 shooting in the quarter. But the Cougars simply ran out of time in the end to make a full comeback, though Swanson said he was proud

See GOLDEN EAGLES/2B

BOARDMAN

Pios win physical match-up

East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — The Mac-Hi Pioneers shut the Riverside Pirates out in the first quarter and hung on for a 34-24 non-league basketball win on Thursday.

Mac-Hi (5-5) led 13-0 after the first quarter and 23-5 at halftime as Riverside (4-6) settled for outside shots that weren't falling.

"We can't run an offense," said Riverside coach Clair Costello of his team, which is without point guard Noe

See PIOS/2B

Boys' Hoops



Mac-Hi
34



Riverside
24

NBA

Portland extends streak over Lakers

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

PORTLAND — CJ McCollum had 27 points and Damian Lillard returned from a sprained ankle with 21 points and 10 assists to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to a 118-109 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Thursday night.

Even Turner scored 15 of his 20 in the fourth quarter as Portland secured its ninth straight regular-season victory over the

See BLAZERS/2B



Los Angeles
109



Portland
118

NFL

Seahawks look vulnerable without Thomas

Opposing passers having their way with secondary

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Until a month ago, the Seattle Seahawks never knew what it was like without Earl Thomas on the field.

Now they're finding out how much Thomas means to everything they try and

accomplish defensively.

"Earl's a unique player. He's an extraordinary player, he's proven that," coach Pete Carroll said. "No matter what position a guy plays, you miss that unique quality."

Since Thomas was injured early in Seattle's Week 13 win over Carolina, the Seahawks have become vulnerable against the pass.

In the final four games of the regular season, the opponent passer rating against the Seahawks was 105.0. In the first 12 games, it was 77.9. And while that final four-game stretch included

NFC Wildcard



Detroit
Lions
(9-7)



Seattle
Seahawks
(10-5-1)

• Saturday, 5:15 p.m.
• at Century Link Field
• TV: NBC

stellar games by Aaron Rodgers and Carson Palmer in a pair of Seattle losses, it also included performances by Jared Goff, Case Keenum and Colin Kaepernick that didn't lead to wins against Seattle but were probably

better than most expected.

Now come the pass-happy Detroit Lions in the NFC wild-card round on Saturday.

"I wouldn't say vulnerable, you know, they're a heck of a defense," Detroit quarterback Matthew Stafford said. "They do a great job. Obviously, Earl brings a mentality to them. He's an extremely aggressive player. Trusts his eyes probably more than any safety I've ever seen and you know, the young guy they've got filling in for him doesn't as much, but I mean

See SEAHAWKS/2B



Seattle's Jeremy Lane (20) tackles a San Francisco player during Sunday's game in Santa Clara, Calif.

AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez

Sports shorts

EOU women's soccer coach steps down for job at Portland State

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon women's soccer head coach Justin Wagar announced he is stepping down after two years at the helm to take an assistant coach job at Portland State.

In his two seasons, Wagar led the Mountaineers to a 26-9-4 overall record. That mark is good enough for second all-time in wins and first all-time in winning percentage for the EOU program.

In Wagar's first season in 2015, the Mountaineers compiled a school-record 17 victories after winning just three games in the season prior.

"It was a special opportunity to work at EOU and in La Grande," Wagar told EOUsports.com. "I'm thankful for the opportunity I had to work with great young ladies on the team and I know they'll continue to succeed in the future."



Wagar

"I have pretty broad interests education, energy, transportation, space. I'll go see what those things hold and see if there's a way to make a difference there."

— Ashton Eaton

Two-time Olympic decathlon champion on his plans for retirement. The former Oregon Duck and his Olympic-bronze winning wife Brianne Theisen-Eaton, who met while competing at Oregon and live in Eugene, announced their retirement on Wednesday.

Beavers add two to football staff

CORVALLIS (AP) — Oregon State has named Jason Phillips its passing game coordinator and wide receivers coach, and John Rushing its safeties coach.

Phillips, who played at Houston before five seasons in the NFL, spent last season as wide receivers coach at Kansas after three years as the co-offensive coordinator at SMU.

Rushing spent last season with the Los Angeles Rams as a special teams and defensive consultant. Before that, he spent seven years with the Green Bay Packers. He has also coached at Utah State, Montana State and Boise State.

Rushing played at Washington State, where he was a four-year starter at defensive back.

Beavers coach Gary Andersen also tweaked some of the coaching assignments within his existing staff, including moving Dave Baldwin to tight ends coach.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1985 — Dan Marino passes for a record 421 yards and four touchdowns to lead the Miami Dolphins to a 45-28 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers in the AFC championship game.

1994 — Nancy Kerrigan is attacked after practice at the U.S. figure skating championships in Detroit. Shane Stant clubs Kerrigan on the knee and flees the scene.

2014 — Jameis Winston throws a 13-yard touchdown pass to Kelvin Benjamin with 13 seconds left and No. 1 Florida State beat No. 2 Auburn 34-31 to win the last BCS national championship game.

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