

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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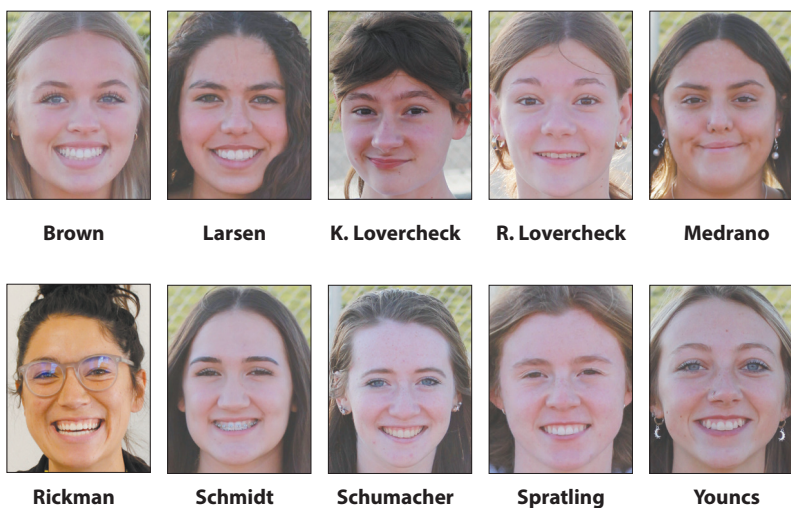
Pendleton's Lovercheck earns IMC POY honor

Senior forward had a team-high 12 goals in conference play

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton senior Reilly Lovercheck picked up Player of the Year honors in the Intermountain Conference after leading the Bucks to a record-setting season. “Reilly grew so much this season,”

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INTERMOUNTAIN CONFERENCE SOCCER

Player of the Year: Reilly Lovercheck, sr., Pendleton

Coach of the Year: Kiana Rickman, Pendleton

First team

Reese Wedding, so., Redmond; Lauren Harding, jr., Ridgeview; Dagne Harris, sr., Redmond; Selena Gallacher, jr., Ridgeview; Kelsey Lovercheck, sr., Pendleton; Emily Adams, sr., The Dalles; Amelia Huxtable, Hood River Valley; Vivian Harrah, The Dalles; Kathryn Biever, sr., Ridgeview; True Becker, sr., Hood River Valley. Goalkeeper — Alyssa Martinez, sr., Hood River Valley.

Second Team

Brooklyn Homan, jr., Ridgeview; Grace Stott, so., Redmond; Hadley Brown, jr., Pendleton; Monica Rojas Soto, sr., The Dalles; Hailey Schmidt, so., Pendleton; Madeline Schumacher, so., Pendleton; Lauren Papke, sr., Crook County; Sutton Le Fevre, so., Hood River Valley; Alison Spratling, so., Pendleton; Kore Medina, so., Redmond Goalkeepers — Alyssa McConnell, sr., Redmond; Miranda Medrano, so., Pendleton.

Honorable Mention

Brielle Youncs, sr., Pendleton; Gabby Nakamura, jr., Ridgeview; Ashtyn Larsen, so., Pendleton.

Numbers not adding up for basketball officials

By JEFF BUDLONG
For EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — George Gillette isn't blowing the whistle to signal a panic-level problem when it comes to the number of officials who will call prep basketball games for the upcoming season. But he could be reaching for it soon.

The Blue Mountain Basketball Officials Association commissioner has seen a steady decline in numbers for decades, but the impact now is truly being felt.

Last spring's pandemic-compressed five-week season tested officials across the state, and the Blue Mountain Basketball Officials Association — which is based out of Pendleton and handles schools from the state line at Milton-Free-water to Boardman and south to Ukiah through Pilot Rock — was no different.

“We were extremely short and we had less than half of what we would normally have during a regular season,” Gillette said.

The association usually counts between 45 and 50 basketball officials able to work games in its region, but during the spring that number dropped to 17. It was further pared down to 12 by the end of the season because of injuries or overwork. It led to a situation where games were rescheduled or even canceled.

Gillette said with the varsity and JV schedules of the 13 schools the association is assisting this year, he is trying to cover about 1,200 games. Schools are moving games to different days, trying to find enough officials to work the games, but that only does so much.

Gillette is hoping the number of available officials increases before games tip-off Dec. 1.

It is not a basketball-specific issue either. Football games were being played on Thursdays and Saturdays in addition to Friday to try to alleviate some of the official shortage.

“Moving games around will help, but most of the schools start games at 3 p.m. and it is difficult to get people to break away and be able to be in a gym and toss a ball up at that time,” Gillette said.

Lingering issue

Gillette held his first meeting for this season Nov. 1 and had 25 officials attend, but there is a new problem he is having to contend with.

“We don't have a lot of lower-level officials, and last spring basically all 16 officials associations in Oregon were shorthanded,” he said. “The (Oregon Schools Activities Association) allowed the schools to take the level of play at the JV level to the JV2 level, which means they did not have to use certified officials to work those games.”

Gillette said he is fearful that could happen again this season. It

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2A SEMIFINALS

COQUILLE GETS PAST HEPPNER 8-6

Smith scores Mustangs' lone TD in the fourth quarter

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

MCMINNVILLE — Heppner finally met its match.

Coquille scored with 2:23 left in the game, and converted the 2-point conversion, to upset the top-ranked Mustangs 8-6 in the 2A state semifinals on Saturday, Nov. 20, at Wortman Field at McMinnville High School.

