

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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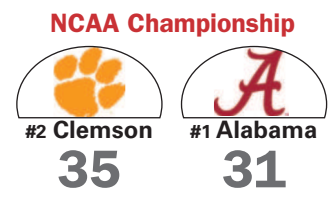
College Football

Clemson dethrones top-ranked Crimson Tide

Watson finds Renfrow in final second to win championship

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — College football's first national championship rematch was even better than the original, with



an incredible twist at the end. Deshaun Watson and Clemson dethroned the champs and became the first team to beat Nick Saban's Alabama dynasty in a national title game, taking down the top-ranked Crimson Tide 35-31 Monday night in the

College Football Playoff. Watson found Hunter Renfrow for a 2-yard touchdown pass with a second remaining to give the Tigers their first national championship since 1981. A year after Alabama won its fourth title under Saban with a 45-40 classic in Arizona, Clemson closed the deal and denied the Tide an unprecedented fifth championship in eight seasons. The lead changed hands three times in the fourth. See CHAMPIONSHIP/2B



AP Photo/David J. Phillip
Clemson's Ben Boulware kisses the championship trophy after the NCAA college football playoff championship game against Alabama Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2017, in Tampa, Fla. Clemson won 35-31.

HERMISTON

Bulldogs eyeing a move up

Hermiston likely moving to OSAA's highest classification in 2018

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

According to a 2016 report by the Oregon Department of Education, Hermiston School District is the second-fastest growing school district in the state, ranking 29th overall out of the 212 total districts.

And because of that increase, the Hermiston High School athletics programs will likely be moving to the highest classification in the OSAA beginning in 2018.

The OSAA began its reclassification meetings and evaluations for the 2018-22 classification block in October, 2016, and with three meetings adjourned and numerous proposals submitted, Hermiston has been slated to move to the highest level each time. Hermiston athletic director Larry Usher said the likely move comes with mixed emotions within the school district.

See BULLDOGS/2B



EO file photo
A 400-pound bronze bulldog statue stands guard just inside the gates of the Kennison Field Complex at Hermiston High School. The most recent plans for the 2018-22 OSAA classification block has Hermiston competing in Class 6A in the Mt. Hood Conference. Final recommendations won't be made until later this year, but Hermiston Athletic Director Larry Usher is moving forward under the assumption the Bulldogs will be playing a lot more games in the Portland area in the near future.

Prep Wrestling

Heppner's Flynn wins Jo-Hi title

Antonucci second for Mustangs

East Oregonian

JOSEPH — Despite road closures around the region, the Heppner/Ione and Echo/Stanfield wrestling teams were able to make their way across the mountain for the two-day Jo-Hi Tournament which began on Friday.

Heppner's Cord Flynn pinned his way to the 195-pound championship for his third tournament win in a row, and Mustangs 113-pounder Trevor Antonucci placed second to lead Heppner to an 11th place finish out of 17 teams.

Echo also had two placers as Kyle Ranger took fourth at 120 and Mason Smith was sixth at 170.

Flynn's title bout came against a familiar opponent as he would meet Culver's Jaiden Jones, who had pinned him to

See WRESTLING/2B

NFL

Just in time, Seahawks find their running game to start playoffs



AP Photo/Stephen Brashear
Seattle Seahawks running back Thomas Rawls, left, is greeted by wide receiver Paul Richardson, right, after Rawls scored a touchdown against the Detroit Lions in the second half of an NFL football NFC wild card playoff game, Saturday, Jan. 7, 2017, in Seattle.

Rawls sets franchise playoff record for yards

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — It was the most obvious question in the aftermath of Thomas Rawls and the Seattle Seahawks running their way to another playoff victory.

Where has that kind of a run game been hiding for most of the season?

"I really had a sense it was

going to happen," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said wryly after the Seahawks 26-6 win over Detroit on Saturday night. "No, I didn't. But I'm telling you, that's the game we've been looking for."

Nothing has been more inconsistent for Seattle than its run game. Hampered by injuries, blocking issues and plain ineffectiveness, the belief was if the Seahawks were going to make a run in the playoffs it would be because of Russell Wilson's arm and the passing game.

There was no evidence the kind of performance Saturday night was about to happen. In the

final three games of the regular season, Seattle averaged 79 yards per game rushing, 2.9 yards per carry. That included a lackluster 87 yards in the regular-season finale against San Francisco, the worst rush defense in the NFL.

So what changed against the Lions to where Rawls got 27 carries and set a franchise playoff record with 161 yards rushing?

"Nothing magic," Seattle right tackle Garry Gilliam said. "It was the same scheme that we've run all year. It was the same people running the same plays. It was a matter of locking in."

See SEAHAWKS/2B

"It was the same scheme that we've run all year. It was the same people running the same plays. It was a matter of locking in."

— Garry Gilliam, Seattle Seahawks right tackle

Sports shorts

Beard's double-double helps OIT to double-overtime win

KLAMATH FALLS — Former Pendleton Buckaroo Bryan Beard came up big for his current team on Saturday with a double-double to help Oregon Tech to a 93-84 double-overtime win over Walla Walla on Saturday.

Beard, a 6-foot-10 senior forward, scored 14 points and added 10 rebounds. He was 8-of-9 at the free throw line, and added a block as well for the third straight game.

Beard is averaging 8.4 points and 8.1 rebounds a game for the Hustlin' Owls (13-5, 6-2 CCC), and has 13 blocks.

Oregon Tech is scheduled to play games in the region twice in the next month — at Walla Walla University on Feb. 4 at 8 p.m. and at Eastern Oregon on Feb. 11 at 7:30 p.m.

"I know that you know that I know there's definitely some of that. ... The fun part about it is come kickoff time the guys between the white lines are the ones playing it."

— Dan Quinn

Atlanta Falcons head coach and former Seattle Seahawks coordinator on the behind-the-scenes strategy and gamesmanship that goes into playing his former bosses. The Falcons host the Seahawks in the NFL Divisional Playoffs on Saturday.

Baylor receives historic ranking

(AP) — Baylor is No. 1 in The Associated Press men's basketball poll for the first time.

The Bears (15-0) have made a meteoric rise in the poll, going from a team that didn't receive a vote in the preseason poll to one that received 55 first-place votes from the 65-member national media panel on Monday.

Villanova, which received one first-place vote, had been No. 1 for the last five weeks, but the Wildcats (15-1) dropped to third after losing at Butler last week.

Kansas (14-1), which was No. 1 on eight ballots, moved up from third to second, giving the Big 12 the top two teams in the poll.

UCLA (16-1), which got the other first-place vote, stayed fourth.

Gonzaga (15-0), the only other unbeaten Division I school, and Kentucky remained fifth and sixth, respectively.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1972 — The longest winning streak in major professional sports 33 games ends when the Bucks beat the Los Angeles Lakers 120-104 behind 39 points by Milwaukee's Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

1982 — Joe Montana's third touchdown pass of the game, a 6-yarder to Dwight Clark, with 51 seconds remaining, lifts the San Francisco 49ers to 28-27 victory over the Dallas Cowboys in the NFC title game.

2006 — Bruce Sutter is elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame, the fourth reliever and first pitcher elected with no career starts.

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