

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## ALL-EO GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Stewart's divergent drive



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Nixyaawii's Mary Stewart is the All-EO player of the year for the 2017 girls basketball season.

## Nixyaawii junior shuns spotlight while also striving for success

By **MATT ENTRUP**  
East Oregonian

Even at a young age, Mary Stewart wanted to be like Mike.

The Nixyaawii junior is too young to remember the ear-worm Gatorade commercials, but she knew her favorite clothing and shoes were Nike's Air Jordan line, and that was enough to make her pick up a basketball and head out to the hoop behind her grandmother's Pendleton home.

"I was like four," said Stewart, the All-EO Player of the Year for girls basketball. "It was in the back of my grandma's house in the grass on a 10-foot hoop. I could hit the rim, then I started getting better and I started making them. I went down there by myself a lot, then my grandma started coming out with me.

"My grandma started shooting with me, and I thought it was so fun so we'd go shoot every day. It got into our schedule, like we'd go shoot every day."

The addition of a competitor would prove key for Stewart's growth as a player.

Perhaps unknown to her at the time, Stewart shared a very distinct trait with her basketball idol Michael Jordan.

"I just don't like to lose," she said.

Stewart's competitive streak just may have been the biggest factor in Nixyaawii's undefeated championship season in 2016-17. Undoubtedly, her 27.7 points, 5.9 assists, 4.8 rebounds and 6.4 steals played a big role in the Golden Eagles' 27-0 record, but Nixyaawii coach Jeremy Maddern said Stewart's drive to win seemed to be contagious to her teammates and made for some pretty intense practices.

"The thing I think is the more competitive the drill is, the harder you push her, the more you're going to get," said Maddern, whose Golden Eagles outscored teams by a 27-point average. "I think the key to her success is that competitiveness. Some of our

practices were, I wouldn't say brutal, but it was fun to watch. There were times when I wouldn't call for a scrimmage before a game because we were pounding on each other so much. I think her competitiveness trickled down to the rest of the team. I think that's why you saw some of the one big margins, just because we're pushing each other so hard in practice."

Stewart turned in some huge games during her junior campaign, including a 41-point game against Helix in which she went 10-for-11 from three-point range, and a 34-point game against Country Christian in the state championship which Nixyaawii won 68-39.

But while she'll gladly bask in the glory of a win, Stewart will be the first to point out that there were 34 other points scored by her teammates in the that title win, and she's just playing the role her natural talents have put her in. She'd be the last person you'd expect to slap her emblem on a shoe and sell it around the world.

"I'm not shy, you can just talk to me and I'll talk back. But I guess I don't really like talking about, like, just me I guess. I feel like if it's just me then it's not fair," she said. "I kind of push (the attention) to the side. After our games I try to leave as soon as I can before someone can talk to me. And that's what I did at state, when they wanted to take pictures but I didn't want to do it. So I was trying to leave."

For sports reporters this poses a problem, but not for her coach.

"For me I don't really think it's an issue, and I think she does what she needs to do. She stays away from the spotlight," Maddern said. "She's going to have that spotlight but she tends to shy away from that. You can definitely tell it bothers her a little bit but I've seen kids the exact opposite where they are attention hogs, so for me I'd rather have a kid who does the right things and doesn't look for that attention."

See **STEWART/2B**

## Prep Roundup

### Greb, Som lead Bucks to wins

Pendleton golfers shoot low rounds at Pendleton Country Club

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Haley Greb shot her second-straight sub-par round and Nathan Som led the Pendleton boys to their lowest score of the season on Thursday at the Buckaroo Invite at Pendleton Country Club.

Greb posted a three-under 69 to win the girls' individual title, and Som paced the boys' field with a 74.

It was a tough day on the greens, said Pendleton coach Nels Nelson, and several players saw their scores suffer due to some unforgiving surfaces. But Pendleton's Brayden Pulver wasn't one of them and needed just 26 putts to get through his round

to finish second with a 77 after winning a scorecard playoff.

