

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## NAUGHTON'S SIZZLING SUMMER

### Pendleton pitcher goes from little-known prospect to D-I commit

By ERIC SINGER  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — A little after 4 p.m. on a Wednesday in late July, Pendleton senior Daniel Naughton steps onto the field at Bob White Ballpark for his usual weekday workout.

First up is a round of long toss with teammate Justin Duso and Pendleton alum and current George Fox University player Brian Branstetter. Afterwards, Duso and Naughton break off for the duo's usual bullpen session. On this day, Naughton and Duso choose a spot down the first base line at the ballpark that is in the shade, doing so to escape the sun and heat of the warm mid-90s weather.

Naughton toes the rubber donning a Nike brand long-sleeve, Dri-FIT shirt with Pendleton Baseball printed on the front, black athletic shorts, and black and white New Balance spikes. He peppers Duso's glove with 35 pitches in this session, mixing his fastball, changeup, curveball and his newest addition, a slider.

But his most prized piece of equipment on this day rests comfortably on top of his head. It's a baseball cap with the letters GU printed on the front in red, white, and blue letters on a blue background, representing Gonzaga University.

Naughton is not just wearing



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton senior pitcher Daniel Naughton works out with junior Justin Duso last week.

the hat as a fan, but now as a future Bulldog himself. In the span of 17 days this summer, Naughton elevated himself from a little-known college prospect in Eastern Oregon to earning a scholarship and committing to the Division I

institution.

"I was not expecting anything like this when summer started," Naughton joked in a recent interview. "I was never thinking anything like Gonzaga or D-I at the beginning, but as summer went along, it started to

go through my mind a bit."

Naughton has always had a love for baseball. He can't really put his finger on the aspect that sucked him into America's Pastime, but there was never a time where his parents had to ask him if he wanted to play

**"This kind of thing is rare for a kid from Umatilla County so we're really proud of him."**

— Rob Naughton, Daniel's father

each spring season, it was always a given. From a young age, Naughton's father, Rob, knew his kid had a talent for the game.

"We noticed Daniel had a good arm at an early age," Rob said. "In Little League he had velocity ... and he could throw a baseball, a football all with a natural motion."

Naughton's talent began to grow as a freshman in high school, when his neighbor and former Buckaroo catcher Alex O'Rourke got him started on Driveline Baseball workouts. At the time, Driveline was still relatively new to the baseball training world but now it has become a top-of-the-line, data-driven training program that is utilized by numerous colleges and high

See NAUGHTON/2B

### College Football

## It's 'Go Time' for the Ducks as fall camp opens

EUGENE (AP) — There is much talk about a culture change at Oregon, and it seems as if the players are taking it to heart.

Quarterback Justin Herbert was thrown into the starter's role last season as a shy freshman. He's since put 15 pounds on his lanky 6-foot-6 frame and new coach Willie Taggart joked that he's been strutting around without a shirt on.

Then there's running back Royce Freeman, already a physical force, who Taggart said has changed both his attitude and his approach.

Taggart is about to embark on his first season as Oregon's head coach and he's pleased with the attitude shift he's seen in his players since his arrival. Fall camp opened Monday and the work begins in earnest.

"It's go time. The honeymoon is over," Taggart exclaimed Sunday. "We are ready to roll."

Just two seasons after playing in the first College Football Playoff championship game, the Ducks' run of 11-straight winning seasons ended with a thud — a 34-24 loss to the rival Oregon State Beavers. Oregon finished 4-8 overall and at the bottom of the Pac-12 North standings at 2-7.

Three days after the season the Ducks dismissed Mark Helfrich.

Taggart's last two head coaching jobs have also been rebuilding projects. He was coach at South Florida for the past four seasons, guiding the team from a 2-10 record his first year to a 10-2 mark and a spot in the Birmingham Bowl last season.

"Anytime you come into a new program, changing the culture is probably the biggest thing and the hardest thing to do because they have been doing it a certain way for a while," he said.

The transition hasn't always been smooth.

Co-offensive coordinator David Reaves resigned in January after he was arrested on charges connected to



AP Photo/Anne M. Peterson

Oregon head coach Willie Taggart speaks at Autzen Stadium in Eugene on Sunday. The Ducks opened fall camp Monday under their first-year head coach.

driving under the influence. Wide receivers coach Jimmie Dougherty, a passenger in Reaves' car, left in early February for UCLA.

Oregon's strength and conditioning coach was suspended in January when three players were hospitalized because of grueling workouts.

