

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021

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Jumping to the next level

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Kaylee Young made one of the biggest decisions of her athletic career in the spring of her freshman year.

The blossoming Hermiston High School athlete decided to turn out for track instead of playing softball, which she had played for years.

Her decision turns out to have been a good one. Young signed a letter of intent on Sunday, March 14, to compete in track and field at Central Washington University.

"I was a softball player, now I'm a jumper and going to college," Young said. "I played softball all the way until my freshman year. It was one of the biggest decisions I had to make. I rolled the dice on myself and won."

Hermiston track coach Emilee Strot said Young had quite a dilemma on her hands.

"I first saw her in middle school," Strot said. "Her grandma (Kay Edwards) said she was fast and that we had to get her out for track. When Kaylee said she was going to do track, I asked her if she had told coach (Kate) Greenough. She said she had. I was so excited."

Young competes in the long jump, sprints and relays, and CWU is excited to have her as part of its program.

"What caught my eye about Kaylee first was her natural talent (vertical jump and weightlifting strength)," CWU sprints/jump coach Bryan Mack said. "After speaking with her and getting her on campus, I really enjoyed her passion for the sport and her willingness to put in the extra work to reach her goals. That level of work ethic will serve her well in college when self-motivation is a big factor in their success."

Young also had interest from Idaho, Eastern Oregon University and Lewis-Clark State College, but she felt at home at Central Washington.



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File
MaKaylee Young, of Hermiston, long jumps during the first day of the 2019 Mid-Columbia Conference Track & Field Championships at Hermiston High School.

"It has a very good family culture there," Young said of CWU. "It reminded me of home. When we drove up, it felt like home right away. Ellensburg is very spread out, but homey. I'm a very big homebody, and leaving makes me nervous. I got to do tours with a freshman, a senior and the coach, so I got to see things in their world."

CWU also offered Young a 50% scholarship.

"It is a really nice scholarship for track and field," said Young, who will major in education. "I also have academic money to put in. When they tell you to keep your grades up, they mean it."

The Wildcats recently got a \$10.4 million upgrade to Tomlinson Stadium, which includes a new track and field facility that meets NCAA standards.

"They have a very nice facility," Young said.

More than just a track athlete

Young also plays basket-

ball in addition to track, and has been a part of Strot's strength and conditioning program for the past four years.

"She has made such an impact at Hermiston High School," Strot said. "She has been a leader for my team. She is a hard worker and is such a pleasure to coach. She will do what a coach asks. She trusts who she is working for. She is going to be special at the next level, I guarantee it."

Those traits also drew Mack to Young.

"Being a multi-sport athlete helps in college in two ways," Mack said. "The first is that the athleticism and coordination of being able to move in all different ways helps athletes pick up technique changes much quicker than athletes who have been doing the same thing for years."

"The other benefit of being a multi-sport athlete means they have experience working with multiple coaches and

having many different people as teammates, which means they're often very coachable and can assimilate with a group of new people very easily."

Young had a breakout sophomore year in the long jump, leaping 17 feet, 5½ inches at the District 8 meet in Richland, Washington. She competed at the 3A state meet, where she placed 13th with a mark of 16-0½.

She has her eyes on the school long jump record of 17-10½, which was set by Mariah Delepierre in 2011.

Her top time in the 100 meters is 12.60 seconds, and her best 200 time is 27.28.

Young said competing in the Mid-Columbia Conference, and against Spokane schools at district, have helped her confidence.

"The first year in the MCC, I was very nervous and in awe of how good their programs were," Young said. "I had jitters, but I had some confidence in myself. Now, I go out and I am confident — I am part of the MCC. Our program is getting noticed."

Adjusting to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic washed away Young's junior year of track, but it gave her a chance to spend time with her family.

"It was a blessing in disguise," she said. "It helped grow a stronger family bond. I have about 20 cousins here and in the Tri-Cities."

While family time is important, Young missed competing.

