

EAST OREGONIAN

SPORTS

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1B

MILTON-FREEWATER



Pendleton’s Aspen Garton attempts to get around the tag from Mac-Hi catcher Ashlyn Marly at home plate in the Bucks’ 7-1 win against the Pioneers on Wednesday in Milton-Freewater.

Let the playoffs begin

Pendleton defeats Mac-Hi 7-1 in final postseason tuneup

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

MILTON-FREEWATER — On Wednesday afternoon, the Pendleton and Mac-Hi softball teams met at Yantis Park for both teams’ final regular season game of the season.

It marked the third consecutive season that the Class 5A Buckaroos and Class 4A Pioneers scheduled the non-league game for the regular season finale. The two teams also previously met in the preseason portion for a single game, but the season finale serves another purpose for both sides.

For the Buckaroos, it presents a chance for one final postseason tuneup to work out any final kinks against a top-tier 4A program and two-time state champion. For the Pioneers, they get another chance against a 5A powerhouse and two-time state champion program with a loaded lineup and top-tier pitcher.

“I love Pendleton,” Mac-Hi head coach Nicole Christian said on Wednesday. “They’ve got a good power one through six in the lineup and it’s good for our pitchers to see those type of hitters and our defense to see those reps at hard hits and put pressure on them. Because



Pendleton’s Lauren Richards throws from the mound in the Bucks’ 7-1 win against Mac-Hi on Wednesday in Milton-Freewater.

anything like this is better than a practice.”

It was the Buckaroos that earned the victory by a 7-1 score, though it was a much tougher game than the April 10 meeting that ended in an easy 12-2 Buckaroos win in five innings. Buckaroos (24-2 overall) head coach Tim Cary credited the Pioneers’ fight though all seven innings, which really pushed his squad.

“Mac-Hi has unbelievable energy,” Cary said. “They were chanting and screaming in the dugout and on the field right up until the very last out and you got to love a team that just believes the entire time. That’s why we love to play Mac-Hi. They bit and scratch and claw to do anything they can to stay in the game and fight to the very end, and they’re great competitors.

“We love playing those guys in the preseason and as we get ready for the postseason. It’s just a good matchup for both teams.”

Neither team had recorded a hit through the first two innings as Pendleton pitcher Lauren Richards and Mac-Hi (16-10) pitcher McKenna Stallings kept the offenses quiet. The Buckaroos finally got to Stallings with some two-out magic in the third inning when Kirah McGlothran’s single started a string of five straight hits that led to three runs.

Stallings then gave way to Sydney Earls in

See SOFTBALL/3B

Prep softball

Stefani, Richards earn top league awards

East Oregonian

Hermiston junior shortstop Sydney Stefani was voted Columbia River Conference Co-Player of the Year and Pendleton senior pitcher was voted Co-Pitcher of the Year by the league’s coaches on Wednesday.

Richards shares the Pitcher of the Year award with Hood River Valley senior Hannah McNerney. It’s the third straight year the Pendleton right-hander has took home the award, earning this year with a 11-1 record with a 0.76 ERA and 84 strikeouts in 73 2/3 innings in conference play.

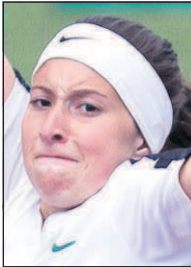
Stefani was a catalyst for the Bulldogs this season as the team’s leadoff hitter while also playing rock-solid defense at shortstop. In conference play, she hit for a .571 average (24-for-42) and had a 1.400 on-base plus slugging percentage (OPS), with seven extra-base hits, nine RBI, 13 runs scored and five stolen bases. She shares the conference’s top honor with Hood River Valley’s Haylee Baker.

Pendleton and Hood River Valley each had eight players make the all-conference list, with Pendleton placing a conference-best seven on the first team. Along with Richards, senior Alexi Brehaut (.568 avg., 6 extra-base hits (XBH)), senior Kalan McGlothran (.440 avg., 3 HR) and junior Aspen Garton (.450 avg., 1 HR) were first team infielders, while junior Kila Solomon (.384 avg., 1 HR) was first team catcher and sophomore Sami Spriet (.285 avg., 3 doubles) was first team utility.

Senior shortstop Rylee Gentner (.363 avg., 4 HR) was the Buck-



Stefani



Richards

See AWARDS/3B

HELIX

Grizzlies’ Bennett signs with the Yotes

Helix senior to play softball at College of Idaho

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

HELIX — Charmayne Bennett never really dreamed about playing softball in college when she started playing the sport as a kid growing up in Helix, and for the most part never really pursued the opportunity as a high

schooler.

In fact, she had decided over the winter that she was going to attend College of Idaho as a full-time student, majoring in psychology. However, when Bennett visited the college’s campus in Caldwell, Idaho, in February, the chance to play collegiate softball fell right into her lap.

“When I visited there they (the school) asked me if I would like the opportunity to talk to the softball coach and I obviously took it,” Bennett said.

“So I got the contact info for the coach and from there we emailed and talked and discussed what needed to happen.”

Though she was committed to the school for academics, Bennett signed her National Letter of Intent to play softball Wednesday morning in front of her classmates, teachers and family in Helix’s school cafeteria.

Bennett, who played prep softball with Weston-McEwen through

See BENNET/3B



Helix senior Charmayne Bennett smiles before signing her National Letter of Intent to play softball at College of Idaho on Wednesday morning in Helix.

Staff photo by Eric Singer

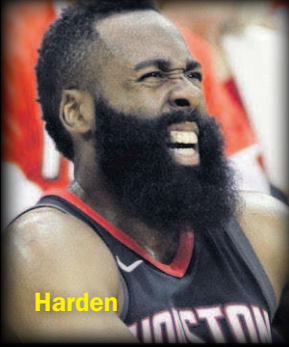
Sports shorts

2 Sherpa guides scales Everest setting records

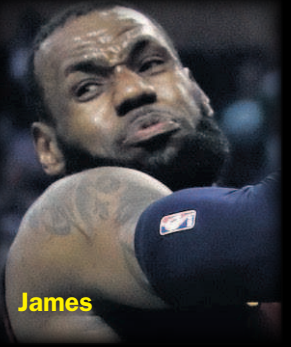
KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — 48-year-old Kami Rita, a veteran Sherpa guide scaled Mount Everest on Wednesday for the 22nd time, setting a record for the most climbs of the world’s highest mountain, while a female Sherpa made it to the summit for the ninth time, shattering her own record for the most climbs by a woman.



Harden, James, Davis finalists for NBA MVP award



Harden



James

NEW YORK (AP) — Houston’s James Harden, Cleveland’s LeBron James and Anthony Davis of New Orleans are the finalists for the NBA’s MVP award.

Harden, who led the league in scoring, has twice been a runner-up for the award, including last year when Russell Westbrook won. James has won the MVP award four times.

The three finalists for the individual awards were announced Wednesday. The winners will be announced on June 25 in Santa Monica, California during the NBA Awards show.

THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1915 — Rhine Maiden wins the Preakness Stakes, to produce the only Kentucky Derby-Preakness wins by fillies in the same year.

1970 — Hank Aaron gets an infield single off Cincinnati’s Wayne Simpson for his 3,000th hit.

1983 — The New York Islanders beat the Edmonton Oilers 4-2 to win their fourth consecutive Stanley Cup.

1998 — David Wells pitches the 13th perfect game in modern major league history.

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