

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2018



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1B

Prep sports



Pendleton pitcher Lauren Richards smiles at a comment from Coach Tim Cary during a scrimmage on Wednesday at Sunridge Middle School. Pendleton begins its 2018 season on Mar. 13 with a road game at Hanford (WA).

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Spring sports season is here

First contests are just five days away

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

Under an overcast sky on a cool and breezy Wednesday afternoon, the sounds of mitts popping and aluminum bats cracking filled the air at Steve Cary Softball Field in Pendleton. The sights and sounds were a welcomed change for this reporter — because it means the spring sports season is here.

Practices for all sports — soft-

ball, baseball, track and field, tennis, and golf — officially began on Feb. 26, and all teams have roughly two weeks until games and meets begin on Mar. 12 to whip things into game shape.

Although practices began last week, numerous teams are only just getting up to full strength this week with basketball playoffs coming to an end. The Pendleton softball team is one of those teams with key contributors Kalan McGlothlan, Rylee Gentner and Sami Spriet finally able to trade in their basketball sneakers for cleats to gear up for the Buckaroos' first game, which is only six days away.

High expectations surround the Buckaroos this season. The team has compiled a 49-10 overall record and reached the Class 5A state semifinals in each of the last two seasons, losing each time to the eventual state champion. And while some big-name players have graduated in that span — notably Alexis Morrison, Payton Hergert, Maddy Parker — the Buckaroos return enough firepower that sets them up for perhaps one last big push at another state championship.

Leading the charge will be two-time all-state pitcher in senior Lauren Richards, with senior Alexi Brehaut as a solid No. 2 and junior

catcher Kila Solomon making up an excellent battery. At the plate, McGlothlan, Brehaut, Aspen Garton and Gentner make up a powerful middle of the order with Kirah McGlothlan and Richards setting the table at the top.

The Bucks get started with a road trip to Hanford (WA) on Tuesday and begin league play at The Dalles in mid-April as they set their sights on another conference championship and a trip to state in June.

Here are some other teams and storylines to watch for throughout this spring season:

See SPRING/3B

MLB

Ichiro back in Seattle

Mariners legend signs one-year deal with team

Associated Press

PEORIA, Ariz. — Ichiro Suzuki's wish was granted. He is back in the familiar white and blue jersey of the Seattle Mariners.



Ichiro

“Even in the offseason when I would go back to Japan, I always came back to Seattle. This was my home ... has always been my home,” the 44-year-old outfielder said through a translator Wednesday after finalizing a \$750,000, one-year contract. “Somewhere deep inside, I wanted to return and wear this uniform again.”

Almost six years away, Suzuki returned to help patch an injury-depleted outfield on the team he played for from 2001-12. The 10-time All-Star can earn an additional \$1.25 million in performance bonuses based on plate appearances: \$200,000 each for 150 and each additional 50 through 350, and \$250,000 for 400.

Suzuki earned the 2001 AL Rookie of the Year and MVP, with the Mariners and won a pair of AL batting titles. He was traded to the New York Yankees midway through 2012, played parts of three seasons with the Yankees, then spent three seasons with Miami.

He has a .312 average and 3,080 hits, not including the 1,278 hits he amassed in nine

See MARINERS/2B

Men's College Basketball

Beavers outlast Huskies in overtime

By JOHN MARSHALL
AP Basketball Writer

LAS VEGAS — Oregon State had a penchant for finding ways to lose instead of win for most of the regular season. If the opposing team hit a big shot or one of the Beavers missed a key free throw, they would slump their shoulders and watch the other team walk off with a victory.

With a chance to move on in the Pac-12 tournament, Oregon State found a way to make the big plays down the stretch.

Drew Eubanks scored 19 points, Stephen Thompson Jr. added 14 and the Beavers outlasted Washington 69-66 in overtime on Wednesday night in the opening round of the tournament.

“We said at halftime: ‘Guys, when we make mistakes and we coach you and get after you, you



can't drop your chins,” Oregon State coach Wayne Tinkle said. “That's part of developing toughness and maturity. And I thought the second half we really did that. That was the difference.”

Oregon State went up 66-64 in overtime on Tres Tinkle's two free throws and Washington tried to set up a shot to tie, but David Crisp threw the ball out of bounds. Eubanks hit 1 of 2 free throws and Crisp scored on a layup with 3.1 seconds left to pull the Huskies within two.

Tinkle hit two more free throws

with 2.5 seconds left and Crisp got a good look at a tying 3-pointer, but it caromed off the back of the rim.

Oregon State (16-15) moves on to face No. 2 seed Southern California in the quarterfinals on Thursday.

“It's definitely a great feeling so far,” Thompson said. “We know we have a lot of work to do in order to accomplish what we want to accomplish.”

Matisse Thybulle had 19 points and Noah Dickerson 15 points as Washington (20-12) saw its slim NCAA Tournament hopes all but disappear.

“You've got to tip your hat to Oregon State,” Washington coach Mike Hopkins said. “I mean, they battled, they made the plays down the stretch that you had to make.

See BEAVERS/2B



Oregon State's Drew Eubanks, right, dunks against Washington's Noah Dickerson during overtime in an NCAA college basketball game in the first round of the Pac-12 men's tournament Wednesday, March 7, 2018, in Las Vegas. Oregon State won 69-66 in overtime.

AP Photo/Isaac Brekken

Sports shorts

Harvick docked playoff points for car violations from Vegas win

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Kevin Harvick has been stripped of the playoff points he earned for winning at Las Vegas because of violations discovered on his Ford.

NASCAR ruled Wednesday that Harvick's No. 4 Stewart-Haas Racing team violated the rule requiring rear window support braces holding the rear window glass rigid, as well as a rule requiring the right side rocker panel extension to be aluminum.

The penalty is the loss of the seven playoff points Harvick earned for winning Sunday's race and both stages. It was Harvick's second consecutive win of the season.

Harvick was also docked 20 points. Crew chief Rodney Childers was fined \$50,000, and car chief Robert Smith was suspended two races.



Harvick

“We all hope for that Sunday afternoon pairing alongside all us young guys. We want that chance to be able to battle it out with him on Sunday. I know he wants that, too, to show us what he's done to other people. Even if it's not 2000 Tiger, it's still Tiger on a Sunday.”

— Jordan Spieth

The pro golfer is excited to play with Tiger Woods again beginning Thursday in the Valspar Championship in Florida. The last tournament both played in together was the 2015 Phoenix Open before Woods' injuries.

MLBPA's free-agent training camp to close Friday

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP) — The spring training workout facility created for free agents by the players' association, will close Friday after three weeks.

Major League Baseball Players Association executive director Tony Clark announced the decision Wednesday after meeting with New York Mets players as part of his tour of the 30 team camps.

With dozens of free agents unsigned as spring training began, the camp opened Feb. 13 at the IMG Academy in Bradenton and workouts started the next day. Forty-one players have attended, and Mike Napoli, Adam Lind, Tyler Clippard, Lucas Duda, Alejandro De Aza, Carlos Torres and Tommy Layne left after agreeing to contracts.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1971 — Joe Frazier wins the world heavyweight title with a unanimous 15-round decision over Muhammad Ali.

1997 — In the World Indoor Championship in Paris, Kevin Little becomes the first white American sprinter in 41 years to win a major international competition, matching the U.S. 200 record of 20.40 seconds.

2004 — Air Force punctuates a record-setting season when it moved into The Associated Press men's basketball Top 25 for the first time in the program's 48-year history.

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