She began training a few months ago, and competed in the long jump and 100 meters in a Resolute Series meet Feb. 28 in Portland. She jumped 16-11¼ to place second. In the 100, she was fourth with a time of 13.52.

"It's good for me to go and get my nerves out," Young said. "I will be more prepared for my next one."

Hermiston will begin track practice on Monday, March 22, for the upcoming season.

Former Hermiston athletes shine at PNW Team Clash

By ANNIE FOWLER
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CORVALLIS — Eastern Washington University sophomore Madison Wilson (Hermiston) placed second in the high jump (5-4¼) and third in the 100 hurdles (15.10 seconds) Saturday, March 13, at the PNW Team Clash at Oregon State University.

Freshman Jazlyn Romero (Hermiston) placed fifth in the javelin (138-11) for OSU, which won the women's team title with 262 points. EWU was second with 190 points.

Wrestling

Senior Sam Colbray (Hermiston) is one of eight Iowa State University wrestlers who qualified for the NCAA Wrestling Championships.

It's the third time Colbray has qualified for the tournament. He reached the Round of 12 his sophomore year, and the tournament was canceled last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic just before it was



Colbray

Romero

scheduled to begin.

Colbray, who finished fifth at the Big 12 Championships, is the No. 29 seed at 184 pounds and faces No. 4 seed Parker Keckeisen from Northern Iowa on Thursday, March 18, in the first round.

The tournament will be held March 18-20 in St. Louis.

Football

Trent Durfey (Umatilla) started at defensive end for Carroll College against Rocky Mountain College on Saturday, March 13.

Durfey, a redshirt freshman, had two tackles in the Saints' 14-12 Frontier Conference victory.

Carroll College will play at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 20.

ON THE SLATE

TUESDAY, MARCH 16

Prep volleyball
Pendleton at Hood River, 6:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Weston-McEwen, 5 p.m.
Stanfield at Heppner, 5 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Riverside, 5 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Griswold, 5 p.m.
Condon at Lone/Arlington, 5 p.m.
Prep girls soccer
Hermiston at Pendleton, 6 p.m.
McLoughlin at Umatilla, 5:30 p.m.
Prep boys soccer
Ontario at Pendleton, 4 p.m.
McLoughlin at Umatilla, 7 p.m.
Irrigon at Riverside, 4 p.m.
Prep slowpitch softball
Hermiston at Chiawana (2), 3 p.m.

Weston-McEwen at Stanfield, 4 p.m.

Nixyaawii at Pilot Rock, 4 p.m.

Ione/Arlington at Sherman, 5 p.m.

Riverside at Umatilla, 5 p.m.

Prep cross-country
Umatilla, Ione at Mustang Invite, 3 p.m.

Prep girls soccer
Pendleton at Redmond, 4:30 p.m.

Prep boys soccer
Redmond at Pendleton, 4 p.m.

Irrigon at McLoughlin, 5 p.m.

Prep slowpitch softball
Walla Walla at Hermiston (2), 3 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19

Prep football
Kennewick at Hermiston, 7 p.m.

Irrigon at McLoughlin, 7 p.m.

Riverside at Weston-McEwen, 3:30 p.m.

South Wasco County at Echo, 7 p.m.

Dufur at Ione/Arlington, 6 p.m.

Prep volleyball
Grant Union at Heppner, noon

Weston-McEwen JV at Griswold, 5 p.m.

Prep girls soccer
Riverside at Umatilla, 2 p.m.

Trout Lake at Stanfield/Echo, 1 p.m.

Prep boys soccer
Riverside at Umatilla, 4 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17

Prep volleyball
McLoughlin at Hermiston, 7 p.m.
Prep cross-country
The Dalles at Pendleton, Birch Creek, 2 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

Prep football
Grant Union at Heppner, 4 p.m.
Umatilla at Stanfield, 7 p.m.
Imbler at Pilot Rock, 5 p.m.
Prep volleyball
The Dalles at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.

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