



HEPPNER'S WILSON JOINS 1,000-POINT CLUB

Junior forward eclipsed the mark Dec. 19 against Myrtle Point

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Sydney Wilson (25), of Heppner, dribbles past an Illinois Valley defender on Dec. 20, during the Rocket Invitational 2A Preview Tournament at the Pendleton Convention Center. Wilson hit the 1,000 point mark on Dec. 19.

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HHEPPNER — Sydney Wilson did not know she was close to scoring 1,000 career points. The Heppner junior forward just laces up her blue Nikes every day and plays her game — doing what she can to help her team win, whether she has

30 points or no points. “It’s really a big surprise,” she said. “I didn’t think I would ever get that. I just want to play my game. It’s nice to play with teammates I grew up with.” Wilson eclipsed the 1,000-point mark Dec. 19 when she scored 27 points in a 61-22 win over Myrtle Point. She added 22 the following night against Illinois Valley, and eight

points in a loss to Gervais to head into the Christmas break with 1,038 career points. “This is my fifth year, and the only other player to do that (1,000 points) was Jacee (Currin),” Heppner coach Robert Wilson said. “Sydney has started every game since she was a freshman. Last year, she was

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Air Force meets WSU in Cheez-It Bowl

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Washington State plays an offense known as the Air Raid, designed to spread teams out, get players into space, and rack up huge amounts of passing yards. Air Force tends to work in tighter spaces, relying on a triple option that’s difficult to defend and annually is among the nation’s best at churning out yards on the ground.

Of the multitude of games during the 2019-20 bowl season, there might not be one with more contrasting styles than Friday night’s Cheez-It Bowl at Chase Field.

“Both offenses are quite explosive,” Washington State coach Mike Leach said. “Then, of course, they do such a good job rushing the football. Both defenses are going to try to get the offenses off the field, so I do think how each defense responds is kind of the key.”

After a pair of 5-7 seasons, Air Force (10-2) bounced back to enter a bowl game ranked for the first time since 1998 and has a chance to win 11 games for the third time in program history.

The Falcons, as usual, did it with their ground game.

With quarterback Donald Hammond III making the reads, Air Force was third nationally and led the Mountain West Conference with 292.5 yards rushing per game. The Falcons had four players rush for at least 490 yards, led by Kadin Remsburg’s 872, and ran for 37 combined TDs.

Air Force averages 57 rushes per game, compared with Washington State’s 56 passes.

“The biggest thing with their offense is it’s a very assignment football based,” Leach said. “Everybody’s eyes have to be in the right place and consistently where you’re supposed to be because if you leave any holes in the net, they’ll get a bunch of yards.”

Washington State (6-6) started the season with plenty of promise, opening at No. 23 in The Associated Press preseason poll. The Cougars climbed to No. 19 after winning their first three games but plummeted out of the rankings with five losses in six games.

Washington State’s offense wasn’t the problem. The Cougars continued to churn out prodigious passing numbers under Leach, leading the nation with 444.4 yards per game.

“The production, the quality of their execution and really the difficulty in trying to assimilate what they do,” Air Force coach Troy

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Seahawks host 49ers for NFC West title

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Even before the transactions of the week, the hype was building. Heated rivals playing the final game of the NFL regular season with massive implications for the playoffs all centered around the winner claiming the NFC West title.

And then for an added layer of drama to Sunday night’s matchup between Seattle and San Francisco, the Seahawks brought back Marshawn Lynch this week for one more ride in a Seattle uniform.

A big game? You bet. “This is definitely a week you don’t have to try at all to get your team up for the game,” San Fran-



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Seattle Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch warms up at the NFL football team’s practice facility on Tuesday in Renton, Wash.

cisco coach Kyle Shanahan said. Just the times I’ve been in this situation in the past, it’s extremely

fun to coach. You have everyone’s attention, everyone is completely into it. No stone goes unturned by anyone. You don’t have to push anyone on that. Everyone’s going to be locked in and that’s all you can do.”

After a memorable Week 10 matchup in which Seattle prevailed in overtime, the encore between the Seahawks and 49ers has ever more at stake. Perhaps the most important meeting between the division rivals since the 2013 NFC championship game won by Seattle because of what it means to the NFC playoff picture.

If San Francisco wins, it’s simple. The 49ers will claim the division and home-field advantage

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW

Utah State battles Eastern Oregon

Associated Press

LOGAN, Utah — The Utah State Aggies (12-2) will be taking on the Mountaineers (7-6) of Division III Eastern Oregon. Utah State is coming off a 65-62 win in Sunrise over Florida in its most recent game. The game tips off at 1 p.m. PST on Saturday at Dee Glen Smith Spectrum in Logan, Utah.

Senior studs: Utah State’s Sam Merrill, Diogo Brito and Abel Porter have combined to score 43 percent of the team’s points this season and have accounted for 44

percent of all Aggies scoring over the last five games.

Jumping for Justin: In 14 appearances this season, Utah State’s Justin Bean has shot 51.7 percent.

Previously: Utah State scored 84 and came away with a 27-point win over Eastern Oregon when these two teams faced off a year ago.

Did you know: Utah State went 9-4 overall when facing out-of-conference foes last season. The Aggies put up 79.6 points per contest in those 13 contests.

N. Colorado looks to extend streak against Portland State

Associated Press

Northern Colorado (7-4, 0-0) vs. Portland State (6-6, 0-0)

The Viking Pavilion, Portland, Oregon; Saturday, 2:05 p.m. PST

Bottom line: Northern Colorado looks for its sixth straight win in the head-to-head series over Portland State. Northern Colorado has won by an average of 11 points in its last five wins over the Vikings. Portland State’s last win in the series came on March 8, 2016, a 74-67 win.

Senior studs: Northern Colorado’s Jonah Radebaugh, Trent Harris and Kai Edwards have combined to score 45 percent of the team’s points this season, including 53 percent of all Bears scoring over the last five games.

Facilitating the offense: Radebaugh has either made or assisted on 52 percent of all Northern Colorado field goals over the last three games. The senior guard has 26 field goals and 19 assists in those games.

Assist ratios: The Vikings have recently used assists to cre-

ate buckets more often than the Bears. Portland State has 53 assists on 91 field goals (58.2 percent) across its past three outings while Northern Colorado has assists on 33 of 86 field goals (38.4 percent) during its past three games.

Did you know: The sturdy Northern Colorado defense has held opponents to just 60.7 points per game, the 25th-lowest in Division I. Portland State has allowed an average of 74.1 points through 12 games (ranked 232nd, nationally).