

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2022

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**Pendleton High School students cheer on the Buckaroos during a home game Dec. 10, 2021, against the Putnam King-
smen in Pendleton. Beginning Friday, Jan. 14, 2022, the Pendleton School District is limiting the number of audience
members at sporting events due to spiking COVID-19 cases in Umatilla County.**

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Smaller crowds in the stands

Pendleton school sports restrict audience size after COVID-19 spike

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton School District is limiting the number of audience members who can attend sporting events. The district in a press release Tuesday, Jan. 11, announced the move is in response to spiking COVID-19 cases in Umatilla County. Starting Jan. 14, the district will

grant six tickets per game to students who participate in middle and high school sports.

“It’s not necessarily a turn for the worse,” Pendleton Athletic Director Mike Somnis said. “We took a look at the county numbers and our district numbers. It is just a safety precaution right now. We thought it would be prudent to limit the numbers. Our No. 1 goal is to keep kids in school over the next month or so.”

Only people who have obtained those tickets will be allowed to attend games, although there will be no admission price. Audience members will be expected to continue observing social distancing and masking rules, and masks will be provided at the entrance to those who don’t bring one.

While each player will get six tickets per event, they don’t necessarily have to go to family members.

“We are not restricting who they go to,” Somnis said. “They can give them to friends if they like. Our goal is to limit bodies in an indoor facility. We hope we can ride out this surge and reevaluate in two or three weeks.”

“We were hopeful that our pre-holiday rates would continue to drop into the new year; unfortunately, that did not happen,” the press release stated. “In fact, our county numbers appear to be at all-time highs. Once case rates subside and begin returning to the pre-holiday rates, we will consider modifying this and other practices.”

Somnis also said concessions will remain open.

2 from EOU earn conference honors

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer



Lumsden Smith

LA GRANDE — Two Mountaineers recently earned Cascade Conference player of the week honors after strong performances this past weekend.

Men’s basketball guard Cooper Lumsden and men’s wrestler Jay Smith were both named player of the week in their respective sports in an announcement from the Cascade Collegiate Conference on Monday, Jan. 10.

Lumsden was electric in his first career start against Multnomah on Jan. 8, scoring a career-high 32 points and nine assists. He added five rebounds and converted all 12 of his free-throw attempts.

Lumsden was firing right from the start, going 7-of-16 from the field and 6-of-13 from 3-point range. The freshman only turned the ball over four times despite playing the full 40 minutes and functioning as the team’s main source of offense in a 102-93 victory over the Lions.

The near double-double for Lumsden was much needed for a short-handed Mountaineers squad in a solid conference victory. Including a COVID-19 forfeit by Warner Pacific on Jan. 7, Eastern has earned victories in its last three consecutive contests. The Mountaineers stand at sixth in the Cascade Collegiate Conference standings with

a 4-5 conference record and 10-7 overall record. Up next, Eastern will travel to Kirkland, Washington, to face off with Northwest (6-8, 3-6) at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 14.

Sophomore wrestler Smith had a strong weekend for the No. 20 Mountaineers, earning two dual wins and helping Eastern defeat conference opponents Arizona Christian 30-12 and No. 18 Embry-Riddle 36-15.

The 197-pound wrestler defeated Arizona Christian’s Va Ili by a 3-1 decision on Jan. 7 to guide Eastern to a come-from-behind victory. The Mountaineers trailed 12-10 midway through the match but went on to win 30-12. On the following day, Smith defeated Embry-Riddle’s Michael Densmore by an 8-4 decision to help the Mountaineers roll past the Eagles 36-15.

Smith is 17-8 on the year, which is a team high in victories for Eastern. This week’s Cascade Collegiate Conference men’s wrestler of the week will look to lead the Mountaineers to success as the team faces three more conference duals before taking part in the conference championships in Havre, Montana, on Feb. 18 and Feb. 19.

EOU baseball program announces 2022 schedule

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Baseball season is right around the corner in La Grande.

The Eastern Oregon University baseball program is set for its second season after being reinstated in 2020.

The Mountaineers announced their 2022 schedule on Tuesday, Jan. 11, setting the stage for a 51-game slate this season.

Eastern compiled a 5-31 record in its first season back on the diamond, with the pandemic limiting the scope of a potential full season.

Now heading into 2022, the Mountaineers have a full schedule that includes several top non-conference opponents — Eastern will open its season Jan. 27 against No. 22 MidAmerica Nazarene at the Coach Calderone Invitational in Glendale, Arizona.

The Mountaineers will conclude the four-game tournament against No. 23 Benedictine Mesa on Jan. 29.

Of Eastern’s 51 games, 27 are against non-conference foes.

Eastern begins its season with 19 straight games on the road, before returning home to the newly renovated Pioneer Park to host a series against the College of Idaho



Eastern Oregon University/Contributed Photo

Nick Jennings throws a pitch during a game March 6, 2021, between Eastern Oregon University and College of Idaho at Caldwell. EOU opens its 2022 season on Jan. 27 against No. 22 MidAmerica Nazarene at the Coach Calderone Invitational in Glendale, Arizona.

on March 5.

Pioneer Park has been undergoing a turf renovation to provide a premier baseball and softball facility in La Grande and improve local teams’ ability to practice and compete in the years to come.

The project involved the efforts of the city, La Grande High School and Eastern Oregon University, while numerous local businesses and contractors made major contributions. The new facility opens the door for tournaments and local tourism as the fields will serve as one of

the top facilities on the east side of Oregon.

