

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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1B

Prep Roundup

Mustangs sweep Loggers

Heppner earns pair of walk-off victories

East Oregonian

HEPPNER — The Heppner softball team faced off against Knappa in a doubleheader on Thursday afternoon and sent the Loggers home with a pair of close losses, winning 16-15 in game one and 10-9 in game two.

Softball



Knappa
15-9



Heppner
16-10

The Mustangs (5-2) took their time getting going in each game but finished strong with walk-off hits by Morgan Correa and Onna DeLoach to outlast Knappa in both games.

Correa hit a single to drive in Tresslyn McCurry in the bottom of the eighth inning to win Game 1 16-15, and DeLoach hit a bases-loaded single with two outs in the bottom of the seventh to score two and lift Heppner to a 10-9 win in Game 2.

The Mustangs scored one run in the first inning of each game, but then went cold as Knappa (1-6) built up leads of 10-1 and 8-1 over the middle innings.

“We was hitting some sharp balls at them but they were fielding everything we hit,” said Heppner coach Rick Johnston. “Our girls never quit once during the day. They always believed they were going to win.”

Heppner started finding the gaps in the fifth inning in Game 1 and took a 11-10 lead into the seventh, then answered when Knappa plated four and sent the game to an extra innings with a 14-14 score.

DeLoach finished the game 4 for 4 with four RBIs, McCurry was 2-3 and Maggie Flynn was 3 for 5.

It was a seven-run sixth inning that got Heppner going in Game 2, and when Knappa regained the lead

See PREPS/2B

NBA

Blazers win fifth straight



AP Photo/Steve Dykes

Portland Trail Blazers center Jusuf Nurkic blocks the shot of Houston Rockets forward Trevor Ariza during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Thursday, March 30, 2017.

Lillard's double-double leads Portland past Houston

By ERIK GARCIA GUNDERSEN
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Damian Lillard had 31 points and 11 assists, leading the Portland Trail Blazers past the Houston Rockets 117-107 on Thursday night.

Jusuf Nurkic had a team-high 11 rebounds to go along with 19 points for the Trail Blazers, who have a season-high five-game winning streak and a 1 1/2-game lead over the Denver Nuggets for the eighth seed in the Western Conference.

James Harden finished with 30 points and eight rebounds to lead the Rockets. Harden's 3-pointer at the end of the first quarter gave the Rockets 1,078 3s, an NBA single-season record.

Portland held a 96-85 lead into the

fourth, but Houston made a run early in the quarter. Trevor Ariza's dunk tied the game at 105 with 2:29 left, but Nurkic's post-up gave Portland the lead right back with 2:05 remaining.

Allen Crabbe sealed the win with steal on Harden, taking it coast-to-coast to give the Blazers a 113-105 lead with 1:12 left.

Harden had three turnovers in the fourth quarter.

After Eric Gordon's 3-pointer gave the Rockets a two-point lead early in the second quarter, the Blazers outscored Houston 19-6 to reclaim the lead and push it to as high as 12 before taking a 65-56 lead into halftime.

Portland's reserves, particularly Crabbe and Al-Farouq Aminu, were crucial in creating the lead while combining for 32 points and five

See BLAZERS/2B



Houston
107



Portland
117



Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard celebrates as the Blazers take the lead late in the fourth quarter of the team's NBA basketball game against the Houston Rockets in Portland, Ore., Thursday.

AP Photo/Steve Dykes

College Basketball

Nike helps Oregon on trip to Final Four

Ducks basketball program thriving with Nike backing

By EDDIE PELLIS
Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — It's one thing to have Nike as a sponsor. It's quite another to have the owner of Nike as your No. 1 fan.

After a 78-year absence from college basketball's biggest stage, Oregon is at the Final Four this week. For a good deal of this success, the Ducks can thank Nike's billionaire owner, Phil Knight — the man who keeps the money flowing into the hoops program, and all the rest of the sports, too.

One of Knight's most recent, and benevolent, gifts



AP Photo/Chris Pietsch, File

In this file photo, Nike's Phil Knight waves to the crowd during a 2014 basketball game in Eugene. It's one thing to have Nike as a shoe sponsor. It's quite another to have the owner of Nike as your main benefactor.

to Oregon was a \$100 million donation to help fund the school's opulent basketball arena, named after Knight's late son, Matthew.

