

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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EOU wrestling earns national rankings in coaches' poll

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics released its first coaches' poll of the 2021-22 regular season on Friday, Dec. 3, which ranked the Eastern Oregon University men's and women's teams in the top 20.

The women's team was slotted at No. 15, while the men's team came in at No. 16.

Eastern's men's team was ranked No. 19 in the preseason poll, but have gotten off to a strong start to the year. The Mountaineers are 4-2 overall and 2-1 in conference competition. The ranking was

decided before Eastern competed at the Battle of the Rockies Duals this weekend, which saw the team go 3-0 in duals and finish fourth at the Battle of the Rockies Open.

Three Mountaineers earned individual rankings in the first coaches' poll of the regular season. Kyle Knudtson (184) and Noel Orozco (285) both came in at No. 3. Keegan Mulhill was ranked No. 5 at the 174-pound weight class.

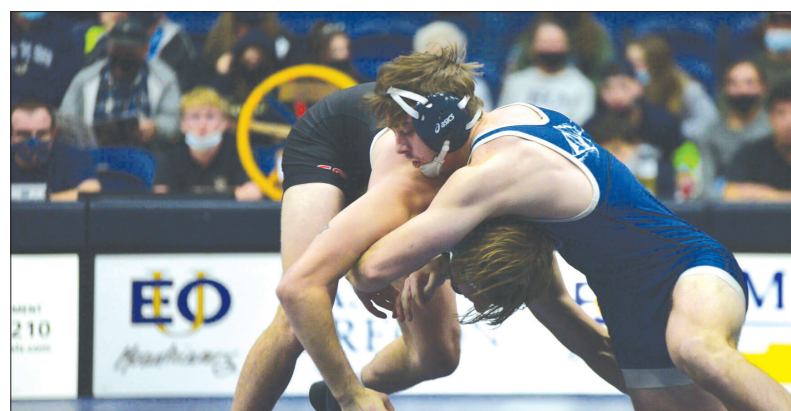
The Mountaineers' next competition is against Southern Oregon at the Reno Tournament of Champions on Dec. 17.

On the women's side, the Mountaineers moved back three spots from their No. 12 preseason ranking.

Eastern is 4-4 on the year and 0-1 against conference opponents. Nine Mountaineers earned individual rankings in the coaches' poll.

