

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2021

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @EOSPORTS | FACEBOOK.COM/EOSPORTS

A9

Playoffs on the line for local football teams

TigerScots looking to keep a hold on BMC's No. 2 seed

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

ATHENA — The easiest way for Kenzie Hansell to keep the Blue Mountain Conference race to the playoffs straight is for Weston-McEwen to simply win its game on Friday, Oct. 29, against Grant Union.

"That has been our goal all season long," Hansell said of making the state playoffs. "And, to get better every week. We have done that. Not only as a team, but as a program for the future."

The TigerScots come into the game with a 4-1 BMC record. Heppner, at 5-0, already has won the conference title.

The Prospectors are tied with Umatilla at 3-2. The Vikings host Heppner on Oct. 29. The top three teams from

the BMC will advance to the state playoffs.

"Grant Union is a great program and is well coached," Hansell said. "The have an aggressive defense, they are disciplined and they do a lot of things well."

The TigerScots, which have a balanced attack between the run and the pass, have scored 206 points this season, and have allowed just 66 points.

The Prospectors have scored 188 points, but also have allowed 148.

"It will be a great night for football," Hansell said. "This is what the student-athletes have worked all season. It's nice to finish with a game that has state implications."

Also that night, the TigerScots will induct the 1996 football team, Casey Perkins (quarterback of the 1996 team), John Shafer and Karen Smith Albert into the Weston-McEwen Hall of Fame.

"We are excited to have

the 1996 team come back and be inducted on a night when two of the top Blue Mountain Conference teams are competing for playoff spots," Hansell said.

SPECIAL DISTRICT 2 PLAYOFFS — There will be a full day of football at Eastern Oregon University on Oct. 29 with four games that have state seeding implications.

The Ione/Arlington Cardinals (5-3) will play Powder Valley at 4 p.m. in the third-fifth game.

"I wasn't even sure what we were doing until today (Tuesday)," Ione/Arlington coach Dennis Stefani said. "It's for placement in our league since there are two sides (East and West). We are a little dinged up and a week off would have helped."

There are six guaranteed state playoff spots to be had.

In the other games, Elgin and Lyle/Wishram will play at 10 a.m. The winner still is in line for an at-large state berth. Crane and Imbler will play



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Weston-McEwen's Levie Phillips (18) carries the ball during an Oct. 1, 2021, game against the Heppner Mustangs in Athena. The TigerScots face the Grant Union Prospectors on Friday, Oct. 29, in a game with significant playoff implications.

at 1 p.m. in the fourth-sixth game, and Dufur and Adrian will play for 1-2 seeding at 7 p.m.

The one wrinkle thrown into all of this is Enterprise, which opted not to play a crossover game. The Outlaws have a majority of their team going to the 94th National FFA Convention this week-

end in Indianapolis.

The Outlaws still have a shot at an at-large berth because of their state ranking. They could snap up the at-large berth that the winner of the Elgin-Lyle/Wishram game is hoping to get.

HERMISTON AT HANFORD — The Bull-

dogs (1-7) are riding high after their 63-36 win over Pasco last week.

Quarterback Chase Elliott scored a school record eight touchdowns — five passing, two rushing and one interception return — against Pasco.

The Falcons (1-7) are coming off a 63-28 loss to Mid-Columbia Conference regular-season champion Kamiakin.

The winner of the Hermiston-Hanford game will host Ferris on Nov. 4, in an MCC-Greater Spokane League crossover game.

The loser will travel to play Ridgeline on Nov. 4.

PENDLETON HAS A BYE — The Bucks will have the week off after Parkrose forfeited to Pendleton last week.

The Bucks (9-1 overall, 7-0 SD1), which won the Special District 1 title last week with a 35-6 road win over Ridgeview, will wait with the rest of the teams for the 5A state pairings to come out Oct. 31.

Bulldogs are going trophy hunting

Hermiston draws Lake Washington in first round of state

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The Hermiston Bulldogs are no stranger to the 2A/3A slowpitch softball state tournament.

The Bulldogs placed second at state in 2019, and despite a few hiccups along the way this season, coach Amy Stone feels her girls have a good shot at bringing home some hardware.

"The girls just need to show up and play," Stone said.

The Bulldogs (13-8) will open the 2A/3A state tournament at 10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 29, against Lake Washington at the Gateway Sports Complex in Yakima

"The girls are definitely going to have to come out strong and get their jobs done," Stone said. "We have nothing to lose. You play game by game and play your heart out. You make them beat you, you don't beat yourself."

Hermiston earned a spot in the final eight after splitting its games with University and Mt. Spokane last weekend.

"Beating University was pretty neat," Stone said. "They came out excited and ready to go. The rough part was we came out flat against Mt. Spokane. If we would have come out and played, it would have been a much better game."

Hermiston opened the season winning seven of their first eight games, then went into a funk, losing their next six games.

