

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @EOSPORTS | FACEBOOK.COM/EOSPORTS

A8

No fans allowed at EOU football games

La Grande Observer

LA GRANDE — Fans will not be attending Eastern Oregon Football games in person this season. The Frontier Conference presidents and athletic directors voted last week to continue the policy prohibiting spectators at games for the remainder of the 2020-21 season.

“We are very disappointed with not being able to allow spectators at our football games but the Frontier Conference is committed to providing a safe environment for student-athletes and visiting programs to compete,” EOU Director of Athletics Anji Weissenfluh said in a press release.

In accordance to the policy, which the league developed in September 2020, spectators will not

MOUNTAINEERS PICKED TO FINISH THIRD IN FRONTIER CONFERENCE

WHITEFISH, Mont. — The Eastern Oregon University football team was picked to finish third in the Frontier Conference by the league’s coaches, according to a press release from the league.

Eastern picked up 10 points in the coaches’ poll after finishing 4-7 overall in 2019 and 4-6 in conference play. Earning the top spot in the preseason poll was College of Idaho, who totaled 15 points and picked up three first-place votes. The Yotes were selected as the favorite after winning the regular season crown in 2019.

Carroll College was picked second in the poll with 13 points and two first-place votes. Rocky Mountain College was picked fourth behind EOU with seven points, while Montana State-Northern was picked fifth with five points.

Eastern Oregon will kick off its 2021 spring schedule this Saturday, March 20, and it will be at home opener when they host Carroll College. Kickoff is set for 1 p.m. inside Community Stadium against the Saints. Greninger

spring season.

The conference released the poll on Friday, March 12. Eastern picked up 10 points in the coaches poll to slide in at No. 3 for the preseason. The Mountaineers enter the spring season third after finishing 4-7 overall in 2019 and 4-6 in conference play, according to a press release from EOU.

The College of Idaho received 15 points and picked up three first-place votes. Coaches selected the Yotes as the favorite after winning the regular season crown in 2019. Second-place Carroll College received 13 points and two first-place votes.

Rocky Mountain College, Montana, was picked with seven points, while Montana State-Northern was picked fifth.

be allowed at any Frontier Conference events — including football, basketball, golf, track and field, cross-county and volleyball.

Eastern Oregon’s two home football games are set to take place on Saturday, March 20, against Carroll

College of Montana and on Saturday, April 3, against the College of Idaho. EOU will livestream the contests on the Mountie Sports Network. Fans can catch the games by going to www.eousports.com/watch. Kickoff for each home game

is set for 1 p.m.

Coaches in the conference picked the College of Idaho to win 2021 Frontier Conference football championship, with Carroll College coming in second and EOU third in the five-team pool going into the

PREP FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Heppner puts 2-0 record on the line against Prospectors

Umatilla will be short-handed against Stanfield

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — The Heppner Mustangs have been unstoppable the first two weeks of the season, shutting out their first two opponents and averaging 40 points a game.

“So far, so good,” Heppner coach Greg Grant said. “Everyone is getting their seasons going. We will see how it goes.”

Heppner will host Grant Union on Thursday, March 18, in a rematch of the first game of the season, won by the Mustangs 35-0.

Heppner will be without running back Blake Wolters for the second consecutive game. The hard-charging back has a leg injury.

Brock Hisler and Jace Coe have stepped up to fill the void, and quarterback Jayden Wilson ran for 84 yards and three touchdowns last week against Stanfield.

Wilson hasn’t thrown the ball a ton, but he hasn’t needed to.

“It’s just circumstance football,” Grant said. “We have thrown a bit, but not much.”

Grant Union is coming off a 44-7 nonleague win over McLoughlin.

UMATILLA AT STANFIELD: In what should have been a good tilt on March 18, the Vikings will go into the game with 14 players after two starters were deemed academically ineligible, and injuries sidelined three other players.

“I don’t know if my 14 guys can match their team,” Umatilla coach Dan Durfey said.

The Vikings only had eight returning starters to start the season, and four will be unavailable

See Umatilla, Page A9

PENDLETON



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Pendleton’s Kyle Liscom (21) and Isaac Urbina (27) drag down Ridgeview running back Josh Biever (5) during the Buckaroos’ 20-12 win over the Ravens at the Pendleton Round-Up Arena on Friday, March 12, 2021.

SMART and DANGEROUS

Kyle Liscom is the key to Pendleton’s defense

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Kyle Liscom could be a standout player on offense, but the Pendleton High School junior prefers defense because it’s a thinking man’s game.

“I like having to read the play,” he said. “It’s more strategic to me — I have to judge the movement and make the play.”

Oh, and there’s one more thing.

“I like hitting people,” the 5-foot-10, 180-pound linebacker said. “I like contact. I like going out on the field and doing that with my friends.”

Pendleton coach Erik Davis said as Liscom goes, so does the Bucks’ defense.