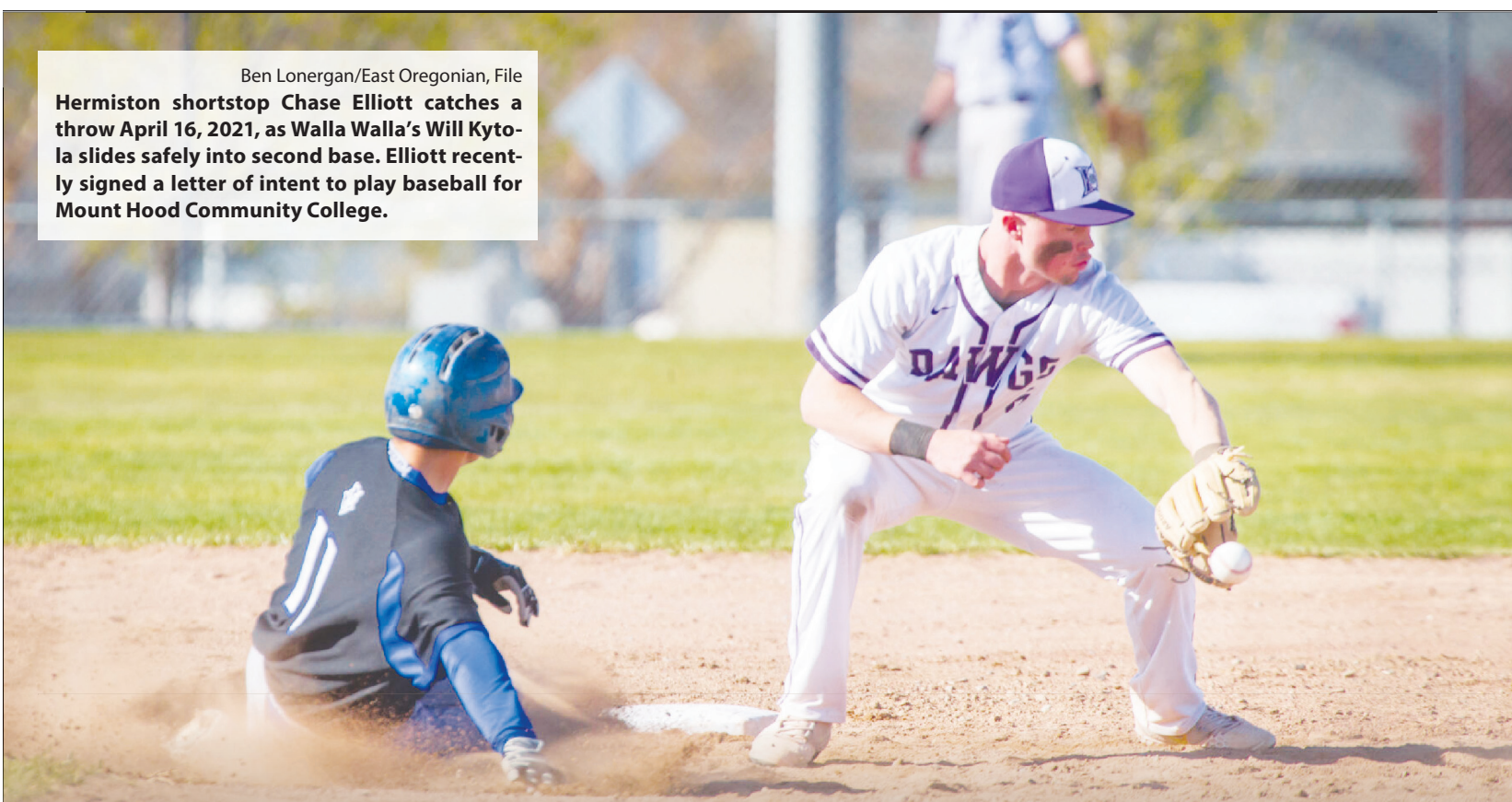
Stephanie Blankenship (109) was ranked No. 21, Macy Higa (123) was ranked No. 13, Morgan Shines (130) was ranked No. 18, Kaylee Moore (136) was ranked No. 15, Erin Redford (143) was ranked No. 4, Nayeli Maston (143) was ranked No. 14, Dempsey Talkington (155) was ranked No. 9, Tenley Swope (155) was ranked No. 18 and Olivia Robinson (170) was ranked No. 10.

Eastern's next competition is on Jan. 14 against Grays Harbor College in Aberdeen, Washington.



Andrew Cutler/The Observer

Eastern Oregon University wrestler Keegan Mulhill faces off against Southern Oregon University's Noah Talavera on Nov. 6, 2021, at Quinn Coliseum, La Grande. The Raiders won 24-18, dropping the Mountaineers to 0-2 on the season.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File
Hermiston shortstop Chase Elliott catches a throw April 16, 2021, as Walla Walla's Will Kytola slides safely into second base. Elliott recently signed a letter of intent to play baseball for Mount Hood Community College.

Brown still looking for the big run

Baker City steer wrestler Jesse Brown finished sixth in the sixth round of the National Finals Rodeo on Tuesday, Dec. 7, taking down his steer in 4.5 seconds.

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

LAS VEGAS — Baker City steer wrestler Jesse Brown finished sixth in the sixth round of the National Finals Rodeo on Tuesday, Dec. 7, taking down his steer in 4.5 seconds.

Brown earned \$4,354 for his effort.

In the fifth round Dec. 6, Brown broke the barrier and finished with a time of 14.2 seconds.