“Phil Knight and Nike have essentially created a lab at the University of Oregon,” said David Carter, executive director of the Sports Busi-

ness Institute at Southern California's Marshall School of Business. “The students welcome that. As long as the programs perform well and stay out of trouble, it's rinse and repeat.”

Among the other beneficiaries of Knight's largesse: The football team, which has played for the national title twice this decade; and the men's and women's track teams, which have combined for 13 indoor and outdoor NCAA titles since 2010.

All this after Oregon spent decades playing in the second division of the Pac-12 and in relative obscurity in the college town of Eugene, population 160,000.

“It's not a booming metropolis,” Carter said. “But every team in the conference has something to hang its hat

See OREGON/2B

Mason, Plum named AP players of the year

Gonzaga's Few, UConn's Auriemma voted as coaches of the year

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Arizona — Kansas guard Frank Mason III and Gonzaga coach Mark Few have won The Associated Press men's player and coach of the year awards, while Washington guard Kelsey Plum and UConn coach Geno Auriemma took home the women's player and coach of the year awards, as announced on Thursday.

Mason is the first Kansas player to win the award. He is the first Big 12 player to win it since Blake Griffin of Oklahoma in 2009.

Mason led Kansas to its 13th consecutive Big 12 title. He received 37 votes Thursday from the same 65-member media panel that selects the weekly AP Top 25.

As a senior point guard, he averaged 20.8 points, 4.1 rebounds and 5.1 assists while shooting 48.7 percent from 3-point range.

Josh Hart of Villanova was second in player of the year voting with 16 votes. Caleb Swanigan of Purdue had nine and Lonzo Ball of UCLA had three.

See AP AWARDS/2B

Sports shorts

Fowler leads at Shell Houston Open

HUMBLE, Texas (AP) — Rickie Fowler shot an 8-under 64 for a one-shot lead over Sung Kang after the first round of the Houston Open on Thursday.

Fowler had his best round in six appearances at the tournament, topping a previous low score of 68. Fowler overcame damp conditions and a chilly, breezy morning to jump to a hot start.

Fowler won last month at the Honda Classic and is trying to keep momentum going into the Masters next week. The Honda Classic win snapped a 13-month, 25-start drought for Fowler.

Fowler held a three-shot lead over Vaughn Taylor and Keegan Bradley when he finished his round in the afternoon, then Kang closed the gap with his 65.



Fowler

“I felt like there were a lot better ways to spend \$750 million than bringing the Raiders to Las Vegas. We could spend it on police, firefighters and teachers and have them all be the best in the country.”

— Bill Foley

Owner of the NHL's new Las Vegas Golden Knights franchise did not agree with the city's decision to pay \$750 million of the \$1.9 billion price tag to the Raiders new stadium to attract the NFL team. The Golden Knights' T-Mobile Arena was built entirely with private funds.

TCU routs Georgia Tech for men's NIT championship

NEW YORK (AP) — Kenrich Williams had 25 points and 12 rebounds, and TCU routed Georgia Tech 88-56 in the NIT championship on Thursday night.

TCU opened with a 20-3 run on its way to the program's first NIT title. Vlad Brodziansky scored 18 points for the Horned Frogs (24-15), and Alex Robinson had 10 points and 11 assists.

Tadric Jackson led Georgia Tech (21-16) with 19 points. Josh Okogie had 12 points and six rebounds.

It was the first meeting between the ACC and Big 12 programs since Dec. 21, 1967, and No. 3 overall. And it mostly belonged to TCU, which never trailed.

The Horned Frogs led 38-27 at halftime and shot 51 percent (35 for 68) and held Georgia Tech to 35.7 percent (20 for 56) shooting.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1968 — The American League's new franchise in Seattle chooses Pilots as its nickname.

1975 — UCLA beats Kentucky 92-85 for its 10th NCAA basketball title under coach John Wooden. Wooden finishes with a 620-147 career record after announcing his retirement two days earlier.

2013 — In one of the biggest upsets in the history of the women's NCAA Tournament, sixth-seeded Louisville defeats defending champion Baylor in the regional semifinals 82-81.

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