And wide receiver Darren Carrington was dismissed from the team recently after he was also arrested to driving under the influence. Carrington, who had 15 TD catches for the Ducks, was expected to be one of team's top receivers this season. He transferred to Utah.

Despite the rocky start Taggart has clearly embraced his new job, becoming the Ducks' most visible cheerleader on social media. He's enthusiastically pursued recruits, evident Saturday night when Oregon hosted "Saturday Night Live," a prospect camp at Autzen Stadium.

Herbert and Freeman will be key to his offense — which Herbert vowed will be even faster than Oregon's speedy "blur" offense that pushed the Ducks onto the national stage under coach Chip Kelly.

"We're going to try and go even faster this year,"

Herbert said at the conference media day this week. "The emphasis is on going fast. We've got so many guys to make plays, and my job is to distribute the ball."

Herbert threw for 1,936 yards and 19 touchdowns in eight games as a freshman last season, taking over when graduate transfer Dakota Prukop struggled.

"He's gained about 15 pounds since last year, and Justin's walking outside with his shirt off now. And if you all know Justin, that wasn't him before. But he's laughing. He's hanging out with his guys," Taggart said.

Freeman joked on Sunday: "We're trying to beg him, 'Just please put your shirt on.'"

Freeman was the Ducks' leading rusher last season with 945 yards in 11 games, but he was hampered by injury. He has rushed for 4,146 yards over three seasons with the Ducks, second only to LaMichael James (5,082 yards) on Oregon's career rushing list.

Freeman, who has already graduated, said he's feeling more comfortable.

"I told him to tell me when he doesn't want any more carries," Taggart said. "I'll just keep giving them to him."



AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez

Seattle Mariners' Felix Hernandez throws to the Texas Rangers in the second inning of a baseball game, Monday in Arlington, Texas.

## Quiet at trade deadline, Mariners beat Rangers

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Robinson Cano had a two-run single in the ninth and the Seattle Mariners won 6-4 at Texas on Monday night, only hours after the Rangers traded pitcher Yu Darvish.

The Mariners trailed 4-0 after two innings before getting even against Cole Hamels, the remaining ace for Texas now that Darvish is with the NL West-leading Los Angeles Dodgers.

Cano lined a ball over the head of right fielder Shin-Soo Choo, getting two runs home before he was thrown out trying to stretch the hit into a double. The hit came right after pitching coach Doug Brocail was ejected for arguing a balk called against Alex Claudio (2-1) that put runners at second and third with Cano at the plate.

David Phelps (1-1) struck out five in 1 2/3 innings before Edwin Diaz pitched a perfect ninth for his 20th save in 24 chances.

Rougned Odor and Carlos Gomez homered for the Rangers, who had five hits in the first two innings against Felix Hernandez and then one the rest of the game. They struck out 13 times against four pitchers.

A day after becoming the first Dominican player and 31st overall in the majors with 3,000 hits, Adrian Beltré added to his total in the first with a solid single up the middle against Hernandez, his good friend.

Odor had just hit his 23rd homer overall and 10th of July, a two-run homer measured at 437 feet, when Hernandez walked toward the plate for a brief word with his catcher.

Hernandez then hugged Beltré before

going back to the mound and giving up the hit. They were teammates during Beltré's five seasons in Seattle (2005-09) and are still close.

Darvish was dealt to the Dodgers within minutes of the non-waiver trade deadline earlier Monday for three minor league players. Texas also traded reliever Jeremy Jeffress back to Milwaukee for a Double-A pitcher, and had sent catcher Johnathan Lucroy to Colorado after Sunday's game for a player to be named.

After three trades the previous week, the Mariners made no additional deals before the deadline.

Hamels struck out seven and walked one while going six innings. Hernandez was erratic despite five strikeouts, walking three and hitting two batters in his 5 1/3 innings.

Seattle got even at 4 with an unearned run in the sixth. Guillermo Heredia reached on a two-out error by Beltré and scored on a triple by Leonys Martin.

It was the third straight game that Beltré had a throwing error. He had gone 62 consecutive games without an error before that, a franchise record and career best for the five-time Gold Glove winner.

### TRAINER'S ROOM

Mariners: Martin, a .145 hitter, was recalled from Triple-A after RF Mitch Haniger got hit in the face by a fastball on Saturday. Haniger is expected to be out about two weeks.

Rangers: RHP Tyson Ross made a rehab start for Double-A Frisco, a week after going on the 10-day DL with a blister on his right index finger.

