

EAST OREGONIAN

SPORTS

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1B



In this Monday, Feb. 27, 2017, photo, Seattle Mariners center fielder Jarrod Dyson throws the ball during the first inning of a spring training baseball game against the Kansas City Royals in Peoria, Ariz.

AP Photo/Charlie Riedel

MLB

Remodeled Mariners believe they can be contender in AL West

Mixed expectations for Seattle's second season in Dipoto era

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Jerry Dipoto was thrilled by the results from his first year in charge of the Seattle Mariners, when they won 86 games and were in contention for a playoff berth until the final weekend of the season.

And yet there were flaws. The Mariners didn't play the way Dipoto

expected or wanted. He wanted more speed. More athleticism. More reliance on defense and less on hitting the home run.

So instead of just tinkering with a roster that was on the cusp of the playoffs, Dipoto embarked on the second phase of Seattle's makeover this offseason, based around trying to take advantage of the current window with stars like Nelson Cruz, Robinson Cano and Felix Hernandez not getting any younger.

"We maintained what we think are the good parts of our team and this was kind of an inevitable reality, more change, although I couldn't have told

you it was going to be as broad as it's been," Dipoto said.

Seattle will go into the season facing mixed expectations. Some believe they are contenders in the AL West and have a real shot at ending the longest playoff drought in baseball as a possible wild card team with an outside shot at the division title. Others feel Cano, Cruz and Hernandez are about to regress and that the other moves made by the Mariners won't be able to make up for a drop in production by Seattle's stars.

Whatever the answer, Seattle will be an intriguing team because there is so

See MARINERS/2B

Prep Roundup

Buckaroos split Day 2

Pendleton softball beats Gresham, falls to Clackamas

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Buckaroos matched their season-high win streak with a 4-0 win over Gresham on Tuesday morning at the Spring Break Challenge, then saw it come to an end with a 7-6 loss to Clackamas at Hood View Park in Happy Valley.

Lauren Richards started the first game, and was the pitcher of record in both after coming in as a reliever in Game 2. She was too much for Gresham, allowing just two hits while striking out 11 and walking four in her third shutout of the season.

"Again, another nice pitching performance by Lauren," said Pendleton coach Tim Cary. "She had command of the game the entire time and did a nice job."

Aspen Garton (2 for 3) hit a solo home run for Pendleton (8-2) in the second inning, and Kalan McGlothlin added double to take down Gresham (5-3).

See PREPS/2B

NBA

Trail Blazers beat Nuggets

Portland takes one game lead for final playoff spot

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Jusuf Nurkic had a career-high 33 points with 16 rebounds against his former team, CJ McCollum had 39 points and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Denver Nuggets 122-113 on Tuesday night to take hold of the eighth seed in the Western Conference.

Portland leads Denver by a game for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference. The Blazers also clinched the season-series tiebreaker with the Nuggets, giving them an upper hand with eight games to play.

Jameer Nelson led Denver with 23 points.

See BLAZERS/2B



PENDLETON

Roseburg outlasts Pendleton

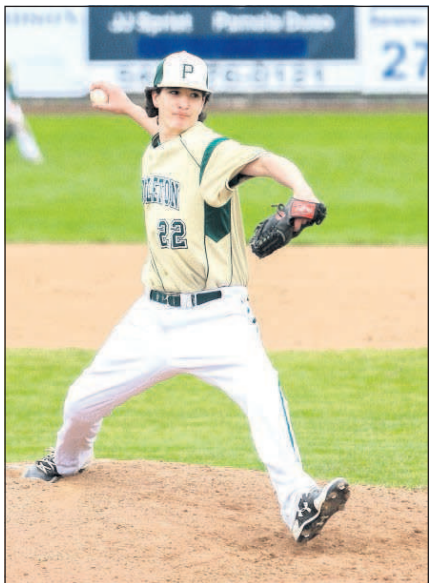


In a chaotic play, Roseburg's Trev-Jacks slides into home plate to the frustration of Pendleton pitcher Daniel Naughton Tuesday at Bob White Field.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Lani, Large solid in first starts on the mound for Bucks

By MATT ENTRUP
East Oregonian



Pendleton's Chris Large winds up for a pitch during Tuesday's game against Roseburg in Pendleton.