La Grande Parks and Recreation Director Stu Spence has said his department plans to bring back the Moonlight Tournament, an all-night adult softball tournament. And, with the improved fields, the department plans to host similar tournaments.

“I’m excited to have fields that will be durable for a number of teams to play on,” he said.

Prior to returning to La Grande, the Mountaineers will close out the opening

road trip with four games against No. 4 Lewis-Clark State.

The Warriors will face off again with the Mountaineers for a four-game series in La Grande starting on April 8.

Eastern will play 16 home games and 35 away games. The Mountaineers conclude the regular season with a four-game conference series against Corban at Pioneer Park.

Head coach Mike McInerney and the Mountaineers are set for opening pitch against MidAmerica Nazarene at 9 a.m. on Jan. 27.

New trail opens in the Umatilla National Forest

By JEREMY BURNHAM
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

PENDLETON — A new trail is open at the Horseshoe Prairie Nordic Ski Area in the Umatilla National Forest.

Blues Crew, part of the Blue Mountain Land Trust, does trail work during the summer and the winter. It started working on the trails at Horseshoe Prairie in 2019.

“The first year, we did a little bit of trail work,” Blues Crew founder Greg Brown said. “We really wanted to get into it, but it was near the end of the season before we really got going. So 2020 was when we really engaged big time at Horseshoe Prairie.”

Brown said 2020 saw the team create a new map defining the trails. It also cleared and performed maintenance on the existing trails and redid all the trail signage.

In 2021, in addition to doing maintenance as normal, the group launched a new trail.

The Tenderfoot Trail is just off the Andies Prairie parking lot. It is a ½-mile double loop groomed trail.

Brown said it is perfect for those new to Nordic skiing and for children of all ages.

Umatilla National Forest public affairs officer Darcy

Weseman said the forest provides great recreation year around, but winter brings unique fun that can’t be experienced at other times.

“It’s actually one of my absolute favorite times to enjoy the forest,” Weseman said. “The nice thing about what Blues Crews has done at Horseshoe Prairie is they have groomed and really marked those trails so you can pick a route and really feel like you know where you’re going.”

She said she hopes this brings new people out to the forest.

“It can be kind of intimidating for people to go out and try to find somewhere they can try cross-country skiing or snowshoeing or go somewhere they aren’t familiar with,” she said. “I think (Blues Crew’s work) brings people a lot of peace of mind in knowing they aren’t going to get lost out there.”

The Horseshoe Prairie Nordic Ski Area is about 26 miles east of Weston on Highway 204.

For more information on the area, including current grooming conditions of the trails, visit bmlt.org/horseshoe-prairie.

For more information on the Blues Crew volunteer team, including how to get involved, visit bmlt.org/blues-crew.

ON THE SLATE

THURSDAY, JAN. 13
Prep boys swimming
Hermiston at Hood River Valley, 3:15 p.m.

Prep girls bowling
Hermiston at Hanford, 3:30 p.m.

Prep boys wrestling
Kamiakin at Hermiston, 6 p.m.

Prep boys wrestling
Kamiakin at Hermiston, 7 p.m.
La Grande at Pendleton, TBD

FRIDAY, JAN. 14
Prep girls basketball
Burns at Umatilla, 5 p.m.
Ridgeview at Pendleton, 5 p.m.

Walla Walla at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.
Baker at McLoughlin, 6 p.m.
Irrigon at Riverside, 6 p.m.
Heppner at Pilot Rock, 6 p.m.
Enterprise at Westwood-Glenwood, 6 p.m.
Joseph at Griswold, 6 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Cove, 6 p.m.
Echo at Klickitat/Glenwood, 6 p.m.
lone/Arlington at Trout Lake, 6 p.m.
Grant Union at Stanfield, 6 p.m.

Prep boys basketball
Pendleton at Ridgeview, 6:30 p.m.
Burns at Umatilla, 6:30 p.m.
Walla Walla at Hermiston, 7:30 p.m.
Baker at McLoughlin, 7:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Riverside, 7:30 p.m.

Heppner at Pilot Rock, 7:30 p.m.
Enterprise at Weston-McEwen, 7:30 p.m.
Joseph at Griswold, 7:30 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Cove, 7:30 p.m.
Echo at Klickitat/Glenwood, 7:30 p.m.
lone/Arlington at Trout Lake, 7:30 p.m.
Grant Union at Stanfield, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 15
Prep boys swimming
Hermiston at Walla Walla, 1 p.m.

Prep girls basketball
Dufur at Echo, 2 p.m.
Hermiston at Pasco, 3:15 p.m.
Stanfield at Heppner, 4 p.m.
Powder Valley at Griswold, 4 p.m.
Walla Walla at Nixyaawii, 4 p.m.

Klickitat/Glenwood at lone/Arlington, 4 p.m.
Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 4 p.m.

Prep boys basketball
Dufur at Echo, 3:30 p.m.
Hermiston at Pasco, 5 p.m.
Stanfield at Heppner, 5:30 p.m.
Powder Valley at Griswold, 5:30 p.m.
Walla Walla at Nixyaawii, 5:30 p.m.
Klickitat/Glenwood at lone/Arlington, 5:30 p.m.
Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 6 p.m.

Prep boys wrestling
Pendleton at Southridge Tournament, TBD
Hermiston at Ellensburg Tournament, 9 a.m.

Happy 11th Birthday, Brody!

Today you’re Eleven! That makes you Extraordinary, Loving, Excellent, Victorious, Exceptional and Nice! We think of you ALWAYS!

Love,
Grandpa and Grandma Powell