The Pendleton boys shot as second-low 320 to win the team title by two strokes over Kamiakin, and also beat regional foes The Dalles (324) and Hermiston (346).

"We kind of put it all together as a team," said Nelson. "The greens were fast and hard to hold, but we managed it well."

Jared Geier shot an 84 and Brandon Cox turned in an 85 to complete Pendleton's score.

Hermiston was led by Anders Lind with an 83, and fifth-place Mac-Hi (352) was led by an 83 from Riley Chester.

On the girls side, Pendleton took the top team spot with a 351, followed by Kamiakin with a 412 and Hermiston a 446.

Pendleton girls coach Terry Prouse

See **PREPS/3B**

## PENDLETON

### BMCC's Mathews signs with Saints



Photo courtesy of Blue Mountain Community College  
Blue Mountain's Jared Mathews, right, and athletic director Brett Bryan smile after Mathews signed a National Letter of Intent with St. Martin's for men's basketball.

Sophomore post makes jump to NCAA

East Oregonian

For the past two seasons, Blue Mountain's Jared Mathews has been one of the top post players in the NWAC East Region.

Now, Mathews will take his talents to the NCAA.

On Wednesday, Mathews signed a National Letter of Intent with Saint Martin's University in Lacey, Washington and will join the NCAA Division II team this fall. At Saint Martin's, the sophomore from Bakersfield, California will reunite with the coach that recruited him to BMCC, Adam Ellis, who is now an assistant coach with the  
See **MATHEWS/2B**

## Sports shorts

### Plum picked No. 1 in WNBA Draft

NEW YORK (AP) — The San Antonio Stars made Washington star Kelsey Plum the No. 1 overall pick in the 2017 WNBA Draft on Thursday night.

The NCAA Player of the Year finished her college career with an NCAA-record 3,527 points. The Stars had the worst record last season and held the top pick for the first time in franchise history.

"I've been dreaming about it for so long," Plum said. "I'm really excited and grateful for the opportunity and will make the most of it."

The Stars took Moriah Jefferson with the No. 2 pick last season. Plum played with Jefferson on a USA Basketball Under-18 team and was excited for the chance to play with her again.

Oregon State star Sydney Wiese went 11th overall to the Los Angeles Sparks.



Plum

"We're not going into the playoffs saying 'Alright, we got here, we did a great job, we fought back and let's just go in here and put up a fight.' We're going in here and we want to win. Ain't no moral victories and all that."

— **Damian Lillard**

Portland Trail Blazers guard says he is confident in his team's abilities to take on and possibly take down Golden State in the first round of the NBA playoffs, even telling CSN Northwest the Blazers will win in six games.

### OSU baseball's win streak comes to a halt after 23 games

SEATTLE — For the first time in 23 games, the Oregon State Beavers finished a game on the wrong side of the scoreboard.

The Washington Huskies beat the Beavers 3-2 in the series opener on Thursday night, ending OSU's ninth-inning rally with the tying run stranded on second base.

It's just the second loss of the season for Oregon State (28-2, 12-1 PAC-12), with last loss coming on Feb. 24 to Ohio State.

Trevor Larnach opened up the scoring in the game with an RBI double in the first inning, but that would be the last run OSU would get until an RBI single by KJ Harrison in the ninth.

Luke Heimlich started for OSU, pitching 6 1/3 innings giving up seven hits and three runs with seven strikeouts.

The series continues today at 4:05 p.m. at Husky Ballpark in Seattle.



## THIS DATE IN SPORTS

**1960** — The Montreal Canadiens win their fifth straight Stanley Cup with a four-game sweep of the Toronto Maple Leafs, including tonight's 4-0 victory.

**1994** — Seattle becomes the first team in NBA history to have 10 double-figure scorers in one game, as the SuperSonics beat the Los Angeles Clippers 150-101.

**2006** — Kobe Bryant sets the Los Angeles Lakers' single-season scoring record with a flourish, getting 50 points to eclipse Elgin Baylor's long-standing total (2,719) in a 110-99 victory over Portland.

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