

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## Ione/Arlington to battle St. Paul in first round of 1A playoffs

It's the Cardinals' first trip to state since 2009

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

IONE — The Ione/Arlington Cardinals are headed to the 1A state football playoffs for the first time since 2009, when the team was solely from Ione.

The Cardinals will take on St. Paul, which is a regular visitor to the playoff scene, making 36 appearances with six state titles. The Buckaroos played in, and lost,

the title games in 2018 and 2019.

Ione/Arlington coach Dennis Stefani said his team has nothing to lose when the teams meet Friday, Nov. 5, at the St. Paul Rodeo Grounds.

"I told them we are going there to win a football," Stefani said. "That is our objective. If we play hard and get beat by a better team, we can get on the bus with our heads held high. I think they know there have been times when they haven't shown up. They are excited to be in the playoffs."

The Cardinals are the No. 3 team from Special District 2-West. They

finished the regular season with a 4-2 league record and are 5-4 overall.

St. Paul won the Special District 1 title with a 4-0 record and are 8-1 overall. The Buckaroos scored a whopping 509 points this season.

"I would say they are the third-best team in the state," Stefani said. "In my opinion, they are not as athletic as Powder Valley or Adrian."

With that said, the Buckaroos still bring the talent to the field.

"We watched a bunch of film on them," Stefani said. "They

play a 3-3 defense and they are very disciplined. They have a good middle linebacker, and they stay in containment the whole time. Their offense and so many of their sets are similar to ours, which helps our practice. What gets tough is when you haven't seen something all year, but they are similar to us. They have a quarterback (George Pohlschneider) who is pretty quick and efficient. He doesn't fire it, but he has good placement. They have one receiver (Warren Rose) who is pretty good."

The Cardinals have leaned heav-

ily on senior Taylor Rollins this season. The 6-foot-2, 265-pound bruising running back and linebacker has left a wake of destruction this season.

"Taylor has been the glue of our team," Stefani said. "He does what he needs to do to help us win."

Cedrick Dayandante is the lightning to Rollins' thunder out of the backfield, while quarterback Carson Eynetich has found success with receiver Azriel Borghese and 6-9 tight end Bryce Rollins.

"When they are playing well, they look good," Stefani said. "When they don't, no one is dialed in."



## BUCKS READY FOR DRAGONS

Pendleton hosts Dallas in first round of 5A state playoffs

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton football coach Erik Davis had a hard decision to make at the start of the season.

With quarterback Jackson Davis unable to play because of a knee injury, Davis called upon the team's best receiver — Collin Primus — to take over under center.

The move has been a good one as the Bucks won the Special District 1 title with a 7-0 record and are 9-1 overall heading into the first round of the 5A state playoffs Friday, Nov. 5, against the Dallas Dragons.

"Being a quarterback is the hardest position," Davis said. "The ball goes through your hands every play. You have to manage the game. Catch the ball, make the right reads. He has done a great job in that aspect. We built an offense he can run and feel comfortable with."

Primus was a little hesitant at the beginning to move from receiver to quarterback, but since has embraced the role.

"I knew my better position was receiver, but I wanted to do what was best for the team," Primus said. "I was excited and nervous. I like the mental aspect of it. The wide receiver position is where my heart's at, but I am willing to do what it takes to take my team into the playoffs."

The Bucks have been run heavy at times this season, which benefitted Primus at the start of the season until he got his feet wet.

"It was a tough transition," he said. "I just had to take extra time, extra practice. The more I watched film, I got a better understanding of what was going on. I know what plays would work well for what defenses they run, and how to pick out the defense's weak spots on the field."

And, he has leaned on his offensive line for support.

"We don't have the biggest size on the line, but they have a lot of heart and work their butts off to help me out," Primus said. "(Center) Andrew Demianew does a great job. He runs our line very well. He's a good guy to have at center."

Davis has enjoyed watching Primus succeed in his new role.

