

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton senior center Everett Willard has put the hard work in at the gym this year and he is seeing the benefits on the field.

## The right man for the job

Pendleton lineman Everett Willard has proven himself worthy on both sides of the ball

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

Quick. Name the starting five across Pendleton's offensive line.

Drawing blank? Bucks senior center Everett Willard said fans shouldn't feel bad.

"The offensive line is a pretty underrated position," Willard said. "Unless they are related, I don't think they would know."

But know this, Willard is one of the main keys to Pendleton's 9-1 record and its spot in the state quarterfinals.

"Honestly, we go as he goes," Bucks coach Erik Davis said. "He is the quarterback of the offensive line. He reads defen-

sive fronts, recognizes blitzes. Sometimes, he's telling (quarterback) Trent (Sorey) what to do. Anything he says and does is gospel. He is invaluable."

Willard's work on the field was noticed by the league coaches. He was named to the Special District 1 first team offense as a center, and the first team defense at tackle.

"There's not a whole lot of recognition for the offensive or defensive linemen," Willard said. "To know people are watching and seeing what I have done, builds confidence. It takes a pretty selfless person to play O-line. When you do your job, it helps everyone else to their job."

The 6-foot-2, 250-pound Willard is in his third year starting at center, a position he began playing toward the end of his freshman year.

"Going from freshman ball and skipping JV, the speed gap was enormous," Willard said. "I wasn't really familiar with the posi-

tion or the speed of the game. I don't think I would be the player I am now without those growing pains."

Sorey and former quarterback Nick Bower (now at Pacific University) have benefited from Willard's hard work and protection.

"I do my best to keep Trent safe back there," Willard said. "I don't want my quarterback to lack confidence in the pocket. I try to keep his head in the right place."

And Sorey appreciates his center's efforts.

"He is just as much a field general as I am," Sorey said. "He's played center for quite a while, and I've taken quite a few snaps from him. He blocks his tail off. His protection is pretty solid. Guys pretty much have to go around all of them (linemen) to get to the backfield."

See WILLARD/2B

## Bucks brace for Scappoose in quarterfinals

Pendleton won the first meeting against Indians seven weeks ago

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

The deeper you get in the playoffs, the tougher the competition gets.

Pendleton will strap on the pads Friday against Scappoose in the 5A quarterfinals at the Round-Up Grounds.

If the opponent sounds familiar, it should. The Bucks (9-1) beat the Indians (8-2) 47-27 in a nonleague game on Sept. 21. But don't let that victory give you false hope.

"It is hard to beat a good team twice," Pendleton coach Erik Davis said. "We turned the ball over four times in the first half last time. Scappoose has a tremendous winning tradition. We are in for a dog fight."

Indians coach Sean McNabb said his team is excited to play Pendleton again.

"We are excited to play at the

### PREP FOOTBALL



**Pendleton Buckaroos (9-1)**



**Scappoose Indians (8-2)**

Friday, 7 p.m., at Round-Up Grounds, Pendleton

historic Round-Up Grounds," McNabb said. "I don't think we were as confident as we should have been the first time we played them. We ended up jumping out to a 13- or 14-point lead at the beginning. They have a lot of good athletes with a lot of speed."

Scappoose likes to the run the ball, and has a pretty lethal three-headed monster working out of the backfield.

Senior Connor McNabb (6-0, 190) has run for more than 1,300 yards and 22 touchdowns. He has nearly 2,300 all-purpose yards for the Indians.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton lineman Everette Willard, 75, blocks La Salle defender Isaac Calvert-Russell, 34, in the Bucks' 62-14 win against the Falcons on Oct. 5 in Pendleton.

Fellow seniors Quincy Cleveland (6-1, 235) and Matt Roth (6-1, 220) have chewed up their fair share of yards this season, and junior quarterback Jakobi Kessi (6-0, 200) likes to take off and run, as well.