Brown

"I just went a little too fast, I guess," Brown said. "It's a what of, could of, should of."

Brown has placed in three of six rounds, pocketing \$19,159.

Though placing in the top six and earning money has been nice, Brown still is looking for that one big run.

"Hell yeah, I think it's there," he said. "I've been making really good runs."

Jacob Talley, who came into the NFR ranked No. 1 in the world standings, still remains on top with \$179,944. Dirk Tavenner, who has won three of six rounds, is right on his heels with \$170,925.

"He is making it happen and I'm not," Brown said of Tavenner. "He is kicking ass."

Brown was second in the world standings heading into the NFR. He now sits eighth with \$121,517 with four rounds to go.

Tristan Martin leads the NFR average after six runs with a time of 25.8 seconds. Brown is eighth at 36.7 seconds.

In addition to appearances, Brown has gotten to spend a little time with his parents Jim and Vicki, and just enjoy what Las Vegas has to offer.

"I'm having fun," Brown said. "Vegas is a pretty fun town and being here for the finals is great."

CHASING HIS DREAMS

Hermiston's Elliott signs to play ball at Mt. Hood

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Chase Elliott loves baseball. He also loves football, but only one of the sports was going to afford him the opportunity to play at the college level.

That would be baseball. The Hermiston senior recently signed a letter of intent to play for Mt. Hood Community College.

"Football was a hard one to let go," Elliott said. "I didn't have a set plan, just where the road took me. I kept my options open. That was my mindset. Whatever was the best opportunity that set me up for success."

Elliott visited a few other colleges, but the coaches and facility at Mt Hood won him over.

"I went to Yakima in person, that was really good," he said. "I went to Columbia Basin College for a prospect camp and they talked to me later on. I got to see the facilities and play on the field. At Mt. Hood, the field is

extremely nice and I really liked the campus."

Elliott will play center field for the Saints, but can play infield in a pinch.

"I can use my speed in the infield," he said. "I don't want to play the infield, but if they ask me to play third or second, I'm not going to say no."

Mt. Hood is rich in baseball tradition. In the past 27 years, the Saints have won 18 regional championships and two Northwest Athletic Conference titles. Mt. Hood finished at the top of the NWAC Southern Region 10 of the past 14 years.

Elliott plans on getting his associates degree at Mt. Hood, then transferring to a four-year school to finish his business degree and baseball career.

"They have a plan to set me up for success," he said.

Elliott also got a helping hand from Hermiston High School Success Coach Jay Ego to navigate some of the college recruiting process.

"I was kind of shocked we had that," Elliott said of Ego's

position. "I was signing my letter of intent and I really didn't know what I was doing. I went in and he helped me. It definitely makes the process easier. I did a lot on my own, but it would have been easier if he would have been here last year."

Never limit your options

While Elliott has played on the Hermiston baseball team, it has been his play in the summer with the Kennewick Outlaws that has helped him catch the eye of college coaches.

"There is always someone ready to go," Elliott said. "It pushes you. You have to be up and above the kids you are competing with."

Elliott excelled with the Outlaws. Thorough 46 games, he hit .367 with 30 singles, nine doubles, two triples, three home runs and 24 RBIs. He also had 29 stolen bases.

This coming summer, he will play for the Tri-City based Northwest Athletics.

The 5-foot-11, 170-pound Elliott, just finished the football

season for the Bulldogs, and now is part of the basketball team.

"No one sport will work all the muscles the same," Elliott said. "In basketball, you have that quick edge. It's your senior year and you want to end on a fun note. I have the rest of my life to play one sport, let's just go have fun."

Elliott's high school sports career began with a broken leg in his varsity football game as a sophomore. He came back mid-way through the basketball season, then had his baseball season canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

His junior year had sports seasons played in shortened coronavirus schedules. He said it was nice to play a full football schedule this fall.

