

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## BUCKS CLAIM VICTORY IN REQUA BOWL



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Pendleton quarterback Tucker Kuza (12) runs the ball for a touchdown Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2021, on fourth down against Milton-Freewater in the Requa Bowl at the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds. The Pendleton Bucks brought down Milton-Freewater 8-0 in the local 5/6th grade championship bowl game.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Weston-McEwen's Theodore White hauls in a pass Oct. 29, 2021, during a 28-26 win over the Grant Union Prospectors in Athena. TigerScots play Saturday, Nov. 6, at Toledo in the first round of the 2A state football playoffs.

## TigerScots back in playoffs for first time in six years

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

ATHENA — It's been six years since Weston-McEwen has qualified for the 2A state football playoffs, and the TigerScots are primed and ready for action this weekend.

The TigerScots play Saturday, Nov. 6, at Toledo in the first round of action.

"We're so excited about being in the state playoffs," W-M coach Kenzie Hansell said. "This has been a goal for our program since the beginning of the year. So excited for the senior class and their leadership that has helped us get to this game. No one on this team has been in the playoffs. It's a reward of hard work, dedication and commitment."

Weston-McEwen, the No. 2 team out of the Blue Mountain Conference, enters the game with a 7-1 record, while the Boomers are the top team from Special District 3 and have a 6-3 record.

Toledo has a turf field, which the TigerScots are looking forward to playing on.

"It will be our first time playing on turf," Hansell said. "We are excited about that."

Hansell said the Boomers like to run the ball, and have the offensive line to wreak havoc.

"They are really big up front and they like to run the ball with a lot of different running backs," Hansell said. "They are fast, they are big and they look for contact. It will be a great game."

The key for W-M on Nov. 6 will be controlling the ball and limiting mistakes.

"We need to take care of the ball and sustain drives," Hansell said. "We have had games where we have thrown the ball a lot and others we have run the ball a lot. Our offense line allows us to do both and change things up."

The TigerScots who left for Toledo on Nov. 5 have been practicing in the cold, rain and windy weather this week. The same weather they are expecting to see Nov. 6.

Despite the conditions, Hansell said his team is ready to play.

"This is an accomplishment," he said. "There are teams at home right now that don't get to put on the helmet and the jersey that says TigerScots. It's an honor in itself. As a coaching staff, we couldn't be more proud of all of our student athletes."

W-M will play at Toledo in first round

## Heppner opens 2A playoffs against Regis

Mustangs are riding 27-game win streak

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — Turning in your football gear at the end of the season is not a happy time.

During the past 31 years, Greg Grant's Heppner football team has stretched its play into the postseason all but two years (1994, 1996), and this season they go into the playoffs as the No. 1-ranked 2A team.

The Mustangs (9-0), who are on a 27-game win streak, will host Regis on Saturday, Nov. 6, at the Morrow County Fairgrounds.

The Rams, the No. 3 team from Special District 2, is 6-3 overall and the No. 16 team in the Oregon School Activities Association rankings.

"They are not the 16th best team in the state," Grant said. "They are a really good team. Very solid. They have a big full-back (Andre Pelayo), they execute their offense well, and they are aggressive on defense. They will be a tough team to beat."

The key to the game, according to Grant, will be to avoid mistakes and stop the Rams' run game.

"We are going to have to step up defensively and stop their run," Grant said.

Defense hasn't been a prob-



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File

Heppner High School's Derrick Smith goes up for a catch during his team's final regular season game Oct. 29, 2021, against the Umatilla Vikings in Umatilla. The No. 1-ranked Mustangs host Regis on Saturday, Nov. 6, in state football playoffs.

lem for the Mustangs this season.

Led by Brock Hisler, Blaine Mahoney, Jace Coe and Kason Cimmyotti, they have only allowed 58 points in nine games (6.4 points per game), while

scoring 310 (34.4 ppg).

Quarterback Landon Mitchell has thrown for 928 yards and 13 touchdowns, while Hisler has run for 963 yards and 10 touchdowns. Caden George leads the team with four interceptions —

two for touchdowns — while Cimmyotti has three.