“Defensively, he’s a pillar,” Davis said. “He has a never-ending gas tank. It’s not something you can coach. He has that toughness. I’m absolutely ecstatic I get him one more year.”

Liscom, a first-team all-league linebacker as a sophomore, led the Bucks in tackles with 105. This season, he has 31 tackles in two games, including 17 against Ridgeview last week.

“He has a really high football IQ,” Davis said. “He’s got a 4.0 GPA. He’s one of those top end kids you get to coach once in a decade. I honestly can’t say enough about him.”

Liscom said he can’t take all the credit for the stops he makes.

“Credit to the guys up front,” he said of his

See Pendleton, Page A9

HERMISTON

Bulldogs face tough test against Lions

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — It’s back to basics this week for the Hermiston Bulldogs.

After suffering a 48-0 loss to Walla Walla last week, Hermiston coach David Faaeteete said his team just needs to play better.

“No big adjustments,” he said. “We can’t dig ourselves in a hole we can’t get out of. It’s the little minute details we coaches let slide. We need to focus on the things we can control and get better.”

The Bulldogs (1-1) need to shore things up this week as the Kennewick Lions visit Kennison Field for a Mid-Columbia Conference matchup on Friday, March 19.

The Lions come into the game with a 3-0 record, including a 54-7 victory over Hanford last week.

“We just need to focus on how we execute,” Faaeteete said. “We didn’t do a good job in our punt game, our attitude or our effort. Those are things we can control.”

That includes the five turnovers the Bulldogs had against the Blue Devils. Four were interceptions thrown by junior quarterback Chase Elliott.

“He didn’t have the best game,” Faaeteete said. “He will get better. It’s his second varsity football game and he sees his team is down. He’s trying to make plays and he overthrows the ball. He owns his mistakes. We still trust him.”

The team’s run game had its merits last week, with Elliott picking up 96 yards on 14 carries, and Daniel Faaeteete 70 yards on 16 carries.

The Lions, who reached the 3A state semifinals last year, return running back/linebacker Myles Mayovsky, who has wreaked mayhem in his first three games

See Dawgs, Page A8

Eastern Oregon University coach reaches milestone

Kaki McLean Morehead earns 300th career victory as head coach

By ANDREW CUTLER
East Oregonian

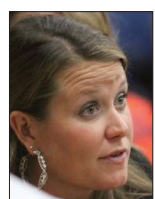
LA GRANDE — When the cheers were directed her way and not at the team, Eastern Oregon University head volleyball coach Kaki McLean Morehead was at a loss.

Of course, it was the second of two 3-0 wins over Warner Pacific on March 5 that generated all the cheers. That is when it registered for McLean Morehead, it was her 300th

win at EOU.

“I actually had no idea, to be completely honest,” she said. “It’s not something that I keep track of. So when my kids started chanting my name at the end of the game, I was like, ‘You guys, what are you doing?’ My kids did a great job of making the day pretty special. I was completely surprised and shocked.”

McLean Morehead, who is in her 14th season as head coach, said the milestone win is something she’s incredibly proud of, but being in the same athletic department as women’s



McLean Morehead

basketball coach Anji Weissenfluh, who has compiled more than 450 wins in 19-plus seasons at EOU, is a motivator.

“On one hand, 300 is an accomplishment and something I’m incredibly proud of because of what we have built here at Eastern Oregon,” she said. “But on the other side of it, you know, I’m just trying to keep up with (Weissenfluh) who has 450 wins and counting.”

The road to 300 has had its challenges, and none bigger than when McLean Morehead had to lead the program after tragedy struck.

A 2004 EOU graduate, McLean Morehead had coached the Mounties for four seasons, from 2006 until 2009. She stepped down after the

2009 campaign in order to move to Idaho. McLean Morehead’s successor, Hailey Pearce, was killed in a car crash just before the start of her second season in La Grande.

McLean Morehead stepped in as the interim head coach for the 2011 season, posting a 17-11 record and a third-place finish in the Cascade Collegiate Conference. Shortly after the end of the 2011 season, McLean Morehead signed on permanently.

“During that time, we realized that Eastern Oregon is where we want to be,” she said. “And again, I am incredibly proud of what my kids have worked to build and what we have worked to build. And I think that, that is something special and it’s not something that you find

every day.”

McLean Morehead has the Mountaineers off to a 9-0 start and a No. 8 national ranking in a season turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. She said the team has proven to be a resilient and determined bunch, and one not taking anything for granted.

“We’re going to try everything that we can and play our best with the opportunities that we are given,” she said.

The Mountaineers put their undefeated record on the line with a pair of matchups on Friday, March 19, and Saturday, March 20, against Interstate 84 rival College of Idaho (4-6 overall) inside Quinn Coliseum. Match times are set for 4 and 7 p.m., respectively.