"Running the ball is our

strength," Coach McNabb said. "We have three good backs, and most of our offensive line is intact from the year before. When you run the football, you can put yourself in position to win games. We

See BUCKS/2B

### College volleyball

## Playoffs loom for BMCC squad

By BRETT KANE  
East Oregonian

Last Friday, the Blue Mountain Community College Timberwolves clinched a spot in the Northwest Athletic Conference volleyball playoffs after a road win against Big Bend.

This Friday, they'll host their last conference match against Columbia Basin before embarking on their playoff journey.

The team secured the No. 4 spot on the east region standings after last week, just ahead of Treasure Valley (9-7). But the road to another title could prove challenging. The Timberwolves won the title in 2010, and 2012-2015.

Spokane, Walla Walla, and North Idaho sit ahead of Blue Mountain in the standings. Spokane remains the heavyweight, sitting firm at the top by remaining undefeated.

But head coach Jessica Humphreys is optimistic about the Timberwolves' chances.

"We've learned this season that we absolutely can be the No. 1 team in all of the NWAC," she said. "It's just a matter of everyone playing at their peak together."

The NWAC tournament runs from Nov. 15-18, and Blue Mountain will have to win five matches to win the championship. But before the playoffs, they still have their Friday night opponents to focus on.

Columbia Basin (2-31, 0-15) has suffered a rough season. The Timberwolves (23-9, 10-5) have already beat them in three earlier this year.

"We expect to do it again," Humphreys said. "They're in a transitional period, and they're working with a new coach this year."

Humphreys said her team's performance this year bodes well for a home victory to close conference play.

"We have a strong defense, and a strong setter, too. That'll help us bring the competition," she said.

Setter Sophia Casarez has noticed that it's more than skill that has given her team success — it's their attitude.

"We always get up at 6 a.m. with a smile, ready to work," she said. "Even if we lose, we'll always have that positive energy to fall back on."

No matter Friday's outcome, the Timberwolves will still make it into the NWAC tournament. Humphreys has been prepping the girls for the playoffs since midseason, running them through extra workouts and conditioning.

"There are some tough teams out there," Humphreys said. "In my experience, teams that fight for every point are the ones that stay alive. Our goal is to make a run down to the end of the bracket."

The Columbia Basin match begins Friday at 6 p.m. at Blue Mountain.

### Sports shorts



AP Photo/Gregory Bull

New York Mets general manager Brodie Van Wagenen.

### Van Wagenen: Tebow earned promotion to Triple-A with Mets

CARLSBAD, Calif. (AP) — New York Mets minor leaguer Tim Tebow has earned a promotion to Triple-A Syracuse.

The 2007 Heisman Trophy winner and former NFL quarterback hit .273 with six homers and 36 RBIs in 84 games this year for Double-A Binghamton. His season was cut short by a broken hamate bone in his right hand, which required surgery July 24.

"Timmy is not a guy you want to put restraints on," new Mets general manager Brodie Van Wagenen said Wednesday. "If he sees a block, he's going to work that much

harder to go overcome whatever somebody places on him. I believe in him."

Before he was hired by the Mets last week, Van Wagenen worked at CAA Baseball and represented the 31-year-old outfielder.

Tebow hit .301 in June for Binghamton and .340 in 15 games in July.

"Given the hamate injury he had last year, his momentum was stopped," Van Wagenen said. "The goal is if he can pick that up in spring training and hopefully get off to a good start in Syracuse, then we'll evaluate it when he's ready."

### THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1959 — Elgin Baylor of the Minneapolis Lakers scores 64 points against the Boston Celtics.

1970 — Tom Dempsey of New Orleans kicks an NFL-record 63-yard field goal on the final play of the game to give the Saints a 19-17 victory over the Lions.

2009 — Indianapolis becomes the fourth team in league history with 17 consecutive regular-season wins. New England did it twice — winning a record 21 straight from 2006-08 and 18 in a row from 2003-04.

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