

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## Pac-12 picks MGM executive as next commissioner

George Kliavkoff to be the conference's next commissioner, replacing Larry Scott

By RALPH D. RUSSO  
AP College Football Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — The Pac-12 hired George Kliavkoff to be the conference's next commissioner on Thursday, May 13, replacing Larry Scott with another college sports outsider and charging him with rebuilding the league's football brand.

Kliavkoff has been the president of MGM Sports & Entertainment in Las Vegas since 2018.

Michael H. Schill, the University of Oregon president and chairman of the five-member search committee, called Kliavkoff "a highly experienced and pioneering sports, entertainment and digital media executive."

Kliavkoff has previously worked with Major League Baseball Advance Media and Hearst Entertainment & Syndication, and was also the chief digital officer with NBC Universal Cable.

"He is very much a new prototype for sports commissioner," Schill said. "He is the sort of person we need for this decade and the decades beyond. Even without serving a day in the job, George has

thoughtfully challenged us to envision what is possible for the Pac-12. What is possible for the coming era of new technologies and media."

The Pac-12 university presidents conducted a secretive nearly four-month search with the executive search firm TurnkeyZRG.

Some familiar names in college sports were among those speculated to be up for consideration by the Pac-12: former NCAA executive and NFL quarterback Oliver Luck, Ohio State Athletic Director Gene Smith, and Texas AD Chris Del Conte, to name a few.

Instead, the Pac-12's next commissioner — much like its last

— comes to the conference with no previous experience as an administrator in college sports.

"With today's announcement, I believe that I am transitioning from the best job in entertainment to the best job in sports," Kliavkoff said in a video conference with reporters. "I made this jump because I'm passionate about the mission of the Pac-12 Conference, to drive financial results, to protect and expand scholarships and support the other educational goals of our member institutions."

Kliavkoff said he has three priorities when he formally takes over as commissioner in July.

"First, we will protect and support our student-athletes.

Second, we will make decisions to optimize revenue for our member institutions, including renegotiating our media distribution deals. And third, we will do everything we can at the conference level to make our teams more competitive in revenue-generating sports, especially football," he said.

Kliavkoff said he supports expansion of the College Football Playoff and the implementation of consistent name, image and likeness guidelines across NCAA sports.

"We think that both CFP expansion and NIL legislation are good for college sports fans, good for our student-athletes, and can be

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Kliavkoff

### COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## McCullough shares player of the year honors

East Oregonian

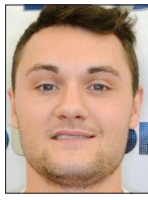
LA GRANDE — Postseason honors continue to roll in for Eastern Oregon University's Max McCullough.

The same week the redshirt senior learned he was named Academic All-District honoree by the College Sports Information Directors of America, Eastern's all-time leading scorer was named Cascade Collegiate Conference co-player of the spring, the league announced on Thursday, May 13.



Jeske

McCullough, who shared the honor with Bushnell University's Stevie Schlabach, has been part of a Mountie squad that has gone 85-43 in five years. He currently stands as the EOU career leader in points scored and is the only player in history to eclipse 2,000 career points at 2,061. This spring, McCullough averaged 21.1 points (third in the CCC) and 5.2 rebounds per game. He also handed out 104 assists (first in the CCC) to go with 32 steals.



McCullough

The league also announced that Southern Oregon University's Tez Allen grabbed defensive player of the spring honors, while Warner Pacific University's Isaac Etter was named the newcomer of the spring and Corban University's Kendall Moore earned freshman of the spring honors. Corban head coach Taylor Kelly was named coach of the spring.

Eastern Oregon's Justin Jeske was an honorable mention selection.

Jeske, a redshirt sophomore, started all 20 games for the Mountaineers during the spring season. He averaged 28 minutes per game and nearly averaged a double-double. He was the team leader in rebounds at 8.4 per contest and ranked third in the CCC. He was fifth on the team in scoring at 10.7 points per game, while shooting 65% from the floor. Jeske's field goal percentage was third highest in the league. He also tallied 40 assists, 26 steals, and had 10 blocked shots.



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File

Pendleton's Sam Jennings throws the javelin during the Pendleton Invite on April 16, 2021. Jennings took first with a throw of 177-9½.

## PERFECTING HIS CRAFT

### Pendleton's Sam Jennings invests in the future with new javelin

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

**P**ENDLETON — A man's work is only as good as his tools. For Pendleton javelin thrower Sam Jennings, an upgrade is needed for him to continue to improve his craft.

A junior, Jennings has thrown a school record 198 feet, 11 inches this spring, and is ranked first in Oregon and eighth in the nation.

If he is going to throw 200 feet and beyond, he and Pendleton throwing coach Nicole Bowden know he needs better equipment.

Pendleton High School has a collection of javelins, some of which may or may not have been used in the first Happy Canyon Pageant, but they do not perform for a thrower of Jennings' ability.

"We have a lot of really old javelins that are 10 or 15 years old," Bowden said. "We get them refurbished every 5 years or so, but with him being so advanced, he needs one with less flex. He can really launch the school javelins, but it's about the core center balance, and a little less flex. His release right now has a bounce and is almost like a smile."

#### Making his mark

Jennings, who finished fourth at state

as a freshman with a throw of 181-7, bought a standard high school javelin at the start of his sophomore year, but didn't get to use it much before COVID wiped out his season.

At a home meet on April 30, Jennings launched a throw of 198-11 to break Geoff Herd's school record of 186-10 set in 2009.

"One of the biggest shocks, is I thought it was a terrible throw," Jennings said. "My goal this year was 190. If I throw 200, I'll be the only junior in the nation to throw that far."

With 200 feet and beyond on his radar, Jennings knew exactly which javelin he wanted to get after seeking advice from 2019 state champion Ty Hampton, who now throws at University of Oregon.

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### SPORTS SHORT

## NCAA eyes host sites in states with anti-transgender laws

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The NCAA announced 20 potential host sites for the early rounds of its postseason baseball tournament on Friday, May 14, including three states that have passed laws requiring athletes to compete in interscholastic sports according to their sex at birth.

The NCAA Division I Baseball Committee unveiled the sites for 16 NCAA regionals and eight super regionals. Those include five schools in states that have passed the laws: Arkansas, Southern Miss, Mississippi State, Tennessee and Vanderbilt.

Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee are also potential host sites for the NCAA's softball tournament.

The NCAA Board of Governors issued a statement April 12 saying it "firmly and unequivocally supports the opportunity for transgender student-athletes to compete in college sports." The board said it would continue monitoring those situations.

NCAA spokeswoman Stacey Osburn referred questions to the board's earlier statement and said the NCAA had no further comment on the issue.

Legislation requiring athletes to compete in interscholastic sports according to their sex at birth

has been introduced in dozens of states this year, and governors have signed bills in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee and West Virginia. Arkansas, Mississippi and West Virginia laws also cover college sports teams.

Human Rights Council President Alphonso David called for the NCAA to refuse to hold championships in states that have enacted the laws.

Jeff Altier, the committee chairman and the athletic director at Stetson, said last month that his committee had been given no directive to exclude any school from consideration for hosting a regional.



Sue Ogrocki/Associated Press, File

A large flag is unfurled in the outfield before the second game of the best-of-three championship series between Florida and Oklahoma in the NCAA Women's College World Series in Oklahoma City on June 6, 2017.