

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2017

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @EOSPORTS

1B

MLB

Altuve, Stanton crowned as MVP's



In this Oct. 25 file photo, Houston Astros' Jose Altuve hits a home run against the Los Angeles Dodgers during Game 2 of the World Series in Los Angeles. Altuve and Miami slugger Giancarlo Stanton were named AL & NL MVPs on Thursday.

AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill, File

Prep Sports

Winter sports season is here already

Practices began this week, contests get underway Nov. 29

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — After a fast three-plus months, outdoor grass fields at high schools across Oregon now sit mostly empty and gymnasiums remain full, though volleyball nets at the center of the court have been replaced by basketball hoops at either end.

Fall sports are nearly complete, and the winter sports season is already underway as prep basketball and wrestling teams across the state began practices on Monday.

This week marked the beginning of Kyle Tedder's third season leading the Pendleton boys basketball team, and prior to his team's practice on Thursday the Buckaroo coach said he is thrilled to get going with his new-look group. No longer is all-state star Caden Smith wearing the green-and-gold on the court, along with other key players like Wyatt Morris and Johnny Stuvland. However, the Buckaroos return some experience with starters Shaw Jerome, Ryan Russell and Tyler Newsom.

"It's exciting getting back, it always is," he said. "The best thing is having our team set now and being able to start molding our process. I've been calling us a project from the start of the summer and that's basically what we are. We have a great group of guys, they're fun to be around and I think they like each other, but it's a work-in-progress."

For each of the past three seasons, the Buckaroos have been molded around the leadership of Smith and earned three consecutive league titles and a fourth place finish at the 5A state tournament just last season. As the Buckaroos begin their challenging road to a fourth consecutive title, Tedder said that the team's focus throughout the summer and these first few weeks of practice are figuring out who will be the next group to step up.

"Can you play without a guy that this program had been molded around? Who's going to be that next guy? That was a fun process to see and I think we have a couple of guys that could step up and take that role," Tedder said. "But what is nice is it'll be shared through a couple of guys, which is good."

The Buckaroo boys are not the only storyline to follow throughout the winter, though. Here are a few more from Umatilla and Morrow County schools to keep track of this season:

NIXYAAWII REPEAT?: The Nixyaawii Golden Eagles girls basketball team steamrolled through their season with a 27-0 record to capture the Class 1A state championship, and looked primed to do so again this year.

The 2016-17 *East Oregonian* Player of the Year Mary Stewart is joined again by fellow seniors Milan Schimmel and Kaitlynn Melton, a trio that terrorized opponents last season with their abilities to score, rebound and dish out passes.

Nixyaawii gets its season underway on Dec. 1 with a road **See WINTER SPORTS/2B**

Altuve wins AL in runaway, Stanton wins tightly-contested NL race

By JAKE SEINER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jose Altuve and the Houston Astros have grown together, enduring an arduous rebuild and coming out the other side among baseball's best.

These days, nobody is standing taller.

Altuve won the American League MVP award Thursday, towering over New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge by a wide margin and capping Houston's championship season with another piece of hardware.

Giancarlo Stanton won the NL MVP, edging Joey Votto of the Cincinnati Reds in the closest vote since 1979.

The 5-foot-6 Altuve drew 27 of the 30 first-place votes in balloting by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. "I was surprised that I won it,"



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster, File

In this Aug. 10 file photo, Miami Marlins' Giancarlo Stanton (27) watches his home run during a game against the Washington Nationals.

Altuve said. "I wasn't expecting this."

It was a landslide long in

the making. Altuve has been in Houston since general manager Jeff Luhnow took a scorched earth

approach to developing a winner. The Astros lost 100-plus games in each of Altuve's first three seasons, beginning in 2011.

Houston won its first World Series earlier this month, and it needed its longest-tenured player to get there. Altuve batted a major league-best .346 in the regular season, hit 24 home runs with 81 RBIs, scored 112 times, stole 32 bases and showed a sharp glove at second base. Voting for these honors was completed before the postseason began.

It's been over a decade since Altuve signed with Houston from Venezuela — only after he was sent home from one tryout and told he was too short.

"They told me not to come back," Altuve said. "It was something me and my dad, he went with me that day, we were like, 'We have to go again. We have to try again.'"

