

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Nichols, Mustangs finish third at state

Despite a week of illness, Heppner rallies for a trophy

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

EUGENE — With a little encouragement from his older brother on the sidelines, Heppner's Trevor Nichols placed third at the 2A/1A State Cross-country Championships on Saturday, Nov. 6, at Lane Community College. "I was trying to be conser-

vative because I didn't feel too well," said Nichols, who posted a time of 16 minutes, 48.20 seconds. "With about 800 (meters) left, I tried to put a little surge on. Then I heard them coming behind me. The final 300, I sprinted it out. The last 100, I out kicked Caleb (Brown of Pine Eagle), who ended up fourth."

Colin Friend of St. Stephen's Academy won the race in a time of 16:23.50, followed by Isaiah Rodriguez of Knappa (16:28.80). Even though they were

missing two key runners because of illness, the Mustangs rallied the troops to finish third in the team standings with 123 points.

Union won the team title with 39 points, closely followed by Bandon with 43.

"I was shocked," Heppner coach Russ Nichols said. "I really could not believe we got third. I thought they all ran pretty darn well. Trevor ran well and finished strong. The first two runners went out quickly and got a little lead on the next group."

The finish was the best Nichols has placed at state, but his time was off his best showing.

"The course was slow today," Nichols said. "Every step you were slipping, even with spikes on. It was a blessing that the rain went away before our race."

Hunter Nichols, a junior at Eastern Oregon University and a member of the cross-country and track teams, drove from La Grande to cheer on his little brother. "He cheered me on and

got me going," Nichols said. "Our whole team has decided he is the best inspiration during a race. He knows how to get you going."

Weston-McEwen's Alex McIntyre finished seventh overall in a time of 17 minutes.

"We have been running a long time together," Nichols said of McIntyre. "When we are together, we run our best. We go back and forth trying to get motivation to get going."

Also scoring for the

Mustangs were Joe Sherman (22nd, 18:32.40), Ed Ellsworth (35th, 19:04.10), Kamron Drury (41st, 19:36.10) and Roen Waite (59th, 22:13.30).

"Third was awesome, especially without one of our top runners," Nichols said. "We were surprised when we found out. Our other runners showed up. Joe ran really great. He ran a good race. He definitely earned the second runner spot today."

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BUCKS FALL TO DRAGONS

Pendleton finishes season 9-2 after 7-6 loss to Dallas

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The football sat on the Dallas 9-yard line. There were 26 seconds on the clock, Pendleton had a first down and trailed 7-6.

Bucks coach Erik Davis wanted to get a few more yards to give kicker Ben Jennings more of a comfort zone. Those yards never came.

An incomplete pass, and quarterback Collin Primus losing yardage back to the 25-yard line, left Pendleton with one play to find the end zone or go home. Another incomplete pass in the end zone turned the ball over to Dallas, who escaped with a 7-6 win in the first round of the 5A state playoffs on Friday, Nov. 5, at the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds.

"It's a tough one," Davis said. "It was ugly. It came down to a missed PAT and the inability to put the ball in the end zone when you are in the red zone. The kids played hard. With them, it's never a lack of effort. They played with the utmost character, and we played great defense."

Dallas (6-4) will play at West Albany in the quarterfinals. The Bucks finished their season at 9-2.

With time winding down in the fourth quarter, the Dragons turned the ball over on downs at the Pendleton 21-yard line with 1:39 left in regulation.

A Dallas penalty put the ball at the 36-yard line. On second-and-10, Primus connected with Jennings on a 16-yard pass play to the Dallas 48.



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

Pendleton's Payton Lambert (32) looks for an opening in the Dallas defense. The Pendleton Buckaroos fell 7-6 against the Dallas Dragons on Friday, Nov. 5, 2021, in the first round of the Oregon School Activities Association 5A State Football Championship at the Pendleton Round-Up Arena in Pendleton.

Another big pass play from Primus to Luke Benschung put the ball at the 21, and a 12-yard run by Primus landed the ball at the 9.

"We had their backs against the wall all night," Dallas coach Andy Jackson said. "I'm just really proud of our kids and the fight they had in them. They stood up against some really good running backs, and made a great stop on the goal line."

