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The decade's finest

Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File

Blue Mountain's Kristin Williams (12) unleashes a spike during a 2016 game against North Idaho College at the McCrae Activity Center in Pendleton. Williams was among six Blue Mountain Community College volleyball players to earn a spot on the Northwest Athletic Conference 2010s All-Decade Team.

BMCC volleyball, basketball players honored by NWAC

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Blue Mountain Community College volleyball program was one of the most dominant Northwest Athletic Conference teams of the past decade, and the players' efforts did not go unnoticed, with six earning a spot on the NWAC 2010s All-Decade Team.

Pendleton's Kristin Williams leads the way with first-team honors, along with Sierra Linke and Robyn Shirmer. Hermiston's Crystal Schmidt was a second-team pick, as were Rebecca Haight and Samantha Odren.

The Timberwolves also had women's basketball player Mar'Shay Moore, a two-time NWAC Player of the Year, named to the first team.

Pendleton's Darian Lindsey earned second-team honors for softball while playing for Mt. Hood.

Blue Mountain won NWAC volleyball titles in 2010, and from 2012-15. During their four-year run, the Timberwolves were a combined 177-22 (.889 win percentage).

Williams, a 6-foot-3 middle on the 2015 team that went 42-9, was named the 2015 NWAC Player of the Year as a freshman. Her sophomore year, in which the Timberwolves were a modest 25-17, she led the team with 77 blocks and was a first-team all-East Region pick.

"I didn't know this was a thing," she said of the All-Decade Team. "I had a few people tag me on Facebook."

Williams, who grew up in Helix, transferred to Pendleton High School when she was a freshman for better exposure to sports.

"I started playing in middle

school," Williams said. "We never went to state when I was in high school. We won the league title a couple of times, but we lost in the state play-in game."

In her first year at BMCC, she earned Player of the Year honors as well as being named to the NWAC tournament first team. She also was a first-team All-American. She finished the season with 185 kills with a 0.327 attack percentage, and 87 blocks.

"Kristin never played the middle blocker position before this season," BMCC coach Dave Baty told the East Oregonian at the time. "She embraced its challenges and continues to learn and improve."

After she finished at BMCC, Williams went to the University of Idaho, but a back injury limited her to a partial season.

"I hurt my back and had to medically retire," Williams said. "That's one of the hard-

est decisions as an athlete you have to make."

Williams remained at Idaho and settled in as a student.

"I found my major and it worked out," she said. "I graduated with my bachelor's in architecture in the summer of 2020. I have one more year of my master's left, then it's on to the real world."

Williams has designed a lot of residential buildings, but she has her eye on something else for her thesis.

"I think I will go into long-term care facilities," she said. "I started in interior design and I think that helped me see how people live."

Robyn Shirmer, volleyball

A setter for Mt. Si High School in Seattle, Shirmer was named the 2012 NWAC Player of the Year. She went on to play at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho. Her junior year, she handed out 833 assists for the Warriors.

Sierra Linke, volleyball

The 5-10 Pasco native was named the NWAC Player of the Year in 2014 as a sophomore, and was named the NWAC Tournament MVP as the Timberwolves won their third consecutive title and posted a 50-4 record. She led BMCC with 273 kills.

Linke went on to play at Eastern Oregon University, where she was an outside hitter. She helped the Mountaineers win Cascade Collegiate Conference regular-season titles in 2015 and 2016, and earn trips to the NAA national tournament.

Linke (now Christensen) finished her degree at Oregon Health & Science University and works as a registered nurse.

Crystal Schmidt, volleyball

A 6-foot middle blocker from Hermiston, Schmidt was a two-time Columbia River Conference Player of the Year for the Bulldogs, and a 5A first-team all-state selection her senior year.

She had 367 kills for the Timberwolves her sophomore year and was named the 2013 NWAC Player of the Year.

Schmidt went on to play at Carroll College in Montana. She earned All-Frontier Conference honors twice and helped Carroll earn a share of the Frontier Conference crown in 2015.

A talented javelin thrower, Schmidt also participated in track at Carroll College.

At the 2016 NAIA Championships, she was fourth in the javelin with a toss of 151-6.

In 2017, she competed in the heptathlon. At the NAIA championships in 2017, she was 11th in the heptathlon (4450 points), 12th in the javelin (130-2) and 13th in the high jump (5-3).

Rebecca Haight, volleyball

A 2009 grad of Mark Morris High School

(Longview, Washington), Haight was the Greater St. Helens 2A League MVP in 2007-08.

Haight set the Mark Morris record for kills in a season with 326 as a junior. That record still stands.

A 5-9 outside hitter, she played two years at BMCC, then went on to play at EOU. She was named the Cascade Collegiate Conference Newcomer of the Year after recording 213 kills.

Samantha Odren, volleyball

Odren was a 5-5 setter from Auburn Mountainview High School in Auburn, Washington. As a senior, she was the SPSL Player of the Year in 2012.

At Blue Mountain, she was a second-team East Region selection as a freshman and a sophomore in 2013-14, and helped the college to two NWAC titles.

Mar'Shay Moore, basketball

Moore had wanted to play Division I basketball since she was 5 years old. She made that dream come true.

The NWAC Player of the Year in 2014-15, Moore was signed by the University of Oregon, making her the first female Blue Mountain student-athlete in any sport to play at the Division I level.

