

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Staff photo by Eric Singer
Pendleton seniors Shaw Jerome, left, and Nick Bower, right, sign their Letter of Intent to play collegiate football on Wednesday at Big John's Pizza in Pendleton. Jerome will attend Western Oregon and Bower will attend Pacific.

PENDLETON

Bucks make dreams a reality

Jerome, Bower sign on to play college football

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

Dating back to their years in elementary school, Shaw Jerome and Nick Bower have been best friends and have shared a passion for sports — specifically football.

Jerome even recalls that he and Bower always played some kind of sport together at recess while at McKay Creek Elementary School, and that the duo had to be split up onto different teams after awhile to make things more fair.

They also began playing football together in the Pendleton Youth Football Association all the way through high school, where the two developed into one of the best quarterback-wide

receiver tandems in Class 5A.

That friendship is also what made Wednesday night memorable for both boys. In front of a large contingent of family, friends and past and present coaches, the two friends sat side-by-side at a small table in the party room at Big John's Pizza in Pendleton and signed their National Letters of Intent to play college football beginning in the fall. It's something each kid has dreamed about

since their youth football days.

"We've been best friends since we were seven years old, before football even started for us," Bower said. "Hopefully it continues for the rest of our life and the fact we'll be only 45 minutes away is a good thing."

Added Jerome, "It's been nice to have him (Bower) by my side all the way through the years, and he's been a big part of my life for sure."

See BUCKS/3B

College Football

USC signs Pac-12s top class on signing day

Trojans sign pair from Oregon while Ducks, Beavers finish strong

By JOHN MARSHALL
AP Sports Writer

Clay Helton has proven to be an adept recruiter in his three full seasons in Southern California, annually bringing in loaded recruiting classes.

His 2018 class may be the best of the bunch.

Headlined by a quartet of five-star recruits, Helton and the Trojans signed 17 players on Wednesday in a class that was ranked sixth nationally by 247Sports.com. Helton's haul comes a day after he signed a contract extension through 2023.

USC may have filled its quarterback need after Sam Darnold declared for the NFL draft, signing five-star quarterback JT Daniels of nearby Irvine.

Daniels, who played at Mater Dei High School, was the Gatorade national player of the year as a junior and committed to the Trojans over the summer for the class of 2019. He is now in the process of graduating early so he can reclassify for 2018.

Daniels will have a familiar target to throw to after Amon-Ra St. Brown, a five-star receiver from Mater Dei, signed with USC. His brother Equanimeous recently left Notre Dame early for the NFL draft and his other brother, Osiris, will be a redshirt freshman at Stanford next season.

A third Mater Dei player, four-star linebacker Solomon Tuliaupupu also signed with the Trojans.

The recruiting class also includes five-star cornerback Olajiah Griffin, son of rapper Warren G. Griffin's announcement had a Hollywood flair to it, with his father and Snoop Dogg in attendance.

Five-star linebacker Palaie Gaoteote IV, of Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas, signed with USC during the early signing period.

Other signing day tidbits from around the Pac-12:

HUSKIES HAUL: USC may have had the Pac-12's highest-rated class, but Washington was not

See SIGNING DAY/2B

Women's College Basketball



Oregon's Sabrina Ionescu, left, leaves the court as Stanford players celebrate their win in an NCAA college basketball game Sunday Feb. 4, 2018.

Chris Pietsch/
The Register-Guard
via AP

Ducks glum, but determined

Oregon now facing steeper path to Pac-12 regular-season title

By RYAN THORBURN
The Register-Guard

EUGENE — It was a loss worthy of an extended mourning period.

Oregon's path to a women's Pac-12 regular-season championship is a lot steeper after Sunday's 78-65 defeat to Stanford at Matthew Knight Arena.