After trading possessions to start the game, the Bucks scored with 4:51 left in the first quarter as Primus connected with Payton Lambert for a 65-yard touch-

down. Jennings missed the PAT, leaving Pendleton with a 6-0 lead that held at the end of the quarter.

On their ensuing drive, the Dragons drove 75 yards in 10 plays, and took a 7-6 lead on a 15-yard touchdown run and PAT by Logan Person just 7 seconds into the second quarter.

"When it came down to it, my line got the job done on my touchdown run," Person said. "Defensively, this is the best we have played all year. They got their touchdown, but we said we wouldn't let that happen again."

Pendleton had two solid opportunities to score in the

third, but the points never came.

Dallas opened the third quarter with the ball, but an incomplete pass and a sack by Enoch Crane put the ball at the Dragons' own 15. On third-and-14, the Bucks flushed Ashton Foster out of the pocket and brought him down in the end zone for

what looked to be a safety. The officials said he was down at the 3-yard line.

Late in the third, the Bucks had the ball at the Dallas 15, facing fourth-and-4. Lambert took the handoff, but only got half of the yards he needed.

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ON THE SLATE

Tuesday, Nov. 9

Prep boys soccer

3A/2A/1A state semifinals: Dayton at Riverside, 5 p.m.

College volleyball

Eastern Oregon at Cascade Collegiate Conference Tournament, TBA

College men's soccer

Eastern Oregon at Cascade Collegiate Conference Tournament, TBA

College women's soccer

Eastern Oregon at Cascade Collegiate Conference Tournament, TBA

College men's basketball

Eastern Oregon at Idaho State, exhibition, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 10

College volleyball

Spokane at Blue Mountain, 6 p.m.

College women's basketball

Eastern Oregon vs. Rocky Mountain College, LC Women's Basketball Tournament, Lewiston, Idaho, 1 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 12

College women's basketball

Eastern Oregon vs. Rocky Mountain College, LC Women's Basketball Tournament, Lewiston, Idaho, 1 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 13

Prep football

2A quarterfinals: Weston-McEwen at Heppner, 1 p.m.

College football

Southern Oregon at Eastern Oregon, 1 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 14

College men's wrestling

Eastern Oregon at Mike Clock Open, Forest Grove, Oregon, 7 a.m.

College women's wrestling

Eastern Oregon at Mike Clock Open, Forest Grove, Oregon, 7 a.m.

Weston-McEwen tops Toledo to reach 2A quarterfinals

Blankenship interception helps TigerScots to win

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

TOLEDO — With Toledo driving down the field in the waning seconds, senior Boone Blankenship came up with an interception to help seal a 20-14 win for Weston-McEwen on Saturday, Nov. 6, in the first round of the 2A state playoffs.

"We are so excited," said TigerScots coach Kenzie Hansell. "It was such an incredible, joyful and rewarding game. We had more fans — who traveled 6 1/2 hours — than Toledo did. That type of support is motivating for the entire program."

Levie Phillips ran the

ball into the end zone from 4 yards out to break a 14-14 tie and give Weston-McEwen a 20-14 lead with just 2:48 left on the clock.

Blankenship's interception came with 40 seconds left in the game and the Boomers on the W-M 25-yard line.

The TigerScots opened the scoring with a 4-yard scoring run by Phillips in the first quarter.

The Boomers (6-4) answered in the second quarter, converting on fourth-and-8. They would score once more to take a 14-6 lead at the half.

In the third, Theo White hauled in a 62-yard touchdown pass from Blane Peal, and Peal ran the ball in for the 2-point conversion to tie the score.

Hansell credited his line

for holding the Boomers to just 14 points.

"Our defensive line was outsized across the board," Hansell said. "They played with heart and character."

Phillips finished the game with 83 yards on 22 carries, while Peal completed 4 of 8 passes for 106 yards. White had three catches for 86 yards.

The TigerScots (8-1) will play at Blue Mountain Conference foe Heppner at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 13 in the quarterfinals. The Mustangs beat Regis 43-8 to advance.

"We are looking forward to next week," Hansell said. "Our program respects what Coach (Greg) Grant has built. They are well coached and disciplined. We are excited to move on to the second round."

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