

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Pendleton's Garton headed to Texas to play softball

Weatherford College is the next stop for shortstop Aspen Garton

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Aspen Garton knew after one informal practice with the softball team that

Weatherford College was the place for her.

The recent Pendleton graduate made her official visit to the two-year Texas school in February, and felt right at home.

"I fell in love with the team and the coach (Haylee Williams)," Garton said. "I got to practice with the team, and that's when I knew I could play there. I liked the school

and the facility. That made it easy to make my decision."

Garton, who primarily plays shortstop, also looked at other schools in Texas, Arizona and New Mexico.

"Arizona is really dry," Garton said. "Texas can be hot too, but I am lucky I will miss it when it's really hot and humid. I will still be in the heat, but I love that. That

was part of my decision."

The Coyotes finished 34-21 this season, and fell short of a return trip to the NJCAA Division I Championships.

"They have a great team," Garton said of Weatherford, which has not had a losing season since 2012. "They play in the best conference in Texas (Northern Texas Junior College Athletic Conference). The

softball is really good."

An elementary education major, Garton also plans to minor in Spanish. She received a generous scholarship from Weatherford, and she also will get a helping hand when it comes time to take her game to a four-year school.

"They help you move on,"

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Hodgen Distributing sweeps Idaho Cubs



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Nic Sheley, of Hodgen Distributing, crosses home plate and looks at the action elsewhere on the field during the first of two games Tuesday against the Idaho Cubs in Pendleton. Idaho catcher Cooper Moore also looks on.

Nic Sheley posts three doubles in home doubleheader

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Second base saw plenty of Nic Sheley on Tuesday.

During a home doubleheader against the Boise-based Idaho Cubs, he notched three doubles to help Pendleton's Hodgen Distributing to a 12-6 win in game one, and a 5-2 victory in the closer.

According to Hodgen Distributing coach Travis Zander, Sheley is more than just a force at the plate.

"He's been hitting really well for

us," Zander said, "but the best thing he adds to this team is innings on the mound. He's solid in relief pitching. We haven't started him much this season, but we will. He's a great addition to the program."

Sheley finished the opener with a 3-for-4 showing at the plate and scored a run along with two RBIs. An incoming junior transfer from South Albany High School, he got his first hit off a single in the bottom of the second inning and made it to third on two consecutive wild pitches. He was left stranded before he could cross home plate, but he got his chance to do so two innings later.

The Cubs grasped the lead in the top of the third thanks to Kaden Brown's two-RBI single, but Pendleton rallied back with eight runs in the

bottom of the fourth to put the game away.

Ty Beers led off with a single and stole second and third, leaving it open for Sheley to double and drive him in on the next at-bat.

"That was important," Sheley said of his hit. "It didn't necessarily make things easier, but it definitely relieved some stress."

Kobe Fell also posted an RBI-double in the same inning. Grayson Clarke sent a double to left field that drove in two more runs.

Idaho's Zach Merritt homered over left field in the top of the sixth, and Dylan Guerrero got an RBI-double in the seventh, but Pendleton had already pulled too far ahead.

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Deputy in clash with Raptors exec has concussion

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A deputy suffered a concussion and is on medical leave after an altercation with the president of the Toronto Raptors as he tried to join his team on the court to celebrate their NBA championship, a lawyer said Tuesday.

The 20-year-veteran of the Alameda County Sheriff's Office also has a serious jaw injury and is considering filing a lawsuit against Raptors President Masai Ujiri, attorney David Mastagni said.

"The officer is off work, disabled and wants to go back to work," Mastagni said. The name of the deputy has not been released.

The clash between the deputy and Ujiri happened as the deputy checked court-access credentials after the game Thursday in Oakland against the Golden State Warriors.

Authorities say Ujiri tried to walk past the deputy but the deputy stopped him because he didn't see Ujiri's on-court credentials.

Ujiri pushed the deputy, who pushed him back before Ujiri "made a second, more significant shove and during that shove his arm struck our deputy in the side of the head," sheriff's Sgt. Ray Kelly said. He said Ujiri also shouted obscenities.

Several bystanders intervened and Ujiri got onto the court without displaying any credentials, Kelly said.

Investigators were questioning witnesses and the office hopes to file a report to prosecutors this week recommending a misdemeanor battery charge against Ujiri, Kelly said.

They are also reviewing footage from body cameras worn by the deputy along with footage from the arena surveillance system and cellphones.

The office does not plan to release the deputy's body camera footage to the public during the investigation, Kelly said.

Kelly confirmed the officer is on medical leave.

Pelicans primed to draft Zion — and another top-5 prospect

By BRETT MARTEL
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Now that six-time All-Star Anthony Davis' trade request has been honored, it's time for the New Orleans Pelicans to start a new era by drafting the next face of the franchise.

Duke star Zion Williamson is widely seen as the top pro prospect to enter any NBA draft since Davis in 2012, and the Pelicans — thanks to an unlikely NBA draft lottery victory last month — have the right to select him first overall on Thursday night.

While new Pelicans executive vice president of basketball operations David Griffin and coach Alvin Gentry have declined to announce their draft intentions,

Gentry chuckled when describing the pressure to get the decision right as "Really very little. Minimal, OK? I think we'll make the right decision."

The ability to make that first pick this year "gives a boost to our franchise right away," Gentry said. "We're going to end up with a really good basketball player."

The Pelicans even posted a compilation of Williamson's Duke highlights on their official website.

The 6-foot-7, 285-pound Williamson was just the second freshman to be a consensus national player of the year, along with Kevin Durant with Texas in 2007. While Williamson has yet to exhibit consistent outside shooting, he has displayed a dominant mix of power, quickness and skill

that has convinced scouts of his extraordinary promise as a pro.

He averaged 22.6 points per game at Duke and also was voted to the ACC's All-Defensive Team after averaging 8.9 rebounds, 2.12 steals and 1.8 blocked shots per game. He leaves Duke as the holder of several freshman records, including single-game scoring after his 35-point outburst against Syracuse in January.

And this draft could have enormous, long-term implications for New Orleans even beyond the addition of Williamson because of the bounty of first-round draft choices the Pelicans are to receive from the Los Angeles Lakers as part of the Davis deal.

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AP Photo/Gerry Broome

Duke's Zion Williamson (1) dunks during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game Jan. 5 against Clemson, in Durham, N.C. The Blue Devils freshman is widely expected to be the No. 1 overall pick Thursday in the NBA draft.