

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## March Madness: NCAA tournaments canceled due to coronavirus

By RALPH D. RUSSO  
AP College Sports Writer

March Madness came to a screeching halt before a bracket could even be filled out.

The NCAA canceled its men's and women's basketball tournaments Thursday because of the spread of coronavirus, putting an abrupt end to the season less than a month before champions were to be crowned.

The unprecedented move comes a day after the NCAA

announced the games that were scheduled to start next week would go on, but played in mostly empty arenas. That plan was scrapped as every major American sports league from the NBA to MLB put the brakes on its season due to concerns about the pandemic.

"This decision is based on the evolving COVID-19 public health threat, our ability to ensure the events do not contribute to the spread of the pandemic and the impracticality of host-

ing such events at any time during the academic year given the ongoing decisions by other entities," the

**"I'M DISAPPOINTED, BUT I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND"**

- Kelly Graves, Oregon women's basketball coach

NCAA said in statement.

The NCAA canceled championships in every spring sport, which include hockey, baseball

and lacrosse.

The stunning end to the major college basketball season came about four

hours after a frantic morning when conference tournaments around the country came to a sudden stop. Moments away from tipoff

at some arenas, and minutes apart, each Power Five conference — the Atlantic Coast, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern conferences — canceled its remaining games.

At Madison Square Garden in New York, the Big East game between Creighton and St. John's did start, but at halftime the conference called off that game and all the rest. Turns out that was the last Division I basketball to be played this season.

"This has been the most extraordinary stretch of days I've ever had or ever seen in my 30-plus years of working in the sports business," Big East Commissioner Val Ackerman said.

Smaller conferences followed suit, shutting down their tournaments, and within a few hours 58 men's games scheduled in 16 conferences had been canceled.

Then the conferences began shutting down all ath-

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### CORONAVIRUS FALLOUT



Student athletes work on drills during the Pendleton High School track practice on Thursday afternoon.

Staff photo by Ben Lonergan



Staff photo by Kathy Aney, File  
Pendleton's Muriel Hoisington (34) goes up for a shot as Lauryn Belanger (15), of The Dalles, defends during an Intermountain Conference game at Warberg Court on Jan. 31, 2020.

## Coronavirus is changing the landscape of sports

### Hermiston will host Kamiakin in a soccer match Saturday

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

**H**ERMISTON — Sorry, mom and dad, you will not get to see your daughter throw the javelin, your son score the game-winning goal in soccer, or your kid hit a walk-off home run to win the game.

The Hermiston School Dis-

trict has announced it will play and host spring sporting events with no fans — for now.

This policy is in accordance with the guidance from the governor's office, with the exception of essential personnel and credentialed media, no spectators will be permitted to attend in-district sporting events in an effort to halt the spread of COVID-19.

"Right now, this is until April 10," Hermiston athletic director Larry Usher said. "We will reevaluate after that. This will not be real popular with our parents and fans, but it's a government proclamation. What are we to do?"

Usher said the school district agrees with the policy.

"No question," Usher said. "At the rate it's spreading, we need to take steps to prevent the coronavirus."

The Bulldogs will host Kamiakin at noon Saturday in a Mid-Columbia Conference boys soccer match.

Hermiston also will host Pendleton in a track dual on March 20.

In a news release Thursday, the Pendleton School District said it is holding outdoor athletic competitions as planned, but asked that fans practice social distancing.

"We are moving forward

with our spring sports," Pendleton AD Troy Jerome said. "We are working very closely with the Oregon health departments and agencies to make decisions in regard to student safety."

Hermiston's MCC partners are still on board with spring sports, except for Walla Walla, Washington.

Walla Walla High School has suspended all athletic competitions, home and away.

It did offer a ray of hope in its news release, saying that the rescheduling of activities and events will be made available when conditions improve

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## Sophomores shine in IMC all-league selections

By BRETT KANE  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — When you take a look at this year's Intermountain Conference girls basketball all-league selections, one name stands out:

Muriel Hoisington.

The Pendleton sophomore point guard is the only Buckaroo present on the IMC all-league first team, joined by Ridgeview senior Alaina Clark, Ridgeview junior Paige Pentzer, The Dalles senior Kilee Hoylman, and Ridgeview sophomore Jenna Albrecht.

"Muriel is a really good player, and the other coaches recognized that," Pendleton girls basketball head coach Kevin Porter said. "She's got the will to be as good as she possibly can be."

Pendleton senior Sami Spriet was named to the second team. After injuries affected Pendleton's roster, Spriet and Carissa Cooley were the only two seniors on the Buckaroo squad moving into the postseason.

"Sami is that player that every coach wants," Porter said. "She's a good leader. She gives every ounce of effort that she has every day. She has an amazing attitude and personality. I could go on and on about Sami."

Chloe Taber, one of the Bucks' top shooters from beyond the arc, was also selected to the second-team list. Taber was the second team's lone sophomore, which was otherwise filled out by four seniors.

"She's one of the best shooters I've coached," Porter said of Taber. "She's confident. She's willing to take those big shots. Not everyone has that in them. I'm super excited to see what she can do in the next two years."

Redmond senior Ellie Corwin

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## White to bring versatility to Mt. Hood volleyball

Irrigon volleyball player Haley White joins St. Bernards volleyball squad as a utility player

By BRETT KANE  
East Oregonian

IRRIGON — Haley White remembers protesting when her mom took her to her first youth volleyball practice as a child.

"I didn't originally want to play volleyball," White said. "My mom forced me to go to my first practice when I was 10. I was in tears."

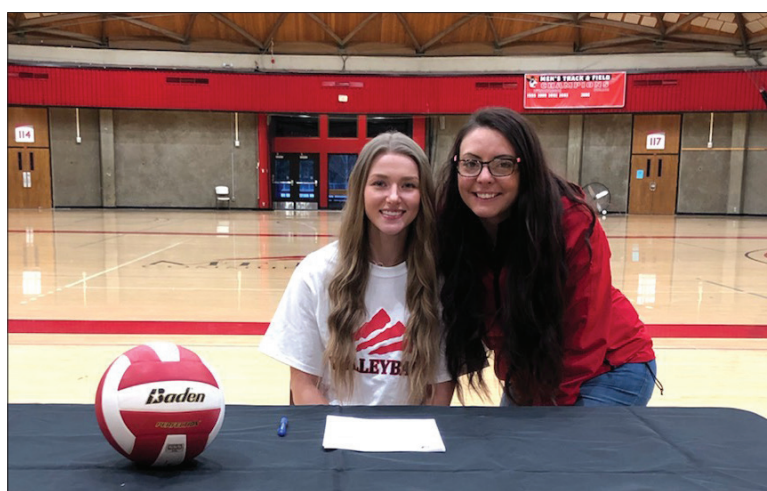
Fast forward eight years, and not only did White complete her senior season as one of the Knights' top volleyball players, but she has also committed to take

her skills to the collegiate level, signing a letter of intent to serve as a utility player for the Mt. Hood Community College St. Bernards volleyball team on Saturday.

"I love it," said White, 18. "Volleyball is both a team and individual sport — you feel a lot of pressure on yourself as an individual to make the play and help your team."

As it turns out, her mother played a hand in getting her collegiate volleyball career rolling, too.

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Contributed photo

Haley White, left, poses for a photo with St. Bernards head volleyball coach Kristina Crivello after committing to play volleyball for the St. Bernards on Saturday at Mt. Hood Community College.