

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## EOU football voted first in Frontier Conference Preseason Coaches Poll



Kathleen Brown/Eastern Oregon University Athletics, File

**Eastern Oregon University quarterback Kai Quinn scrambles during a play on March 20, 2021, while playing at home in La Grande against Carroll College. Quinn was the Frontier Conference's Offensive Player of the Year after completing over 63% of his passes for 811 yards and eight touchdowns during the spring.**

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**  
*The Observer*

GREAT FALLS, Mont. — The Mountaineers football team is the one to beat this year.

Eastern Oregon University topped the preseason coaches poll, which was announced Tuesday, July 27, during the Frontier Conference's media day in Great Falls, Montana. The Mountaineers finished with three of the eight first-place votes. College of Idaho and Montana Western tied for second and Carroll slotted in at No. 4. Southern Oregon, Montana Tech (two first-place votes), Rocky Mountain College and Montana State-Northern rounded out the back half of the poll.

"When we get all these guys back, we have a great opportunity to do something," EOU head coach Tim Camp said. "We're excited to play, but we want to win."

The Mountaineers narrowly edged out the College of Idaho and Montana Western, who both tied for second place with 36 points. Carroll College was voted fourth with 33 points.

Eastern Oregon tied atop the Frontier during the shortened spring 2020 season with Carroll and College of Idaho after four spring contests, giving the Mountaineers at least a share of a conference title for the first time since 1980 and just the fourth time since 1955.

Camp, who is entering his 14th year as head coach, was named co-coach of the year last season, while quarterback Kai Quinn won conference offensive player of the year and defensive lineman Chase Van Wyck earned conference defensive player of the year. Through a tumultuous season, the Mountaineers finished the 2020 season ranked 21st in the NAIA.

Most coaches started their press conferences at media day by discussing the challenges of the 2020 spring season and expressed their sentiments about returning to a more normal 2021 season in the fall.

"Not being able to coach against all of them in 2020 was a lot different for me," Camp said.

Camp, who has compiled a 74-61 record with the Mountaineers, credited the Frontier Conference for making it through the pandemic and pointed out the importance of Athletic Director Anji Weissenfluh and President Tom Insko in Eastern's efforts to compete last season. Camp said the unique season brought his team closer together and that because of extended eligibility rules, almost his entire roster from last season is returning, including Quinn and Van Wyck.

"We got so much better,

not just at football, but at relying on each other," he said.

### Loaded offense returns for EOU

Quinn, who many consider to be the best at the position in the Frontier Conference, returns after throwing for 811 yards and eight touchdowns last season. Camp noted a key component for 2021 will be the return of the bulk of the team's offensive line to protect Quinn in the pocket.

"It's important that you're great up front if you want to protect the guy that's supposed to be making the big bucks in the back, which is Kai Quinn," Camp said.

While the Mountaineers are set to return Quinn and the offensive line, there will be a new workhorse in the backfield next fall. John Lesser graduated and left the program following a year in which he rushed for 340 yards over four games. Camp suggested that there will be a running back competition in the offseason between Victor Rosas and Nathan Reed.

### Improvements on defense

Camp stressed the importance of strengthening the defense, mentioning the Mountaineers' abysmal defensive performance in 2019. Eastern allowed 30.9 points per game and finished the last full season with a 4-7 record.

The Mountaineers followed up those efforts in 2020 by allowing just 22 points per game in the four-game season.

"We're starting to play defense the way I think it should be played," Camp said. "It starts with tackling, but you have to get lined up and have some enthusiasm behind doing some things."

The return of Van Wyck and 2020 first-team linebacker Solo Taylor will be crucial for Eastern as the team aims to continue improving on the defensive side of the ball. According to Camp, bringing back numerous upperclassmen will allow the Mountaineers to move players around to different defensive positions.

"We've got some dudes coming back that I think can play any place," Camp said.

### Eyes set on the regular season

Eastern Oregon begins its summer offseason program on Aug. 5 and the regular season begins on Aug. 28. The Mountaineers open on the road at Montana Tech, followed by the first Eastern home game of the year on Sept. 4 against Montana Western.

After a season of just four games, Camp is excited to see the rest of the Frontier Conference.

"We're going to do everything we can to make Eastern Oregon University and the community of La Grande proud," Camp said.



Umpqua Community College/Contributed Photo

**Fatima Izaguirre-Frasser (center) signs her wrestling letter of intent for Umpqua Community College as her mom, Karla Frasser-Parrish, and stepdad, Butch Parrish, look on. Izaguirre-Frasser also will run cross-country and track for the RiverHawks.**

## Ready to compete

By **ANNIE FOWLER**  
*East Oregonian*

HERMISTON — Fatima Izaguirre-Frasser was looking forward to her senior year at Hermiston High School.

She was part of the cross-country and track teams, and participated in wrestling. On top of that, she was getting ready for college. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, she had already missed out on things students look forward to during their senior year.

