

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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BREATH OF FRESH AIR FOR RIVERSIDE FOOTBALL



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Riverside High School head football coach Cole Ashby leads a weight room workout for the team Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2021, at the high school in Boardman.

Cole Ashby replacing longtime coach David Boor, who stepped down after last season

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — It's time for a change. David Boor, who has coached football at Riverside High School and at the middle school, stepped down after last season, saying

it's time for someone else to try and change the culture at the high school. "They need a change," said Boor, who has spent the past 20 years between the high school and middle school. "It was hard for me to stay positive. They need a fresh approach. I had a hard time being positive with COVID and all. If you can't be posi-

itive, you shouldn't be coaching." During his tenure the past few years, the wins have been few, and the number of athletes turning out also has dipped. "You have to get the community, the coaches, parents and administration on the same page, and I couldn't make that happen," Boor said. "Bottom line, you want to win games.

There are enough kids to field a quality team, it's a matter of getting them on the same page. Hopefully Cole can get that done." That would be Cole Ashby, 28, who was an assistant under Boor the past two years.

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James Cimburek/Contributed Photo

Hunter Nichols, second from left, runs during the semifinals of the 1,000 meters at the NAIA Indoor Track & Field Championships in March 2021 in Yankton, South Dakota. Nichols attends Eastern Oregon University, and the College Sports Information Directors of America selected the 2019 Heppner High graduate as a second-team academic All-American.

Heppner's Nichols earns academic honors at EOU

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — Hunter Nichols kept getting texts congratulating him. For what, he didn't know. A couple of days later, his coach at Eastern Oregon University let Nichols know he was named a College Sports Information Directors of America — or CoSIDA — second-team academic All-American.

"I was was out on fires and I didn't know what they were talking about," said Nichols, a 2019 graduate of Heppner High School. "The school hadn't told me. I think it's cool. Finally, all

the hard work pays off. Everyone always sees your name for sports. It's all the behind the scenes stuff they never see. It pays off a little more when people see it."

To qualify, student-athletes must have a minimum 3.30 GPA to be nominated, and should be a significant contributor to their teams.

Nichols, who is studying biology, has a 3.83 GPA.

He was named to the U.S. Bank All-Academic Team in both cross-country and track and field for the 2020-21 academic year. He was also named to the CoSIDA academic all-district first team.

Nichols was a top-two

runner for the Mountaineers' cross-country team, and he qualified for the NAIA indoor nationals in the 1,000 meters. He earned All-American honors in March by finishing fifth at nationals with a time of 2 minutes, 32.51 seconds.

During the outdoor season, Nichols placed second in the Cascade Collegiate Conference Championships in the 800 and 1,500, helping EOU win the CCC outdoor title.

He qualified for the NAIA track and field national meet in the 800, where he placed 14th.

Nichols, who has been fighting fires all summer, said he is ready to get back to running.

"I had a really good start

to my summer running," he said. "Then the fires started. I haven't done much since."

Nichols, who will be a junior at EOU, has not been in the midst of the smoke and flames. He has been operating the heavy equipment to make fire breaks.

He spent nearly three weeks on the Bootleg Fire in Southern Oregon, and Thursday, Aug. 12, he was headed to the fire outside of Dayton, Washington.

"I haven't seen a frickin' flame," he said. "I'm operating the heavy equipment, that's where the money is. I have had all sorts of work experience in the past 4-5 years and none of it applies to medical school."

SPORTS SHORT

Stu Barnes returns to coach Tri-City Americans

East Oregonian

KENNEWICK — Tri-City Americans General Manager Bob Tory announced Aug. 7 that the team hired Americans alum and co-owner Stu Barnes as the team's head coach.

Barnes, 50, began his hockey career with the St. Albert Saints of the Alberta Junior Hockey League in 1986 before jumping to the Western Hockey League the following season.

After one year with the New Westminster Bruins, Barnes relocated with the franchise to Tri-City for the 1988-89 season.

He posted 59 goals and 141 points in 70 games for the Amer-

icans in their inaugural season. Barnes was awarded the Four Broncos Memorial Trophy that year, given to the WHL's Player of the Year.

After his impressive season in Tri-City, Barnes was selected fourth overall in the 1989 NHL Entry Draft by the Winnipeg Jets.

He finished his junior career by collecting 144 points in 63 games in 1989-90, a total that sits second all-time in Americans franchise history for points in a single season.

Barnes went on to enjoy a 16-year professional career that saw him play 1,136 games in the NHL with the Winnipeg Jets, Florida Panthers, Pittsburgh Penguins, Buffalo Sabres

and Dallas Stars. During his NHL career, he totaled 575 points (261 goals, 336 assists) and reached the Stanley Cup Final twice (Buffalo, 1999; Florida, 1996).

"Stu had a tremendous impact on the Americans organization as a player and fan favorite," stated Tory. "As a fierce competitor himself, he understands the development process of today's young players and will bring relentless passion and energy to the job."

After retiring from his playing career in 2008, Barnes spent five years as an assistant coach with the Dallas Stars.

Barnes will be the 15th head coach in Americans franchise history.



Tri-City Americans/Contributed Photo

Stu Barnes acknowledges fans Aug. 7, 2021, as he was introduced as the coach of the Tri-City Americans at the Toyota Center in Kennewick.