



Bryce Dole/East Oregonian

**Bikers wearing masks wait at the start line for the 13th annual "Echo Red to Red" cross-country mountain bike race on Saturday, March 20, 2021.**

## Race:

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"It's a beautiful piece of desert," said Lloyd Piercy, a longtime Echo resident and farmer who owns the property where the race was held. Piercy also sponsored the race.

The trail is maintained by and named after many Echo residents over the years, Piercy said. The annual race has become a tradition embraced and supported by the community, though some "are upset because they live in a sleepy town and all of a sudden it's not sleepy for one day of the year."

Standing along Main Street between old buildings he has helped restore, Piercy spoke optimistically about the direction of the Echo community, commenting on an influx of young people and new businesses coming to town, including day spas, coffee shops and high-end restaurants.

"We keep a lot these events happening and keep the town vibrant," he said.

Piercy added that seeing the crowd come out to the mountain bike race was a "pleasure."

"The way I view the world is, I don't own property," he said. "I'm here for a short period of time. I'm a steward. So it's part of my stewardship, sharing this

place with all these folks."

Throughout the morning, bikers rode throughout the town, warming up on the sunny but cool, and breezy spring morning. Several bikers said they were excited to ride after a year without races due to the pandemic.

Brandon Egger, a radiology technologist from Chewelah, Washington, said he hadn't raced since June of 2019.

"I'm excited," said Egger, who was riding the 32-mile race. "I'm trying to fill up my schedule now and make up for all the lost time."

Eggers said when races were canceled last year, it was difficult to stay motivated, but this year he hopes to "get in five to 10 races this year."

Derick Mosman, a real estate property manager from Salem, was participating in his first mountain bike race. Mosman was part of a team of riders from Salem, called Capitol Velo, who made the trip out to the race.

"All the guys from Capitol Velo always come over here and say it's an awesome race," he said. "I might not have come this far otherwise. But a lot of the guys, who have been in the club for a long time, are familiar with the race."

Mosman said that he's typically ridden by himself for the past year, so he was excited to be out at a race with other people.

# Soccer: 'They always have a lot of talent'

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12-4 and reached the 4A state semifinals.

The Pioneers have gotten stellar performances from the older and younger players this season and have outscored their opponents 26-3 in six games. Their one tie was a 2-2 game with Riverside on March 11.

"They always have a lot of talent," Garcia said of Riverside. "I remember when we used to kill Riverside years ago. Their coach asked me to talk to his players a while back. I told them they needed to work hard, play for their coach and each other, and have dreams. Three years later, boom, they are beating us."

Since their tie with River-

side, the Pioneers have kicked things into high gear. They have posted shutouts against The Dalles (4-0), Umatilla (6-0) and Irrigon (6-0).

The Pioneers have had the luxury of having several players step up in the scoring column this season.

Seniors Kael Castruita, and Rolando Castillo have done their part, and freshman Sean Molina has stepped up and been creative with a few goals of his own. Senior Hector Castillo protects the back end.

"Sean is a hard worker," Garcia said. "He is a tiny, small kid. I think people lose track of him."

Hector Castillo can score with the best of them, but he is more valuable on defense.

"I can't afford to put him up front," Garcia said. "He

can't be beat, he is so fast back there. Last year against Ontario, they beat us 3-1 the first time. Their No. 10 (Greg Rodriguez) killed us. The second game, I asked Hector to play defender and he said he would play where we needed him. We finished in a tie and he (Rodriguez) didn't do anything."

Roland Castillo was a work in progress, but this season he is a team leader and leads the team in assists.

"He played in middle school and he was terrible," Garcia said, "and his attitude was bad. He has improved so much. He started as a sophomore, and his junior year he kept asking if he could do this and that. He wanted to learn."

In net, junior Leonardo Rodriguez has had an impres-

sive start to the season.

"There are times he has been overconfident, but he has done a good job for us," Garcia said.

While Garcia has enjoyed his years with the Pioneers, there are a couple of moments that have made the adventure worthwhile.

His son, Favian Garcia, was a senior goalkeeper when the Pioneers won the 3A state title in 2005. Mac-Hi also won 4A state titles in 2006 and 2007.

"He was a great goalie," Garcia said. "I can say he didn't get the recognition he deserved."

This season, his grandson Romario Garcia is a freshman on the team.

"That's been special," Garcia said.

## Oregon: Ducks sink seven 3-pointers

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ovation from the limited crowd allowed in Bankers Life Fieldhouse.

Joe Wieskamp added 17 points, but the rest of the Hawkeyes weren't of much help to the big fella, sending them out of the bracket early with other top seeds Illinois, Ohio State and Texas.

"It's heartbreaking, so surreal, it kind of hit me all at once that this is the last time I'll put on this jersey and that hurts a lot," Garza said. "I feel bad that I wasn't able to lead this team to where it needs to go."

The Ducks managed to navigate a difficult season full of pauses and injuries to win their second straight Pac-12 regular-season title.

Oregon earned a No. 7 seed in Indianapolis and faced what was expected to be a difficult opener against VCU and its Havoc defense. But the Ducks learned



Darron Cummings/Associated Press

**Iowa's Luka Garza (55) hugs a teammate following a second-round game against Oregon in the NCAA men's college basketball tournament at Bankers Life Fieldhouse, on Monday, March 22, 2021, in Indianapolis.**

during their pregame meal that they would advance without playing a game, leaving them with a huge break before facing the No. 2 team in the region.

Nerves? Rusty? Nope.

The Ducks went on the attack from Richardson's opening layup and used

quick ball movement to set up open looks throughout the first half.

Oregon hit seven 3s — two by Figueroa late — made 22 of 37 shots and used a 10-0 run to lead 56-46 at halftime despite having three players in foul trouble.

## ON THE SLATE

### TUESDAY, MARCH 23

**Prep girls soccer**  
Pendleton at The Dalles/Dufur, 4:30 p.m.  
**Prep boys soccer**  
The Dalles/Dufur at Pendleton, 6 p.m.

### THURSDAY, MARCH 25

**Prep football**  
Hermiston at Chiawana, 7 p.m.  
Irrigon at Umatilla, 5 p.m.  
**Prep girls soccer**  
Hermiston at Walla Walla, 2 p.m.  
Prep slowpitch softball  
Hermiston at Pasco (2), 4 p.m.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 26

**Prep football**  
Pendleton at Redmond, 7 p.m.  
Stanfield at McLoughlin, 7 p.m.  
Joseph at Echo, 7 p.m.  
Pilot Rock at Lone/Arlington, 7 p.m.  
**Prep volleyball**  
Echo at Bickleton, 5 p.m.  
McLoughlin at Riverside, 1 p.m.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 27

**Prep football**  
Weston-McEwen at Heppner, 2 p.m.  
**Prep volleyball**  
Ridgeview at Pendleton, 11 a.m.  
Hermiston at Pendleton, 3 p.m.  
**Prep girls soccer**  
La Grande at Hermiston, noon  
McLoughlin at Riverside, 1 p.m.  
Umatilla at Stanfield/Echo, 1 p.m.  
**Prep boys soccer**  
McLoughlin at Riverside, 3 p.m.  
**Prep cross-country**  
Walla Walla, Southridge at Hermiston, 3 p.m.

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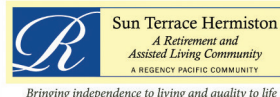
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