Heppner has scored on offense, defense and special teams this season. It's weapons appear endless at times. While all that is well and good, it will not help them against Regis.

"It's all about what happens Saturday," Grant said. "All that we have done got us there. Now it's all about what we do on Saturday."

The Mustangs are hoping to have two-way lineman Cody Fletcher (bone bruise) back after missing a few games. Other than that, they are healthy and ready to go.

So is the community, which gives a healthy dose of support to the Mustangs.

"It's kind of one of the rewards of working hard all season," Grant said. "Our kids appreciate it and respond to it."

The Mustangs also know the playoffs are a byproduct of hard work and they do not take it for granted.

"If you work hard, you play your best, good things happen," Grant said. "They should be excited to play their best football at the end of the year. That's all they have left. They are playing for their football lives and they want to keep a fun thing going. It's fun to be together and be part of something you've worked for together. To be able to extend that is special."

## Local teams running for medals at state cross-country meets

Hermiston girls looking for top eight finish

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — Led by sophomore Megan Joyce, the Hermiston girls cross-country team has high hopes at the 3A state championships on Saturday, Nov. 6.

The Bulldogs will take off at 1 p.m. on the beautiful course at Sun Willows Golf Course in Pasco.

"We are ready to get going," Hermiston coach Troy Blackburn said. "We have done the work. We have run in the rain, the wind and we have run a lot of hills. They are ready for anything."

Hermiston finished second at the District 8 Championships last week, and Joyce finished seventh overall. The top three teams advanced to state.

"We are hoping she can get into the top 20 and bring home a medal for us," Blackburn said of Joyce. "Liz (Newman) and Alexia (Serna) should follow right along. As a team,

we are hoping for a top eight finish. I would like to see top six, that would make me super happy. Top four, I'd be ecstatic."

Kennewick's Macy Marquardt is among the favorites to win, along with Lily LaPorte from Bishop Blanchet.

Hermiston also will have two boys running Nov. 6 — freshman Jaysen Rodriguez and senior Logan Springstead.

Rodriguez has been the Bulldogs' top runner most of the season, with Springstead right on his tail.

"Logan was our top guy last year and the start of this year, and Jaysen has really come along," Blackburn said. "Logan is getting his confidence back. They both have their strengths and weaknesses. Jaysen starts stronger and Logan finishes stronger."

Bishop Blanchet's Will Schneider and Drew Oliver are among the favorites, as are Walla Walla's Brody Hartley and Cruize Corrin from Lakes.

### Oregon 2A/1A boys

The Heppner boys finished second

at district, qualifying its entire team for the Nov. 6 championships at Lane Community College in Eugene.

The Mustangs looked to be contenders in the top half of the field, but illness has hit the team this week and limited their miles.

"They all tested negative for COVID, which is good," said Heppner coach Russ Nichols. "It's just crazy. I'm just hoping by Saturday they all feel better."

Junior Trevor Nichols has led the Mustangs this season. He finished second at the Special District 5 Championships. Weston-McEwen's Alex McIntyre finished fourth to earn an individual berth.

Heppner, which has only had a program the past seven years, is taking runners to state for the sixth consecutive year.

The 2A/1A boys will run at 10:35 a.m.

### Oregon 5A boys

Pendleton senior James Thatcher will be the Bucks' lone runner at state after finishing fifth at the Intermountain Conference Championships.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Heppner High's Trevor Nichols runs through a water crossing in the men's 5,000 meters Oct. 7, 2021, at the Mustang Invate at Thompson Ranch in Heppner. The junior finished third with a time of 16:32.7. The Mustangs compete Saturday, Nov. 6, at the 2A/1A boys state championships at Lane Community College in Eugene.

Thatcher ran a personal best 17 minutes, 13.7 seconds to become the first Pendleton runner to earn

a trip to state since 2016. The 5A boys run at 2:20 p.m. at Lane Community College in Eugene.