A lack of consistency continued as the overriding trend for Pendleton baseball's first two weeks of the season as big innings and bullpen depth bit the Buckaroos again in a non-league doubleheader to Roseburg on Tuesday.

Like it has been most times it takes the diamond this season, Pendleton was giving the Indians a close contest midway though each game at Bob White Field, but ended up with ugly looking losses of 9-4 and 9-3 by the time it was said and done.

The afternoon wasn't without its highlights for the home team, but Roseburg (6-3) was more steady with its play

Baseball



in the field and sophomore Zack Mandera hit home runs in each game to lead an 18-hit afternoon for the Indians.

Pendleton (1-7) coach T.J. Haguewood said the Bucks' inability to put together a full game is starting to become worrisome after the team let nail-biters against Walla Walla get out of hand late.

"Every game's been close midway through," he said. "Walla Walla, we're up 3-1 in the fifth inning and lose 10-3. Over there we're up 1-0 in the fourth and lose 11-1 in the

fifth. Today we're up 1-0 in the fifth — so it's gonna tell, we haven't been able to put together a complete game."

Another issue for Pendleton has been a lack of stamina on the mound. Haguewood was happy with the debuts of starting pitchers Nick Lani and Chris Large, but a couple good innings was all their arms were able to provide at this point in the season.

"I thought our starting pitchers did a great job today giving what they could give us," Haguewood said. "We didn't make some plays behind (Lani), gave him some runs, but I thought he threw the ball well. ... Our top three pitchers, Daniel (Naughton) has a sore arm, then Lani just

See PENDLETON/2B

Sports shorts

EOU men's soccer coach resigns

LA GRANDE — After two seasons as head men's soccer coach at Eastern Oregon University, Stan Rodrigues has resigned.

Rodrigues was the program's first-ever head coach as he was tasked with starting the EOU program from scratch when he was hired. In his two seasons as coach, the Mountaineers compiled a 18-15-1 record.

"We want to thank Stan for his commitment to EOU athletics," EOU athletic director Anji Weissenfluh told EOUSports.com. "Starting a new program is a difficult task, and Stan did a good job building our men's soccer program. He cares deeply for his student-athletes and always has their best interest at heart."

Prior to EOU, Rodrigues spent 12 years as a coach and Director of Coaching for the Westside Timbers youth soccer club team in Beaverton.



Rodrigues

"Our focus is 100 percent on making sure this is a one-time deal, not an eight-, nine-, 10-time deal. You do that by making sure you maintain the culture that has allowed that streak to continue ... once you let it slip, it's hard to get back."

— Jeff Blashill

Detroit Red Wings head coach after the team was officially eliminated from NHL playoff contention, ending its 25-year playoff streak which was the longest active streak in professional sports.

Trump declines Nationals offer for 1st pitch on Opening Day

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Washington Nationals say President Donald Trump has declined an invitation to throw out the ceremonial first pitch before their game on opening day.

A spokeswoman for the baseball team said Tuesday that the White House said Trump would not be at next week's game at Nationals Park against the Miami Marlins because of a scheduling conflict.

Washington hosts Miami next Monday afternoon to begin the 2017 season.

President Barack Obama threw the ceremonial first pitch at the Nationals' opener in 2010, marking the 100th anniversary of a presidential pitch to start the season. William Howard Taft first did it on April 14, 1910.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1984 — The NFL Colts leave the city of Baltimore in the early hours of the morning, headed for Indianapolis.

1999 — New York Rangers center Wayne Gretzky surpasses Gordie Howe as the leading goal scorer in pro hockey history in a 3-1 victory over the Islanders. Gretzky's goal was the 1,072nd of his career 20 NHL seasons.

2014 — The Philadelphia 76ers snap their NBA record-tying, 26-game losing streak, routing the Detroit Pistons 123-98 to avoid establishing a new longest skid in U.S. major pro sports history.

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