"I definitely had days where I was freaking out," she said. "It was my senior year. I was hoping to have something. Once school started again, I was very excited."

While Hermiston students still were in remote learning, Izaguirre-Frasser contracted COVID-19.

"It was around December when that happened, and it continued into January," Izaguirre-Frasser said. "I was staying with my dad and he got it from work. It messed up my breathing. That's why my performance was weak in cross-country. I wasn't hospitalized, but I have an inhaler if I need it."

While things didn't look good at the beginning of the year, there was a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for Izaguirre-Frasser, who signed letters of intent to run cross-country and track at Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, as well as wrestle for the RiverHawks.

"We are looking for her to come in and contribute to our distance runners," UCC coach Alan King said in a news release.

One sport is the norm, two is admirable but three will keep Izaguirre-Frasser plenty busy.

"Our coaches (at Hermiston) really push us to do our best," she said. "They are supportive in what we do. That pushed me to do more in college."

Izaguirre-Frasser runs everything from the 800 to the 3,200 in track. This year, she hit a personal best of 2 minutes, 48.04 seconds in the 800, and a personal record of 6:47.87 in the 1,600. She also ran on the Bulldogs' 4x400 relay team.

At UCC, she will keep her distances shorter.

"I will do the 800, 1,600 and 4x400 relay in college," she said. "I prefer more mid-distance. Long distance isn't that much of my favorite because of my breathing issues."

In cross-country, Izaguirre-Frasser has a personal best of 22:05.3 in the 5,000 meters, and her personal best in the 3-mile race is 21:41.8.

"The distances in cross-country are easier because it is one race a day, not three or four," she said.

Izaguirre-Frasser, who plans to major in criminal psychology, will be joining a Umpqua Community College team that finished second at the NWAC Southern Regional this year.

Out of the three sports, Izaguirre-Frasser may like wrestling most of all. She placed third at 105 pounds in the Northern Section of districts as a senior, and was named to the Mid-Columbia Conference honorable mention team.

"It makes me feel powerful, and I'm

in control," she said of wrestling. "I love the teamwork and just wrestling in general. It's fun. I like working out. In a way, it's harder than cross-country and track. Since I run a lot, it's easier for me. It gets hard because you are using all of yourself."

The RiverHawks ended the 2019-20 season as the top-ranked junior college program in the county. They finished second at the NCWA National Championship and eighth in the WCWA National Championship. They crowned three National Champions, 10 All-Americans, and four Academic All-Americans that season.

"Fatima will help to add depth to our lower weights and will bring a strong work ethic and skill base to our team and room," Umpqua coach wrestling Craig Jackson said in a news release.

Izaguirre-Frasser is excited to join the RiverHawks on the mat.

"It's a big privilege to wrestle for them," she said, "and be wanted to come and wrestle for them."

With the college season right around the corner, Izaguirre-Frasser will start college cross-country practice Aug. 2.

Umpqua Community College has on-campus housing for female athletes, which was a relief for Izaguirre-Frasser, but she heads to Roseburg not knowing a soul.

"I don't know anyone there at all," she said. "It will be a new experience for me. It's exciting, but a little scary. Mom (Karla) is happy for me to start a new life on my own, but she's sad her first child is leaving the nest."

### SPORTS SHORT

## Oregon picked by media to win 3rd straight Pac-12 title

*The Associated Press*

LOS ANGELES — After taking an unusual route to its second straight Pac-12 title last season, Oregon is the preseason favorite to make it three in a row.

The Ducks received 27 of 40 first-place votes in the annual poll of media members released Tuesday, July 27, before the start of Pac-12 media day. Southern California got 10 votes, and Utah received three.

Oregon beat the Trojans 31-24 in the conference title game last December, representing the Pac-12 North after Washington could not participate because of a COVID-19 outbreak among its players. It was the second conference title in three seasons under coach Mario Cristobal, rewarding his emphasis on recruiting that has seen Oregon bring in the likes of junior edge rusher Kayvon



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian, File

**Oregon wide receiver Devon Williams (2) tries to avoid a tackle after the catch during a game against UCLA at Autzen Stadium in Eugene in November 2020. A media poll released Tuesday, July 27, 2021, picked the Ducks to win the Pac-12 title.**

Thibodeaux, who could be the first player selected in the next NFL draft.

Although the teams did not play each other in the shortened conference-only season last year, Oregon

got the nod over the Pacific Northwest rival Huskies to represent the North. The Ducks received 38 first-place votes in the division, with Washington getting two.

California, Stanford, Oregon State and Washington State rounded out the voting in the North, which has won nine of 10 title games since the Pac-12 expanded in 2011.

USC, which won the Pac-12 South's lone conference title in 2017, was picked to represent the division again. With star quarterback Kedon Slovis returning, the Trojans received 27 first-place votes.

Utah and Arizona State each got six first-place votes, but the Utes edged the Sun Devils for second place.

UCLA, which got the remaining first-place vote, was picked to finish fourth, followed by Colorado and Arizona.

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