

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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COLLEGE SIGNING

Heppner graduate will run at EOU

Madelyn Nichols will run track, cross-country for Mountaineers

By ANNIE FOWLER
For the East Oregonian

HEPPNER — Madelyn Nichols has made a name for herself as one of the top small-school runners in Oregon, and even though she lost her junior year of track and field, she did not fall off the radar of college coaches.

The Heppner senior signed a letter of intent to run cross-country and track at Eastern Oregon University on Wednesday, Jan. 6.

“At first, I was set on Eastern,” Nichols said. “My brother (Hunter) is there. Then I started talking to coaches at Mount Hood (Community College), Lane (Community College), Western Oregon and College of Idaho. Eastern won out because I know a lot of people there and I’m familiar with the campus.”

EOU also moved to the top of the list because the COVID-19 pandemic limited campus tours, and meeting with coaches and prospective teammates.

Nichols had a standout sophomore year, starting with basketball. She was a starting guard on the 2A state championship team. She then followed up with a pair of state medals at the 2A/1A state track meet.

“Getting to state is almost impossible,” Nichols said. “Only two in each event at district get to go.”

Nichols placed second and ran a personal best 2 minutes, 25.90 seconds in the 800 meters. She then ran to a fourth-place finish in the 1,500 in a personal best time of 5:06.34.

She also runs the 400, the 4x400 relay and the 3,000 meters.

“The 3,000 is not my favorite,” she said. “I enjoy the 800 and 1,500 better. I like the 400, especially since I was on the 4x4-relay team.”

Nichols has a personal best of 11:45.86 in the 3,000, and a 1:05.54 in the 400.

In the fall of her junior year, Nichols finished fifth at the 3A/2A/1A Special District 3 Cross-Country Championships at Pendleton Community Park. She ran a personal best 19:41.60 to earn the last spot to state.

She finished 18th at the state meet in a time of 20:33.10.

“It’s tough getting to state when our district is so awesome,” she said. “Thank goodness I went my junior year, I might not get to go this year. It’s kind of sad. I try to have hope, but I also try to be realistic.”

From high to low

After cross-country was over, Nichols jumped into basketball, where the Mustangs finished 14-10 overall and 6-6 in Blue Mountain

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Cascade Collegiate Conference/Contributed Photo

Cascade Collegiate Conference Commissioner Rob Cashell presents the College of Idaho mascot, “Baby Yotie,” with the conference’s mascot of the year award on March 3, 2015. Cashell, who served as the athletic director at Eastern Oregon University from 2001 to 2012, is beginning his 10th year as the CCC’s commissioner, making his the second longest tenure in conference history.

Guiding the CCC to new heights

Former EOU Athletic Director Rob Cashell makes history leading the Cascade Collegiate Conference

By DICK MASON
La Grande Observer

CORVALLIS — A former Eastern Oregon University athletic director is making Cascade Collegiate Conference history in more ways than one.

Rob Cashell, who served as Eastern’s AD from 2001-12, is beginning his 10th year as the conference’s commissioner, making his the second longest tenure in conference history.

The span has been a busy and fast-paced one for Cashell, who has helped the CCC expand from 12 to 23 schools, counting full and asso-

ciate members. Today, the CCC’s reach extends north to the University of British Columbia and south to Arizona Christian University in Phoenix.

Cashell speaks humbly of his role in the conference’s progress, stating the presidents of the colleges and universities in the conference are its driving force.

“The reason we’ve been successful is that we have a great presidents council,” said Cashell, who in early 2019 moved from La Grande to Corvallis with his wife, Heather, and daughter, Elizabeth.

Cashell said his time as the Cascade Collegiate Conference’s commissioner has flown by.

“It seems to have gone by quickly. I’ve enjoyed it and I hope to have another 10 years. I hope to stay as long as they will have me,” he said.

The pace has slowed for Cashell the past 10 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced most CCC schools to sideline much of their athletic programs. The pandemic has made plan-

ning, coordinating and organizing burdensome, especially because rules regarding COVID-19 change at a blistering pace.

“It has been important to be flexible because the mandates and rules change so quickly. A new rule one day may not be worth the paper it is written on the next day,” Cashell said.

The commissioner has found the most critical thing to be aware of when working with people during the pandemic is to understand their mindset.

“It is important to meet everybody where they are at emotionally. (The pandemic) effects everyone differently,” Cashell said.

He said understanding this helps with communication and problem solving.

