

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Weston-McEwen's Genevieve Robinson (10) hits the ball Thursday, Aug. 26, 2021, during a four-set win over Dufur to open the season for the TigerScots.

## 2A BMC CONTINUES TO SHOW STRENGTH

Heppner, Stanfield, W-M are formidable volleyball programs

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

ATHENA — After opening matches Thursday, Aug. 26, it's not hard to see that the Blue Mountain Conference is as strong as it's ever been.

Heppner, Stanfield and Weston-McEwen all won.

It's that parity in the league that makes each team better year in and year out.

"We are definitely not the favorite coming in," W-M coach Shawn White said. "Last year, Union was as good as any 2A team in the state. They did graduate several good hitters, but they will still be tough. Stanfield, realistically, is the team to beat. We are going to give it a good shot."

Tigers coach Blain Ganvoa appreciates the kind words, but after beating Irrigon 3-1 on Aug. 26, he said there still is work to be done.

"He is being nice," Ganvoa said of White's remark. "W-M is always formidable. We haven't had the success consistently to

put us in that top tier, but we will be there sooner than later. We still have a long way to go and have the girls keep it in perspective. That comes with getting better with every match, finding the joy in every game and competing with each other."

Heppner, who dominated with Sydney Wilson in the lineup for four years, is now without the all-round threat after she graduated in the spring. The Mustangs still were able to make quick work of Riverside in their opener, but once conference play rolls around, the competition will be fierce.

The TigerScots have 35 players out this year, led by senior setter Charli King. Setter is a loose term for King, who also hits and digs up every ball within a country mile.

"We are going to ask a lot of Charli this year with setting, as well as hitting," White said. "She does a lot of good things for us. Addie (Perkins) is coming along and she will take some of the sets this year so we can get some swings out of Charli. She will be a good setter. I wouldn't have her on varsity if she wasn't."

The TigerScots also have a solid middle in 6-foot-1 junior

Genevieve Robinson.

"This is the first time I have ever had a player over 6 feet," White said. "She is working into it; she will have a really good year. She only started playing as a freshman, then the whole COVID thing hit. She has been learning really fast. I'm really happy with where she is."

W-M has a few more non league matches on the schedule before heading into conference play Sept. 16, hosting Pilot Rock.

"They are working hard," White said. "We just have to keep our nose to the grindstone. I'm very pleased with the group I've got."

### One day at a time

Pendleton opens its season Aug. 28, at the Lewiston Tournament.

While early tournaments help coaches gauge what they need to work on, Bucks coach Amanda Lapp will be happy to get out of Lewiston with a couple of wins.

"I haven't had them all together yet," Lapp said of her team. "The first day we were going to practice together, we had a younger player test positive (for COVID-19), so we all got shut down. We are taking four

varsity players to Lewiston. The JV kids that I do have are freshmen. They have never played in a high school match before. When you throw them in a match, it's a learning experience. It will help them during the season."

Seniors Chloe Taber, Muriel Hoisington and Nora Yoshioka, along with junior Elsie Zaugg, are the four returning players that Lapp will have this weekend.

When the Bucks are at full strength, they will have five players who are 5-10 or taller.

"We have a tall group of girls this year, which is really nice," Lapp said. "We don't get that too often. They meshed really nice the first couple of days we had them. We were able to sit down and go through some season goals. If they put their heads together, they can get it done."

The Bucks will be without senior hitter Daisy Jenness this season, who is recovering from a knee injury suffered in basketball.

"She is going really well," Lapp said. "She has physical therapy every day. She is able to walk on it. I'm bummed out that she can't play this season, but she will be there with us."

## Bucks able to pick up a Week 1 game

Pendleton will play at Southridge on Sept. 3

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton football team had its season opener, Sept. 2, at La Grande canceled because of COVID-19 precautions. But the Bucks were able to pick up another game.

Pendleton Athletic Director Mike Somnis was notified Monday, Aug. 23, by La Grande Athletic Director Darren Goodman they had players who tested positive before practice started.

With just two weeks before their game, there wasn't enough time for the mandatory quarantine and the required number of practices in pads for the Tigers.

"We are just taking precautions in bringing them back properly," Goodman said. "We didn't want to put people in situations they weren't ready for."

The Bucks were able to schedule a non-league game at 7 p.m. on Sept. 3 at Southridge, which plays in the 6A-2 Metro League.

"The way the last year and a half has gone, everyone is excited to have a Week 1 game," Somnis said. "Our coaches and kids are looking forward to that Friday night experience."

As soon as Somnis found out they would need a game, he posted on the OSAA site of teams looking for games.

"We put out some feelers that we were looking for a game," Somnis said. "When Southridge came available, they jumped on it and reached out. It was a good opportunity for us. Football is one of those sports where you don't want to have a bye week. It's big to get a game like this."

The Skyhawks were scheduled to play Thurston, which also is in the midst of COVID-19 protocols.

The Bucks will host Wilsonville in a non-league game at 7 p.m. on Sept. 10.

## Pac-12 decides not to expand

SAN FRANCISCO — The Pac-12 said Thursday, Aug. 26, it will stand pat with its membership and not look to expand the 12-team conference, making it highly unlikely the Big 12 schools being left behind by Texas and Oklahoma will find new Power Five homes.

The announcement came two days after the Pac-12, Atlantic Coast Conference and Big Ten pledged to work together on governance issues and scheduling agreements in football and basketball.

The formation of a three-conference alliance came a little less than a month after the Southeastern Conference invited Texas and Oklahoma to join the league in 2025. The move would coincide with the end of the Big 12's current television contract.

With Pac-12 expansion off the board, and both the ACC and Big Ten stating publicly that they are content with their current membership, the eight remaining Big 12 schools appear to have limited options beyond sticking together.

— The Associated Press

### SPORTS SHORT

## Ronaldo heading back to Manchester United

By STEVE DOUGLAS  
Associated Press

Cristiano Ronaldo is headed back to Manchester United.

The English club said Friday, Aug. 27, it has reached an agreement with Juventus for the transfer of the 36-year-old Portugal forward, subject to agreement of personal terms, visa and a medical examination.

Ronaldo, a five-time world player of the year, told Juventus on Aug. 26 that he no longer wanted to play for the Italian

club, coach Massimiliano Allegri said.

United did not disclose a transfer fee for Ronaldo, but it is reported to be \$29.5 million. He had one year left on his contract at Juventus.

Ronaldo played for United from 2003-09 and turned into a superstar under the guidance of then-manager Alex Ferguson.

"Everyone at the club looks forward to welcoming Cristiano back to Manchester," United said in a brief statement, ending a day of fast-moving developments.

It is the latest blockbuster move of the transfer window, with Lionel Messi — Ronaldo's long-time rival — having joined Paris Saint-Germain after his contract at Barcelona expired. PSG forward Kylian Mbappe is also the subject of a bid of about 160 million euros (\$188 million) from Real Madrid.

Hours before United confirmed Ronaldo's return to the club where he scored 118 goals in 292 games, current manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said Ronaldo "knows that we're here" if he wanted to join.



Associated Press

Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo goes for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Udinese and Juventus, at the Dacia Arena in Udine, Italy, Sunday.