"We're going to put this game behind us maybe in a few hours," sophomore guard Sabrina Ionescu

Pac-12 Standings

Team	Conf.	Overall
Oregon	10-2	21-4
UCLA	10-2	19-4
Stanford	10-2	16-8
Oregon St	8-4	17-6
Arizona St	8-4	17-7

said after exiting a somber locker room. "A few days actually."

The Ducks (21-4, 10-2 Pac-12), who slipped three spots in this week's Associated Press poll to No. 9, play four of their final six games on the road.

Oregon has back-to-back games against two ranked teams — No. 8 UCLA in the home

finale on Feb. 19 and at No. 25 Arizona State on Feb. 23.

The Cardinal (16-8, 10-2) moved into a tie for first place after Brittany McPhee scored 31 of her career-high 33 points in the second half.

Stanford outscored Oregon 21-2 in points off turnovers, 27-18 on three-pointers, 36-28 in the paint and 11-0 in bench points.

But the team's record is what eventually caught coach Kelly Graves' eye as he examined the postgame box score at the podium.

"It's been a great year. I look down, and we're 21-4 and 10-2," Graves said. "If you would have

given me that back in November or December I would have said, yeah I'll take it. We're still in good position."

Oregon plays at last-place Washington (7-16, 1-11) on Friday and Washington State (10-14, 3-9) on Sunday. Stanford, which has lost seven games to ranked teams this season, doesn't have any remaining games against opponents in the poll.

The Ducks don't make the Bay Area trip this season in the Pac-12's unbalanced schedule.

"Unfortunately we don't have another chance to go against them," Graves said. "So if it does end up in a tie, I know we still

See DUCKS/2B

Sports shorts

Ex-Hermiston star earns Big 12 Wrestler of the Week honor

Former Hermiston wrestling star Sam Colbray and current Iowa State Cyclone earned the Big 12 Conference's Co-Wrestler of the Week for his standout performance over the weekend.

Colbray, a redshirt freshman wrestling in the 197-pound class, earned two dual victories for the Cyclones. His second win was the most impressive, as he upset South Dakota State's Nate Rotert — ranked No. 11 in the country — with a win by fall in 5:22. He also scored a 5-3 decision over North Dakota State's Cordell Eaton to help Iowa State secure a 21-20 team victory in the dual.

On the season, Colbray holds a 13-10 record with two major decisions and one pin. Colbray and Iowa State will be back in action this weekend with duals against Fresno State and Northern Iowa.



Colbray

Salt Lake City 1st in US to seek 2030 Winter Olympic bid

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Salt Lake City has become the first U.S. city to announce it will pursue a bid for the 2030 Winter Olympics.

An exploratory committee that studied the issue and state leaders announced the decision Wednesday after spending nearly four months ensuring Utah could host the Winter Games again without losing money. The city hosted the 2002 Winter Olympics.

The U.S. Olympic Committee has until March to pick a city for 2026, though chief executive Scott Blackmun said recently that officials believe the 2030 Winter Olympics are more realistic for a U.S. city.

In the U.S., Denver and Reno are considering bids. Internationally, cities weighing bids include Sion, Switzerland; Calgary, Canada; Stockholm, Sweden; and Sapporo, Japan.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1962 — Wilt Chamberlain of the Philadelphia Warriors scores 59 points in a 136-120 victory over the New York Knicks, beating his own single-season scoring record of 3,033.

1987 — Seattle's Tom Chambers, a last-minute replacement for the injured Ralph Sampson, scores a game-high 34 points to lead the West to a 154-149 overtime win over the East in the NBA All-Star Game before 34,275 at the Kingdome.

1996 — Charles Barkley becomes the 22nd NBA player to reach 20,000 points, scoring 30 in the Phoenix Suns' 107-102 victory over New Jersey.
Contact us at 541-966-0838 or sports@eastoregonian.com

"Once I caught it, I just trusted everything I've done in my career."

— LeBron James

The Cleveland Cavalier said of his buzzer beater in single overtime to seal the 140-138 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Wednesday night. The Cavs had won just seven of their last 20 games up to that point.