Cashell is less than a year from overtaking Howard Morris, CCC’s commissioner from 1994-2003, as the conference’s longest-serving leader,

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WIAA moves fall sports to Season 1

Hermiston must follow guidelines in 2 states to resume play

By ANNIE FOWLER
For the East Oregonian

HERMISTON — David Faeteete was happy to see the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association move football to Season 1 during its Wednesday, Jan. 6, meeting, but for the Hermiston football coach, the announcement also comes with hesitation.

The WIAA’s executive board, made up of 13 school administrators from across the state, decided the traditional fall sports season can begin with practice on Monday, Feb. 1. Those sports include foot-

ball, girls soccer, volleyball, cross-country, and girls swimming and diving, among others.

“It’s exciting, but this could all change tomorrow,” Faeteete said. “It’s promising, but you are nervous as a coach. You don’t want to feed your kids false information.”

Football was in Season 2, but with Washington Gov. Jay Inslee’s new Healthy Washington — Roadmap to Recovery plan that was announced on Tuesday, Jan. 5, the WIAA changed course.

“The change in guidelines allow all traditional fall sports to be played in Phase 2 while we still do not have a clear pathway to the high risk indoor activities of basketball, competitive cheer and dance, and wrestling,” WIAA Executive Director Mick Hoffman said in a

news release. “With that in mind, moving fall sports to Season 1 will hopefully provide the most opportunities to participate.”

Season 1 is scheduled for seven weeks, ending on Saturday, March 20. The WIAA Executive Board will review Seasons 2 and 3 at its Tuesday, Jan. 19, meeting.

Hermiston is between a rock and a hard place, being an Oregon school playing in a Washington conference (Mid-Columbia Conference). While the logistics make sense, the politics in both states makes things difficult.

In Oregon, guidelines for K-12 school sports are now based on a county’s COVID-19 risk level (lower, moderate, high, extreme), according to a Jan. 6 news release by the Oregon Health Authority.

Umatilla and Morrow counties are at an extreme risk level, limiting sports for the time being.

All of Washington is in Phase 1, which does not allow high school sports. Certain high school sports will be allowed in Phase 2.

Faeteete said all of the Hermiston head coaches will have a meeting next week with Athletic Director Larry Usher to get a better sense of everything.

“You just have to focus on what you can control — effort, attitude and preparation,” Faeteete said. “You have to try and give the kids an opportunity to live a dream and stamp their legacy on the program.”

The Walla Walla Union-Bulletin contributed to this report.

SPORTS SHORT

Lasorda, fiery Hall of Fame Dodgers manager, dies at 93

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Growing more and more frail, Tommy Lasorda looked on from a suite at Globe Life Field in Texas, watching as the Los Angeles Dodgers clinched the World Series in Game 6 against the Tampa Bay Rays.

Surrounded by family and friends, Lasorda celebrated the team’s first championship in 32 years that October evening amid the coronavirus pandemic. While his mobility was slowed, his mind was still sharp.

Fittingly, it was the last game he ever attended.

“He always said he wanted 2 things, to live to be 100 and to see another

championship brought to the city of LA,” Dodgers third baseman Justin Turner tweeted. “Although he fought like hell to hit triple digits, I couldn’t be more proud to know he got to see the Dodgers on top again, where he knew we belonged.”

The Hall of Fame manager who was true blue to the Dodgers for more than seven decades died Thursday night, Jan. 7, after having a heart attack at his home in Fullerton, California, the team said Friday, Jan. 8. Lasorda was 93. He had just returned home Tuesday, Jan. 5, after being hospitalized since Nov. 8, 2020, with heart issues.

Lasorda had been the oldest living baseball Hall of Famer — that distinction now belongs to Willie Mays, who

turns 90 in March.

Flags at Dodger Stadium were being lowered to half-staff and Lasorda’s No. 2 was painted in the outfield. A jersey with his number hung in the dugout and fans showed up with flowers, candles and Dodgers memorabilia at the ballpark.

Lasorda had a history of heart problems, including a heart attack in 1996 that hastened the end of his managerial career and another in 2012 that required him to have a pacemaker.

He is survived by Jo, his wife of 70 years. The couple lived in the same modest home in Fullerton for 68 years. They have a daughter Laura and a granddaughter Emily. The couple’s son, Tom Jr., died in 1991 of AIDS-related complications.



Richard Drew/Associated Press, File

Los Angeles Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda autographs a baseball in the Dodgertown locker-room in Vero Beach, Fla., on Feb. 15, 1990.