

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Oregon clinches Pac-12 title with 80-67 over Oregon State



Amanda Loman/Associated Press
Oregon's Eric Williams Jr. (50) dunks against Oregon State during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game in Corvallis on Sunday, March 7, 2021.

Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Will Richardson scored a career-high 22 points and Oregon made a season-high 15 3-pointers in beating Oregon State 80-67 on Sunday night, March 7, to finish as the Pac-12 Conference's regular season champion for the second straight year.

Oregon has won five straight in just a span of 11 days and is 10-2 since Feb. 4.

Richardson finished with career-high six-made 3s and only missed once from beyond the arc. As a team, it was the most made 3s by a Ducks unit since 2017 when they went 11 for 24. Oregon finished 15-for-23 (65.2%) from deep.

"You know the guys have been through a lot, but they really came

together," Oregon coach Dana Altman said. "I thought we were really connected that first half. Second half, we gave up too many baskets, but I really thought our energy level was good, our ball movement was good. We finished it off with some good 3s. But, really, really good effort, even on the boards."

Eugene Omoruyi scored 18 points for Oregon, Eric Williams Jr. 14, and Chris Duarte and LJ Figueroa each scored 10.

Oregon (19-5, 14-4) built a 26-10 lead and never trailed. They led by double figures for most of the remainder.

Ethan Thompson scored 16 points for Oregon State (14-12, 10-10), Warith

Alatishe 14, Jarod Lucas 12, and Roman Silva 10.

"We got off to a slow start offensively. The whole objective was to pound it inside, and I think once they got a little bit of a lead, we thought we were going to just shoot our way back into it, rather than staying on plan. It's just a little bit of our experience and immaturity," Beavers coach Wayne Tinkle said.

Oregon State faces UCLA on Thursday, March 11, in the post-season conference tournament in Las Vegas.

Oregon is the tournament's top seed. On March, it will face the winner of the Wednesday, March 10, matchup between Arizona State and Washington State.

VOLLEYBALL

RIVALRY RENEWED

Dawgs, Bucks set to meet on volleyball court for first time since 2017

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Volleyball in the spring is not something coaches are used to, but after a year with zero high school sports, they are willing to adjust and make things work.

"Having a season this time of year provides challenges," Hermiston High School coach Becky Wadkamper said. "It's been more of a struggle than most people realize. We are trying to do the best we can."

Pendleton High School coach Amanda Lapp agrees.

"I think the girls are more than excited to be on the floor, no matter the conditions or the rules," Lapp said. "They are so jazzed to play. It's nice to see the light in their eyes."

Hermiston and Pendleton opened their seasons this past week. The Bulldogs beat The Dalles in straight sets, 25-23, 25-16, 25-23. The Bucks split their matches, beating Redmond 21-25, 25-14, 25-14, 25-15, and dropping a 25-8, 25-17, 25-9 match to Bend.

The former Columbia River Conference foes will meet for the first time since 2017 on Thursday, March 11, as Hermiston hosts the Bucks at 7 p.m.

"I'm not going to lie," Wadkamper said. "I'm excited to play Pendleton again. I was a head coach in the CRC and we won two league championships and went to state once. We battled with them, we always do. It didn't matter what our records were, it was fun. It was never a nasty rivalry."

The Bulldogs last beat the Bucks at the Westview Tournament on Oct. 1, 2016. Pendleton has won the past five matches

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Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File
Pendleton's Maureen Davies (10) hits the ball past Scout Reagan (7), of Hermiston, on Oct. 17, 2017, at Warberg Court.

TRACK & FIELD

Heppner grad earns All-America honors

EOU's Hunter Nichols takes fifth at NAIA nationals in 1,000 meters

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

YANKTON, S.D. — Hunter Nichols did a good job of channeling his nerves into a top-5 finish on Saturday, March 6, at the NAIA Indoor National Track & Field Championships.

The Eastern Oregon University sophomore turned in a time of 2 minutes, 32.51 seconds to finish fifth in the 1,000 meters, and earn All-America honors. He was seeded seventh going into the finals.

"I was really nervous the whole day," said Nichols, a 2019 Heppner High School graduate. "I can kind of calm my nerves, but it was a whole other kind of nervous."

Running in the finals at the Ruth Donohoe First Dakota Fieldhouse at Mount Marty University, Nichols led the first lap, moved between first and second in the second lap, then finished fifth by the end of the five-lap race.

"I thought I could get between fourth and sixth," Nichols said. "I was never less than fifth. I wasn't going to settle for last — that's my competitive drive."

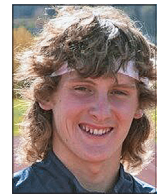
At the start of the season, the 1,000 meters was a different event for Nichols, but now he said he is starting to embrace the event.

"It's starting to grow on me," he said. "I'm learning how to run it right and be tactical."

It was Nichols' first trip to nationals, and it's one he won't soon forget.

"The past two weeks are ones I won't forget, for sure," he said. "It was a cool experience. I know there is a lot more to come. I'm thinking about the future and what there is to come."

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Nichols

SPORTS SHORT

No. 4 Stanford routs No. 9 UCLA to win Pac-12 title

W.G. RAMIREZ
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Red and white confetti littered the basketball court inside the Mandalay Bay Events Center on Sunday night, March 7, Erica Banks' hit song "Buss It" blared through the sound system, and Stanford's women's basketball players broke from posing for a celebratory picture to perform the popular Tik Tok dance.

It seemed only fitting, after Kiana Williams scored 26 points to lead No. 4 Stanford to the Pac-12 Tournament championship with a 75-55 win over No. 9 UCLA.

"When the confetti came down it was time to celebrate, time to dance," Williams said. "We have business to take care of (in the NCAA Tournament) in San Antonio, my hometown. We want to be the last team standing."

Stanford, which has made the Pac-12 championship game 18 times in 20 total tournaments, improved to 14-4 in the finals while winning its third title in five years.

Lexie Hull added 24 points while Haley Jones finished with 10 points and 13 rebounds for Stanford (25-2).

"We really came out aggres-

sive," Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer said. "We got a lot of different contributions. It's a total team effort."

Michaela Onyenwere led UCLA (16-5) with 30 points. Charisma Osborne finished with 11 points and five rebounds for the Bruins.

The game was a renewal of one of the more storied rivalries in Pac 12 postseason history, as Stanford has played UCLA more than any other team in the Pac-12 Tournament. The Cardinal improved to 11-1 against the Bruins in the event, including four wins in championship meetings.



Isaac Brekken/Associated Press

Stanford forward Cameron Brink, center left, and guard Kiana Williams, center right, celebrate after defeating UCLA following an NCAA college basketball game in the Pac-12 women's tournament championship on Sunday, March 7, 2021, in Las Vegas.