In her sophomore year at Blue Mountain, the 5-foot-8 guard from Vancouver, Washington, averaged 24.1 points a game for the 19-10 Timberwolves.

Her 700 points for the 2014-15 season is tied for the second most in NWAC history behind former Umpqua Community College's Kristi Fallin, who also went on to play at Oregon.

As a freshman at BMCC, Moore averaged 18.4 points a game while shooting 45 percent from the field, and had 4.7 rebounds and 2.1 steals per game.

At Oregon, Moore came off the bench for coach Kelly Graves, and was a tenacious defensive player.

Beavers have depth at QB, but who will start season?

BY STEVE GRESS
Corvallis Gazette-Times

CORVALLIS — Oregon State head football coach Jonathan Smith believes competition helps bring out the best in players.

He anticipates that will be the case in the quarterback room, where the Beavers have several candidates to take over the starting job for this coming season.

Training camp gets started at the end of next week, and the Beavers will be looking to see which quarterback emerges as the leader of the offense.

The Beavers return two quarterbacks who saw extended action last season.

Tristan Gebbia started the first four games before suffering a season-ending leg injury. He completed 80 of 129 passes for 824 yards with three touchdowns and three interceptions and helped lead the Beavers to an upset of Oregon before he was hurt on the game-winning drive.

Smith said Gebbia should be ready

to go when camp starts.

"I think he's got a great skill set," Smith said at the Pac-12's media day on Tuesday. "Understands the scheme, good leader. Has won games for us."

Chance Nolan took over for Gebbia and completed 46 of 91 passes for 537 yards and six touchdowns with two interceptions. He also rushed 30 times for 147 yards and one score, providing a dual threat at the position for the Beavers.

"We were really close the last couple (games) with him as the starting quarterback," Smith said. "Counting on him making huge strides in his game from Year 1 to Year 2."

Ben Gulbranson, who also saw a limited action last season, will not be ready for fall camp due to a shoulder injury, Smith said.

Knowing that Gulbranson would be out, the Beavers added former Colorado starter Sam Noyer, a grad transfer, to the fold back in June.

Noyer, from Beaverton, passed for 1,000 yards in the Buffaloes' five games last season, completing 80 of

137 passes with six touchdowns and five interceptions. He also rushed for 191 yards on 45 attempts.

"(Noyer) has a little bit different skill set, makes the game physical, moving his feet, bigtime arm," Smith said. "Anxious to work with him coming in August."

"(We have) three really good options there."

Noyer isn't the only Sam in the quarterback room as freshman Sam Vidlak from Hidden Valley High has been on campus and participated in spring practice.

"Had a great spring," Smith said. "He's going to have an opportunity this August to go. We have four healthy guys."

If Gulbranson hadn't been injured, the Beavers may not have been as interested in Noyer, Smith said. But in need of another healthy body at the position, and Noyer's familiarity with some of the current players, as well as offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren, who was at Colorado before joining Smith's staff when he took over, made it an easier decision.

"Everything I've heard so far since

he's been here has been great," Smith said. "You talk about a guy who loves the game, is unselfish. You can see his leadership capabilities even the short time he's been with us."

"So I'm really excited to see him out there on the practice field with us, using the skill set that he has, not just throwing or running but also on this leadership side."

The familiarity with Lindgren and the system should help Noyer adapt quicker to what the Beavers want to do on offense.

"Schematically, some of the way we call plays, probably brought back what he remembers from his first couple years," Smith said.

There isn't a lot of time between now and the season opener — Sept. 4 against Purdue in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Regardless of who wins the starting job, the Beavers need to be able to rely on the other three to step in when needed.

"We feel like we've got a quarterback room that is full of some talent, it's going to be competitive this month in training camp," Smith



Amanda Loman/The Associated Press, File
Oregon State quarterback Chance Nolan (10) scrambles while looking for a receiver against Arizona State in Corvallis on Dec. 19, 2020.

said. "The cream rises to the top when you have that type of competition in August, but also it adds to our depth as the season goes."

SPORTS SHORT

Blazers acquire rights to Texas forward Greg Brown

By ERIK GARCÍA
GUNDERSEN
The Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Portland Trail Blazers on Thursday, July 29, acquired the rights to Greg Brown, the No. 43 pick in the NBA draft, in a trade with the New Orleans Pelicans.

Deputy Commissioner Mark Tatum announced the Blazers sent a future second-round pick and cash to New Orleans, which selected the

forward from Texas.

Brown started 24 of 26 games for the Longhorns last season. He averaged 10 points and nearly seven rebounds per game in Big 12 play.

The Blazers entered the night without any draft picks. The rights to their 2021 first-round pick were sent to the Houston Rockets in last fall's trade for starting forward Robert Covington.

After their fourth first-round playoff loss in five seasons, general

manager Neil Olshey hired former Clippers assistant Chauncey Billups to succeed Terry Stotts as head coach.

Stotts is the only coach star guard Damian Lillard led USA Basketball with 21 points in Wednesday's 120-63 victory over Iran at the Olympics in Tokyo.

Lillard has publicly stated he believes the Blazers must improve while denying reports that he is asking for a trade.



Charles Rex Arbogast/The Associated Press, File
Texas' Greg Brown III participates in the NBA Draft Combine at the Wintrust Arena on Tuesday, June 22, 2021, in Chicago.