"It's almost weird to have something normal," he said. "To play a whole football season, I have finally done that. You learn so much in those games, and you get better each week. Time really does fly by when you are having fun, but it also does when you are doing nothing."

ON THE SLATE

Thursday, Dec. 9

Prep girls basketball

Riverside vs. Nixyaawii at Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 2 p.m.
Irrigon vs. McLoughlin, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 4 p.m.
Echo vs. Powder Valley at Calvin Hiatt Memorial Tournament, Powder Valley, 4 p.m.
Umatilla vs. Grant Union, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 5 p.m.
Toledo at Heppner, 6 p.m.
Bandon at Pilot Rock, 6 p.m.
Bonanza at Stanfield, 6 p.m.
Pendleton at Putnam, 7:15 p.m.
Prep boys basketball
Riverside vs. Nixyaawii at Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 3:30 p.m.
McLoughlin vs. Irrigon, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 5:30 p.m.
Echo vs. Powder Valley at Calvin

Hiatt Memorial Tournament, Powder Valley, 5:30 p.m.
Umatilla vs. Grant Union, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 6:30 p.m.
Toledo at Heppner, 7:30 p.m.
Bandon at Pilot Rock, 7:30 p.m.
Bonanza at Stanfield, 7:30 p.m.
Prep girls bowling
Hermiston at Walla Walla, 3 p.m.
Prep girls wrestling
Hermiston at Pasco, 5 p.m.
Prep boys wrestling
Irrigon, Heppner/Ione at Riverside, 4 p.m.
Hermiston at Pasco, 5 p.m.
Prep swimming
Pendleton at Hood River Valley, 4 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 10

Prep girls basketball
Stanfield vs. Culver, 2A Preview

Basketball Tournament, Pendleton Convention Center, 8 a.m.
Weston-McEwen vs. Bonanza, 2A Preview Basketball Tournament, Pendleton Convention Center, 11:45 a.m.
Echo vs. Union at Calvin Hiatt Memorial Tournament, Powder Valley, 2:30 p.m.
Griswold vs. Four Rivers at Arlington Snowball Classic, 3 p.m.
Heppner vs. Bandon, 2A Preview Basketball Tournament, Pendleton Convention Center, 3 p.m.
Umatilla vs. Irrigon, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 3 p.m.
Nixyaawii vs. Grant Union, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 4 p.m.
Hanford at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.
Ione/Arlington vs. Klickitat/Glenwood, Arlington Snowball Classic, 6 p.m.

McLoughlin vs. Riverside, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 6 p.m.
Pilot Rock vs. Toledo, 2A Preview Basketball Tournament, Pendleton Convention Center, 6:15 p.m.
Prep boys basketball
Stanfield vs. Culver, 2A Preview Basketball Tournament, Pendleton Convention Center, 9:45 a.m.
Weston-McEwen vs. Bonanza, 2A Preview Basketball Tournament, Pendleton Convention Center, 1:15 p.m.
Echo vs. Union at Calvin Hiatt Memorial Tournament, Powder Valley, 4 p.m.
Griswold vs. Four Rivers at Arlington Snowball Classic, 4:30 p.m.
Umatilla vs. Irrigon, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 4:30 p.m.
Heppner vs. Bandon, 2A Preview Basketball Tournament, Pendleton

Convention Center, 4:45 p.m.
Nixyaawii vs. Grant Union, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 5:30 p.m.
Putnam at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.
Riverside vs. McLoughlin, Columbia River Clash, Umatilla, 7:30 p.m.
Hanford at Hermiston, 7:30 p.m.
Ione/Arlington vs. Klickitat/Glenwood, Arlington Snowball Classic, 7:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock vs. Toledo, 2A Preview Basketball Tournament, Pendleton Convention Center, 8 p.m.
College women's basketball
Blue Mountain at Centralia, 7 p.m.
Prep boys wrestling
Hermiston, Pendleton, McLoughlin at Muilenburg Tournament, La Grande, 7 a.m.
Irrigon at Culver Invite, TBD