

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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OSAA 5A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP



CENTRAL 11, PENDLETON 4

BUCKS FALL SHORT



Pendleton catcher Justin Duso tags out Emiliano Alarcon at home plate. Central defeated the Pendleton Bucks 11-4 to win the OSAA 5A State Baseball Championship at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer on Saturday. East Oregonian Photo/Ben Lonergan

Pendleton drops 5A baseball title game to Central Panthers

By **BRETT KANE**
East Oregonian

KEIZER — Pendleton watched their dream season quickly crumble as two bad innings led to the Central Panthers winning the Oregon School Activities Association 5A baseball state title.

On Saturday, the 5A's top-ranked Panthers put up nine runs in the first two innings on their way to beating the Bucks and claiming the state title 11-4 at Volcanoes Stadium.

Although no team hopes to take home a second place trophy, Pendleton coach TJ Haguewood knows that moments like these only come around every so often. The last time the Bucks were in this position, it was the spring of 1992, where they lost a 4A championship game in Portland to McNary, 7-4.

"I went to that game," Haguewood said. "I went as a fan. I bleed green. This was a really special opportunity. It's a tough way to end the season, but I couldn't be more proud of the boys."

Pendleton starting pitcher Cooper Roberts struck out Central's lead-off batter Hunter Chase, but the next three batters each had singles, including Brendan Lesmeister, whose line drive to left field drove a runner home. Emiliano Alarcon would do the same on the next at-bat, and Justin Girod's two-run single would cap off the four-run inning.

It was a lead that the Panthers never gave up. The four-run burst set down the path early to their first state title since 1958, when they shut out Myrtle Creek 6-0 in the A-2 state championships.

"I'm just happy for the guys. They worked extremely hard to enjoy this," said Central coach Tom Roberts. "I can't say enough about Pend-

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Karen Demianew drapes tassels over the shoulders of Matt Demianew before an on-field graduation ceremony held for the Bucks. Central defeated the Pendleton Bucks 11-4 to win the OSAA 5A State Baseball Championship at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer on Saturday. East Oregonian Photo/Ben Lonergan

Pendleton baseball celebrates graduation in Keizer

By **ANNIE FOWLER**
and **BRETT KANE**
East Oregonian

KEIZER — The traditional pomp and circumstance of graduation is something parents and family wait years for.

The Pendleton High School Class of 2019 graduated Saturday morning at Round-Up Arena,

minus seven of its classmates, who played for the 5A state baseball title later that day.

Pam Duso, mother of Bucks catcher Justin Duso, said choosing the championships over the "official" graduation ceremony was a no-brainer.

"He's going to remember this for the rest of his life," Duso said. "The boys wanted to prac-

tice together as a team. Baseball players are very superstitious. They didn't want to break their routine."

While Duso, Matt Demianew, Quinn Doherty, Ryan Stahl, Austen Fell, Chris Large and Gabe Umbarger missed walking with rest of their classmates, they still

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