In the final push at the end of the season, Hermiston won five games in a row entering the District 8 Tournament.

"The girls got nervous playing against the bigger names and didn't trust what they could do," Stone said. "They let themselves beat themselves."

What makes the Bulldogs a wild card in the tournament, is a majority of their fastpitch players are not playing slowpitch.

"It's kind of neat," Stone said. "We



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Hermiston High School softball head coach Amy Stone pitches to a batter during practice on Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. The Hermiston Bulldogs play Oct. 29 in the 2A/3A slowpitch softball state tournament.

we are one of a few teams that don't have a majority of their varsity players playing. Some play soccer and volleyball and others don't want to play. The girls we do have, they have had to work hard to learn the game, and fix the things they can."

All season, outfielder Eliza Rodriguez has powered the Bulldogs at the plate. Heading into state, she is hitting .701 with seven home runs, 32 RBIs and has scored 36 runs. She also has not committed an error through 21 games.

Alli Serna has hit .621 with 17 RBIs and 34 runs scored, while Hailey South hit .600 with four home runs, and Macey Tovar hit .656 with a handful of doubles.

Adding to the firepower are freshman Rylee Richman, who is hitting .547 with 12 RBIs and 34 runs scored, and Kendyl Inners, who is hitting .636 with five home runs.

"She has really stepped up this last half of the season, which has been great," Stone said of Inners.

Tickets for the state tournament are sold exclusively online. A ticket for the entire tournament is \$20 for adults and \$14 for students/seniors/military. Fans also can purchase single-day tickets.



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Hermiston High School freshman softball player Rylee Richman fields a throw to first base during practice Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. Richman has a .547 batting average with 12 RBIs and 34 runs scored.

ON THE SLATE

Thursday, Oct. 28

Prep volleyball

Hermiston at Richland, 5:30 p.m.

Prep girls soccer

Riverside at Umatilla, 4 p.m.
Pendleton at Ridgeview, 4:30 p.m.

Prep boys soccer

Ridgeview at Pendleton, 4:30 p.m.

Riverside at Umatilla, 6 p.m.

College volleyball

Southern Oregon at Eastern Oregon, 7 p.m.

College men's soccer

Eastern Oregon at Northwest, 12:30 p.m.

College women's soccer

Eastern Oregon at Northwest, 3 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 29

Prep football

Ione/Arlington vs. Powder Valley, 4 p.m., EOU
Hermiston at Hanford, 7 p.m.
Heppner at Umatilla, 7 p.m.
Nyssa at McLoughlin, 7 p.m.
Stanfield at Irrigon, 7 p.m.
Grant Union at Weston-McEwen 7 p.m.

Prep cross-country

Heppner, Nixyaawii, Pilot Rock, Riverside, Stanfield/Echo, Umatilla, Weston-McEwen at 3A/2A/1A Special District 5 Championships, John Day, TBD
McLoughlin at GOL District Championships, Milton-Freewater, TBD

Slowpitch softball

2A/3A Tournament: Hermiston vs. Lake Washington, 10 a.m., Yakima

College volleyball

Big Bend at Blue Mountain, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 30

Prep volleyball

1A state tournament: Echo vs. TBD

2A state tournament: Portland Christian at Stanfield

Prep girls soccer

District 8 playoffs: Hermiston at Southridge, 1 p.m.

College football

Carroll College at Eastern Oregon, 1 p.m.

SPORTS SHORT

Josh Frost named Linderman Award winner

East Oregonian

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Linderman Award is one of the most prestigious awards in pro rodeo. It recognizes a cowboy who won at least \$1,000 in three events, and those events must include at least one roughstock and one timed event.

The PRCA announced the 2021 Linderman Award winner is Randlett, Utah, cowboy Josh Frost. This past season Frost earned \$130,192 in bull riding, \$4,110 in

tie-down roping, and another \$1,070 in steer wrestling.

Frost, a two-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier, said in the press release the award means a lot to him, calling it the "most cowboy award" in the sport of pro rodeo.

"You have to compete on both ends of the arena in roughstock and timed events," he stated, "so it's an award that is hard to qualify for and especially hard to win."

Frost now has won back-to-back Linderman awards. His first came in 2019, then the honor was not awarded

in 2020. He said it's an award he shoots for every season, but it was more difficult than ever in 2021.

"Every year I set out with the goal of being in the running for the Linderman Award," Frost said. "This year was a little different, I had a big goal of trying to be the PRCA World Champion Bull Rider this year. I went to as many rodeos as anybody, so I was on the road a lot and didn't get to do as much as I wanted to do in the other events."

Kyle Whitaker holds the PRCA record for most Linderman Awards won with 10 in his ProRodeo career.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Josh Frost, of Randlett, Utah, rides Magic Mike for 84.5 points Sept. 15, 2021, on the opening day of the Pendleton Round-Up. Frost is the recipient of the 2021 Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Linderman Award.