“I thought my kids stepped up and did everything I asked of them,” Heppner coach Greg Grant said. “This group of kids was great. Great leadership, they were tight, they were committed to each other. It pains me they didn't get to go all the way. Nothing about the way they played should they hang their heads about. We had a chance to play in this game and have a regular year. The guys last year didn't get that. We will take it.”

Red Devils coach Davis Thomason said the game was all he expected and more.

“We were playing Heppner — we were expecting a battle and that's exactly what we got,” Thomason said. “I don't think we have been in an 8-6 game since 2016. It was 0-0 going into the fourth. That's what movies are made of.”

The Mustangs (11-1), who had won 29 consecutive games, lost for the first time since Nov. 2, 2018 — a span of 1,114 days. This year's senior class finished its career with a 36-4 record.

“They really played well together, they love the game and



Damon Brosnan/Contributed Photo

A pack of Heppner defenders wrap up Coquille running back Hayden GeDeros (24). The Heppner Mustangs fell 8-6 to the Coquille Red Devils Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021, during the semifinal round of the Oregon School Activities Association Class 2A state football tournament at McMinnville High School.

worked hard at it,” Grant said of his players. “It was one of those unfortunate days when we came up short — but not in effort or attitude.”

Coquille (9-1) will play Kennedy in next week's championship game. It's the first trip to the title game for the Red Devils since 1970, when they won their only state title.

“I'm a history teacher, and the history of this is not lost on me,” Thomason said. “It's great for the players and coaches, but even bigger for Coquille. We don't want to let them down.”

After three scoreless quarters of play, Heppner was the first to find the end zone, moving the ball 65 yards in eight plays, capped by an 8-yard touchdown pass from Landon Mitchell to Derrick Smith

COQUILLE 8, HEPPNER 6

Coquille 0 0 0 8 — 8
Heppner 0 0 0 6 — 6

SCORING PLAYS

H — Derrick Smith 8 pass from Landon Mitchell (run failed)
C — Gunner Yates 7 run (Brock Willis run)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Passing — C, Bryce Poston 3-4-1-33. H, Mitchell 5-8-0-53.

Rushing — C, Yates 26-138, Willis 20-100, Hayden GeDeros 3-1, Poston 1-0. H, Caden George 9-54, Brock Hisler 12-37, Cameron Proudfoot 1-5, Jace Coe 1-5, Mitchell 5-(minus-13).
Receiving — C, Yates 1-12, Hunter Layton 1-11, GeDeros 1-10. H, Kason Cimmiyotti 2-45, Smith 2-9, George 1-(minus-1).

with 5:32 left in the game.

The Mustangs opted to go for the 2-point conversion, but the run by Kason Cimmiyotti was ruled short of the goal line by a couple of inches, leaving them with a 6-0

lead.

“It was a game of inches,” Grant said. “We just fell short on that 2-point conversion.”

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Stanfield trio highlights BMC volleyball team

Tigers' Reeser, Shelby and Griffin named to first team

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — Stanfield had three players named to the Blue Mountain Conference first team, and had seven players honored overall.

Junior Zuri Reeser, and seniors Alexis Shelby and Katelyn Griffin were selected to the first team, while Jennifer Flores and Taylor Longhorn were named to the second team.

Freshman Mazie Reeser and senior Rheanna Rivera were selected to the honorable mention team.

The Tigers won the BMC title with an 11-1 record. They placed



Griffin



Z. Reeser



Robinson



Shelby

second to Grant Union in the district championships, and earned a spot in the 2A state tournament.

Stanfield lost in the first round of state to Portland Christian in five sets to finish the season with a 19-5 overall record.

Zuri Reeser finished the season with 338 kills, 289 assists, 236 digs, 86 service aces and 20 blocks.

Shelby dominated at the net with 119 blocks and 188 kills. She also had 339 digs and 43 aces.

Griffin led the Tigers with 386 assists. She also had 120 kills, 139 digs and 65 aces.

Weston-McEwen junior Genna

Robinson was the lone TigerScot selected to the first team.

The 6-foot-1 middle blocker finished the season with 265 kills, 62 blocks, 45 service aces and 89 digs.

W-M finished the season 14-11 overall and 7-5 in BMC play.

Also earning honors for the TigerScots were senior setter Charli King and junior outside hitter Lily Lindsey, and sophomore libero Lirian Holden, who were named to the honorable mention team.

Heppner had one player earn all-conference honors, senior

BLUE MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

First Team

Zuri Reeser, jr., Stanfield; Callie Glenn, sr., Union; Genna Robinson, jr., Weston-McEwen; Alexis Shelby, sr., Stanfield; Grace Taylor, sr., Grant Union; Katelyn Griffin, sr., Stanfield; Lauryn Pettyjohn, sr., Grant Union (libero).

Second Team

Paige Gerry, sr., Grant Union; Zabrena Masterson, sr., Heppner; Kaylin Nowak, sr., Union; Carson Weaver, sr., Grant Union; Jennifer Flores, sr., Stanfield; Drewsey Williams, so., Grant Union; Taylor Longhorn, sr., Stanfield (libero).

Honorable Mention

Jesse Ledbetter, fr., Union; Emma Ricker, sr., Union; Adeline Northway, fr., Grant Union; Maci Marr, jr., Enterprise; Mazie Reeser, fr., Stanfield; Rheanna Rivera, sr., Stanfield; Charli King, sr., Weston-McEwen; Rilyn Kirkland, sr., Enterprise; Lirian Holden, so., Weston-McEwen (libero); Megan Winterton, jr., Union (libero).

middle Zabrena Masterson, who was named to the second team.

The Mustangs were 4-8 in BMC play and 7-14 overall.