See MVP/2B

Women's College Basketball

Hebard helps No. 10 Oregon beat No. 19 Texas A&M

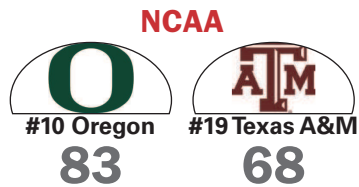
Ducks stay hot to start season, next face No. 5 Louisville on Sunday

Associated Press

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Ruthy Hebard scored a season-high 24 points on 10-for-10 shooting and No. 10 Oregon beat No. 19 Texas A&M 83-68 on Thursday night.

Down six at the half, the Ducks (3-0) scored the first seven points of the third quarter to grab a 35-34 lead. After A&M (2-1) briefly led once more, Oregon began running away late in the period.

The Aggies unraveled before the home crowd in the third quarter



primarily because of Oregon's precision passing and clutch shooting, the latter in particular by the sophomore Hebard, who only missed from the free throw line (4 of 7).

Oregon senior guard Lexi Bando, one of the nation's top long-distance shooters, was 3 of 6 from the 3-point line, in particularly stinging the Aggies from the left corner in the decisive second half. Bando's career 46 percent shooting from the 3-point

line leads the nation among active players.

The Aggies tried making it interesting late in the game, when a layup by Anriel Howard and consecutive 3-pointers by Lulu McKinney and Danni Williams tightened the gap to 67-62 with 3:28 remaining.

But Hebard's hard-fought short jumper from the right side of the key on her 10th field goal of the night on 10 tries lifted the Ducks to an insurmountable lead. Freshman guard Chennedy Carter paced the Aggies with a career-high 23 points, and Howard grabbed 13 rebounds.

BIG PICTURE

Oregon: In the first true test of the season and first venture on the road, the Ducks flew past the

defensive-minded Aggies with flying colors (primarily neon green and yellow). The Ducks have won all three of their games by double-digits, with A&M easily the stiffest test to date.

Texas A&M: While smarting from a home loss and their first setback of the season, the Aggies in a couple of months will look back on this one, when they led a solid Oregon squad 34-28 at halftime, as great experience for the grind of the SEC.

UP NEXT

Oregon: The Ducks play at No. 5 Louisville on Sunday in the final of the preseason WNIT in what amounts to a bonus game this season, prior to resuming regular-season play on Tuesday at home against Eastern Washington.

Sports shorts

Timbers, Caleb Porter part ways

PORTLAND (AP) — A person familiar with the decision confirms that head coach Caleb Porter has parted ways with the Portland Timbers.

The surprise move was first reported Thursday night by the soccer website FourFourTwo.com.

Porter, 42, has been coach of the Timbers for the past five seasons, guiding the team to the MLS Cup Championship in 2015. He was named the MLS Coach of the Year after his first season with the team in 2013.

The Timbers finished this season as the top seed in the Western Conference, but fell in the conference semifinals 2-1 on aggregate to the Houston Dynamo.

Porter finishes his run in Portland with a 60-50-52 record.

A team spokesman did not respond to messages seeking comment.



Porter

"It all stems from hard work and it stems from wanting to be difference makers. ... It's about bringing it together with hard work. That's what we've been doing. We just have to make sure we keep it going."

— Gabe Landeskog

The Colorado Avalanche forward was modest, praising the team's effort after his first-career hat trick in the 6-2 victory over the Washington Capitals.

Mariners trade reliever Vieira for international bonus money

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The Seattle Mariners have gained more flexibility if they want to try to sign star Japanese pitcher/outfielder Shohei Otani.

They acquired an additional \$500,000 for their international signing bonus pool from the Chicago White Sox in a trade for right-hander Thyago Vieira.

Otani, a 23-year-old, would be limited to a minor league contract with a signing bonus under Major League Baseball's new collective bargaining agreement. The trade announced Thursday increases the Mariners' available money for a signing bonus to \$1,557,500.

The 24-year-old Vieira made his major league debut with a scoreless inning against Baltimore on Aug. 14, his only big league appearance. He had a 4.00 ERA in 41 games between Double-A and Triple-A.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

2009 — Kobe Bryant scores 40 points for the 100th time in his career, and the Los Angeles Lakers avoided a rare three-game losing streak with a 106-93 victory over the Detroit Pistons. Bryant trails only Wilt Chamberlain (271) and Michael Jordan (173) in 40-point games in NBA history.

2013 — Jimmie Johnson wins his sixth Sprint Cup championship in eight years. Johnson, who needed only to finish 23rd or better to wrap up the title, finishes ninth.

Contact us at 541-966-0838 or sports@eastoregonian.com