

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Union County rodeos set to ride again

Eastern Oregon Livestock Show, Elgin Stampede to return

By **DICK MASON**
La Grande Observer

UNION — Three years after rising from the ashes of a devastating fire, the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show is set to come out of the gate again.

The EOLS will open in June after the coronavirus pandemic led organizers to cancel the show in 2020.

“We are very excited to be back in the saddle again,” said EOLS Second Vice President Cassie Miller.

The EOLS will be able to restart because of falling COVID-19 rates in Union County. While scheduling details remain to be worked out, rodeo action is set to begin June 10



Zeb Lanham of Sweet, Idaho, holds on during his ride aboard the bull Train Wreck during the 2017 Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in Union. The pandemic in 2020 led to the show's cancellation, but the show is coming out of the gate again in 2021.

The Observer, File/La Grande Observer

with the Ed Miller Xtreme Bull Riding event. Gates will open at 5:30 p.m. and competition will start at 6:30 p.m.

Three days of PRCA rodeo will follow, with competition beginning at 4 p.m. June 11, 2 p.m. June 12 and 1:30 p.m. June 13.

WHERE TO GET TICKETS

Tickets for the 2021 Eastern Oregon Livestock Show will be available online via www.rodeoticket.com. The EOLS later will announce when tickets go on sale.

The Eastern Oregon Livestock Show's Main Street parade also is returning and starts at 2 p.m. June 11. Youth FFA and 4-H events will go on this year, but their schedules will be announced later.

Miller said she hopes to again hold horse racing, long a major part of the event. She said the EOLS is working with the Oregon Racing Commission in an attempt to add it to this year's lineup.

Miller said the Oregon Health Authority played a big role in reviewing the livestock show. The OHA earlier modified its guidelines

to allow outdoor events to operate at a percentage of their maximum occupancy. The county's risk level at the time of an event determines the percent of occupancy. Risk levels change, and Miller said the EOLS may have to make changes to how the event is run in the days leading up to its start.

“The EOLS is aware of the possibility that guidelines may fluctuate between now and the first full week in June, and we are prepared to adjust the plan as needed to stay in compliance,” Miller said.

This will be the second comeback the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show has made since July 24, 2017, when a fire destroyed three race-horse barns and did other damage, but caused no injuries to people or animals. Despite the blaze, the show opened on time in June 2018 with all the damaged structures replaced.

“We have dealt with a lot of adversity during our 114-year

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Several members of the Hermiston girls cross-country team pose for a portrait at Hermiston High School on Wednesday, March 24, 2021. From left to right, Madeline Franke, Hailey Melville, Alexia Serna, Julianna Joyce, Cydney Sanchez, Ellie Ernst, Ashley Treadwell and Megan Joyce pose for a photo

Teamwork paying off for Bulldogs

Hermiston girls cross-country team best in recent memory

By **ANNIE FOWLER**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Talent and depth have served the Hermiston girls cross-country team well this season.

The Bulldogs have relied on all 10 members of the team to finish the Mid-Columbia Conference regular season with a 7-1

record. They were undefeated until last weekend when Richland topped them in the final regular-season meet.

“They have been doing really good,” Hermiston coach Troy Blackburn said. “We have not raced once all season with our top five girls together. We are deep, have good leaders and good young runners.”

Hermiston will host the

Mid-Columbia Conference Championships on Saturday, March 27, at Big River Golf Course. The girls race begins at 3 p.m., with the boys race is set for 4 p.m.

Senior Amanda Nygard and junior Alexia Serna have led the Bulldogs most of the season as an injury has sidelined junior Cydney Sanchez, Ashley Treadwell has had an iron deficiency,

and senior Fatima Frasser had COVID-19 and it has taken her time to get her energy back.

“Our top five has been eight or nine different girls,” Blackburn said. “It's great to have all these girls pick it up. They have been training since July. I'm tickled and super happy to have this group of girls I can depend on.”

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UFC PREVIEW

Miocic sees improved Ngannou before UFC 260 rematch

By **GREG BEACHAM**
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — No UFC heavyweight has made more title defenses or landed more punches than Stipe Miocic. He has knocked out a remarkable portion of the best fighters of his generation, leaving little doubt he's the most accomplished heavyweight ever to step inside a mixed martial arts cage.

And the champion is still a betting underdog Saturday night, March 27, at UFC 260 against Francis Ngannou, an opponent he thoroughly dominated three years ago.

“I'm used to it at this point, actually,” Miocic said with a smile. “Vegas hates me, so it's all good.”

Miocic (20-3) is in Las Vegas anyway to meet another challenge in the unique MMA career of an active firefighter who pulled his most recent shift at the firehouse in Cleveland — and received the usual good-natured teasing — just eight days before he defends his heavyweight crown.

“It's never going to change,” Miocic said. “They're going to make me clean toilets, mop floors, clean trucks. That's what I love about them. They don't treat me any different. I wish they did, but I'm still the lowest man on the totem pole, working my way up.”

Even with Miocic's unmatched list of accomplishments, some bookies and fans apparently will never process the notion of a 38-year-old with a second full-time job beating

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SPORTS SHORT

Russia sweeps women's figure skating medals

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — A sweep of the women's medals Friday, March 26, further stamped Russian dominance of these World Figure Skating Championships.

Yet, the two American women did just enough to earn a third berth at next year's Olympics.

Three-time national champion Anna Shcherbakova made her first appearance at worlds golden despite finishing second to countrywoman Alexandra Trusova in the free skate. Shcherbakova, who turns 17 Sunday, March 28, won the short program.

Elizaveta Tuktamysheva, the 2015 world champion, earned silver in her

return to the event, ahead of Trusova. It was the second 1-2-3 finish in the modern era, matching the United States with Kristi Yamaguchi, Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan in 1991.

This year's Americans got exactly what they needed to grab a third spot for the Beijing Games. Karen Chen, repeating her fourth-place showing of 2017 with exactly the same prize being sought, and U.S. champion Bradie Tennell, who was ninth, needed a total of 13 places or less.

Bingo.

Even though she fell on two jumps, and two-footed a landing on another, Trusova won the free skate basically because of the unprecedented difficulty of her program, flawed as it was. Her

presentation wasn't outstanding either, but Trusova became the first woman to land multiple quads at worlds by nailing two of the five she attempted.

That vaulted her from 12th to third and was a clear indication the judges favored technical bravery over artistic brilliance.

Shcherbakova had plenty of both, but seemed stunned as her marks revealed victory. She appeared to need confirmation from her coaches that the gold was hers.

Chen scored a personal-best 134.23 in the free skate, but her overall total of 208.63, also a career high, didn't get her close to the podium. Still, the team reward was uplifting for the 2017 U.S. gold medalist.



Russian skater Anna Shcherbakova performs during the Ladies Free Skating at the World Figure Skating Championships in Stockholm, Sweden, on Friday, March 26, 2021.

Martin Meissner/
Associated Press