

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2017

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1B

PENDLETON

Buckaroos stay in groove

Smith scores 32, Pendleton wins eighth straight

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

After playing just seven games in a 51-day span to start the season thanks to inclement weather across the state, the Pendleton Buckaroos were struggling to find a rhythm.

As the weather has now calmed, the Buckaroos have had more time in practice and more time on the court and it has showed. The Buckaroos have now played eight games over the past 26 days and have now won all eight in a row after defeating Hood River Valley 65-48 on Tuesday night at Warberg Court.

Pendleton coach Kyle Tedder said that he is proud of the way his team has handled the ups-and-downs of the season so far, and that the work that his team has put in on the practice court is paying dividends in game action.

"I just think we have some hard-nosed, tough kids," he said, "that no matter what situation you put them in whether it's the weather, back-to-backs, three or four games in a week, they're going to come and compete every day. I think that's what's really been the staple for us, is I think it's tough to find a team in the state that practices harder than we do."

"But that's how we win games, we're not overly talented we win with how hard we work."

Senior Caden Smith echoed what Tedder said.

"We're not an oversized team or anything, but with good effort and good defense

See PENDLETON/2B



Pendleton's Wyatt Morris shoots the ball trailed by Hood River's Jonah Tactay in the Bucks' 64-48 win against the Eagles on Tuesday in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J.Harris

HERMISTON

Dawgs keep cool for win

Hermiston girls and boys beat The Dalles

East Oregonian

The Bulldogs maintained their composure in a heated Columbia River Conference contest and were able to clear the bench as they closed out The Dalles 54-46 on senior night Tuesday.

Girls Hoops



The Dalles
46



Hermiston
54

When frustration boiled over for a couple of technical fouls on the Riverhawks in the second half, Hermiston freshman Jazlyn Romero made them pay by hitting 3 of 4 free throws to help add some room in what had been a tight game with a halftime score of 28-24.

"I thought our girls did a good job of keeping their heads in those instances," said Hermiston coach Juan Rodriguez.

Romero finished with a game-high 20

See HERMISTON/2B

Prep Roundup

Eagles beat down Badgers

Nixyaawii girls finish off perfect regular season

East Oregonian

NORTH POWDER — Another lockdown defensive effort lifted the Nixyaawii Golden Eagles girls basketball team to a 51-23 win over Powder Valley on Tuesday to finish off an undefeated regular season.

Coach Jeremy Maddern said post Sunshine Fuentes anchored the defense, and guard Mary Stewart scored 22 points to lead the offense.

See PREPS/2B

MLB

Hernandez out to 'prove people wrong' after down year

Mariners ace battled injury, elevated ERA in 2016 season

Associated Press

PEORIA, Ariz. — Felix Hernandez arrived for Seattle Mariners spring training on Tuesday already ahead in his offseason preparation from previous years.

It's the result of the World Baseball Classic and his determination to prove last year's struggles were an anomaly.

"I've got to prove people

wrong," Hernandez said after taking his physical with the Mariners. "I feel fine. I'm healthy. That's the main thing."

How Hernandez approached the offseason was one of Seattle's big questions after watching its ace have a rocky 2016 season that included a lengthy stint on the disabled list due to a leg injury. Hernandez was 11-8 with a 3.82 ERA in 25 starts last season. It was the fewest starts in a full season in his career and his ERA was its highest since 2007. He walked more batters, struck out fewer and



Hernandez

was prone to giving up the long ball.

It was unlike the Hernandez most have come to expect, which made how he would respond one of the big topics that could ultimately determine how good Seattle is in 2017.

"The offseason has been good to me," Hernandez said.

Hernandez spent most of his time in Miami working out with the same trainer — Iron Glenn — who has worked out teammates Nelson Cruz and Robinson Cano in previous seasons. Hernandez

reported at 224 pounds, which is up from last season when he reported at 207, but he believes the increased weight comes via strength that will help him last the season.

"Working on everything. The whole body, to be balanced, left and right side," Hernandez said. "(We) do a lot of bands. We do a lot of stuff."

Hernandez also had a brief two-game stint in the Venezuelan Winter League to start getting ready for the World Baseball Classic.

Hernandez said he still needed to finalize his pitching schedule with the Mariners staff but is likely to throw in two spring training games before joining Venezuela.

Hernandez expects to pitch the pool play opener for his country on March 10 against Puerto Rico. Hernandez did not pitch for Venezuela during the 2013 WBC.

"It means a lot. I think we've got a pretty good team to win the whole thing," he said.

Hernandez will also spend the early days of spring training figuring out Seattle's overhauled roster. There are just eight players remaining on the 40-man roster from when general manager Jerry Dipoto took over in September 2015.

"There's a lot of new faces. I have to sit down and see who the guys (are)," Hernandez said. "But we look different. More athletic."

Sports shorts

CCC honors EOU's Washington

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon men's basketball's Kentrell Washington was named the Cascade Collegiate Conference Red Lion Player of the Week on Monday for his efforts in a pair of big wins for the Mountaineers.

Washington, a senior guard from Las Vegas, averaged 27 points and 10 rebounds as the Mountaineers took sole possession of second place with wins over Southern Oregon and No. 15 Oregon Tech.

He had 16 points, 11 rebounds and three assists in a 94-83 win over Southern Oregon on Friday, Feb. 10.

Against Oregon Tech, Washington had a career-high 38 points with nine rebounds and four assists to help EOU rally from an 11-point halftime deficit for a 83-73 win on Saturday.

Eastern has two games left in the regular season and is at College of Idaho on Thursday.



Washington

"I came to the conclusion that our team needed a new energy, a new voice, a new direction."

— Geoff Molson

Montreal Canadiens Owner on firing head coach Michel Therrien. The Canadiens are 31-19-8 and lead their division by six points, but are the NHL's worst team since the start of February with a 1-5-1 record. Therrien was replaced by Claude Julien, who coached the Boston Bruins to a Stanley Cup in 2011.

Marlins reverse prohibition of facial hair for players

JUPITER, Fla. (AP) — Beards are back for the Miami Marlins.

Manager Don Mattingly said he and owner Jeffrey Loria decided lift their prohibition on facial hair after one season.

"It was a constant fight last year, honestly, with guys," said Mattingly, speaking Tuesday before the first spring training workout for pitchers and catchers. "Through the course of the season and watching the playoffs and the World Series, for me it just didn't seem like that big of a thing. The most important thing is our guys prepare and play the game right."

The Marlins will continue to require players be well-groomed. The ban was adopted after Mattingly was hired as manager before the 2016 season.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1964 — Ken Hubbs, the 22-year-old Chicago Cubs second baseman, dies when his private plane crashes in Utah. The 1962 NL Rookie of the Year had his pilot's license for two weeks and was flying in bad weather.

1998 — Dale Earnhardt takes the Daytona 500 on his 20th try and ends a 59-race winless streak on the day NASCAR begins celebrating its 50th anniversary.

2013 — Ted Ligety becomes the first man in 45 years to win three gold medals at a skiing world championships.

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