"Going into the year, we had hopes to move him out there (receiver) and use other kids at quarterback," Davis said. "He got more comfortable, and his demeanor is calming to other kids. As soon as we felt he earned that sport, we ran with it. He has turned into a pretty good high school quarterback. He is part of what got us here."

The Bucks will need Primus to be at the top of his game the night of Nov. 5 against the Dragons. Pendleton is coming off a bye week, which Davis said was much needed.

"We needed it to heal," Davis said. "It couldn't have come at a better time. Kyle (Liscom) has had a little bit of a back issue that has been bothering him. It was good to let him heal a little bit. He is

the rock on the defense we need. Any extra time and treatment he can get will increase his productivity."

Dallas is the No. 4 team from Special District 3, finishing the regular season with a 5-4 overall record.

"We've started the process, but haven't completely broken them down," Davis said. "They are a good team. They create some matchup issues. They run a modified Wing-T and they are run heavy. They get off the ball really well. They have to come here, which helps a little bit. Right now, everyone is pretty good. We are going to have to play a very good football game."

The Bucks saw a version of the Wing-T against Putnam, but it's not something they see a lot of.

"With a run-heavy team, the clock seems to disappear pretty quickly," Davis said. "We've got to score when we have the ball and force a couple of turnovers to get our defense off the field."

Offensively, the Bucks have Liscom, Payton Lambert and Brock Mackey coming out of the backfield, Ben Jennings and Luke Bensching have been reliable receivers, and tight end Aiden Gunter has been a useful weapon.

"Defensively, they bring a lot of pressure," Davis said. "We have to be solid in our blocking schemes. Game by game, you see what's working. If the run game is working, that is an easy game to call. If you are thrown into a must-throw situation, your playbook shrinks. We adjust as a coaching staff to allow them to do what they can do. We will make sure our kids are prepared."

Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File

Pendleton quarterback Collin Primus (4) looks for a receiver Oct. 15, 2021, at the Pendleton Round-Up Arena as Redmond defender Braden Cruz (33) rushes toward him. The Bucks play Dallas on Friday, Nov. 5, in the first round of the 5A state football playoffs.

### SPORTS SHORT

## Pendleton Round-Up is a Sowing Good Deeds finalist

East Oregonian

DULUTH, Ga. — The Pendleton Round-Up is one of five rodeo committees selected by AGCO Corporation, a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of agricultural machinery and precision ag technology, as its 2021 Sowing Good Deeds finalists.

Also selected were Gunnison (Colorado) Cattlemen's Days, Burke (South Dakota) Stampede, Prescott (Arizona) Frontier Days and Reno Rodeo committees.

The annual contest recognizes Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeo committees who go above and beyond in their charitable endeavors, making positive impacts in their local ag communities.

This year's finalists represent the best of what the PRCA stands

for — community impact, innovation, and their ability to overcome adversity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pendleton Round-Up committee created the Let'er Buck Cares program to support and benefit various community organizations that rely on the Round-Up and Happy Canyon events for revenue.

AGCO will announce the winning committee at the 2021 PRCA Awards Banquet in Las Vegas, at the South Point Hotel, Dec. 1. The Wrangler National Finals Rodeo presented by Teton Ridge runs Dec. 2-11 in Vegas.

The overall winner receives a Massey Ferguson tractor valued at more than \$60,000.

"Rodeo is an important part of the fabric of America, supporting not only revenue-generating



Austin Johnson/For the East Oregonian, File

Members of the Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon courts display their pink outfits for Tough Enough to Wear Pink day Sept. 16, 2021, on the second day of the Pendleton Round-Up. The Round-Up is a finalist for an award honoring professional rodeos for charitable efforts.

competitions, but local ag organizations like FFA and 4-H that represent the future of our industry," said Matt LeCroy, director, marketing hay and forage for

Massey Ferguson North America, in a press release. "Sowing Good Deeds shines a spotlight on the generosity and services provided by rodeo committees across the

United States. AGCO is proud to recognize these unsung heroes who selflessly give their time and talents to make our ag communities stronger."