

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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A11

CCC pushes forward with winter seasons

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

CORVALLIS — Fans across the country are crossing their fingers that sports seasons will not be postponed or canceled amidst a recent increase in COVID-19 cases.

In the Cascade Collegiate Conference, Eastern Oregon University's league, officials are intent on moving forward with the season. With forfeited games counting as losses on a team's record, health and safety is of the utmost importance for teams looking to compete for conference titles.

"Our goal is to push through to the end, have our tournament and send our representatives on to nationals," Cascade Collegiate Conference Commissioner Robert Cashell said.

Short-handed

Through Saturday, Jan. 15, the Mountaineers' men's and women's basketball teams have experienced a combined five cancellations. Evergreen State recently canceled its men's basketball games against the College of Idaho on Jan. 14 and Eastern on Jan. 15. The conference has seen just more than 20 cancellations between men's and women's basketball, all of which took place from Dec. 18 through this past weekend.

The Mountaineers women's basketball team has experienced three forfeit victories this season, all of



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group, File
Paul Pennington makes a layup attempt against defenders Jok Jok (10) and Treyton Paxton (14) during the second half of the game Oct. 30, 2021, between Eastern Oregon University and Montana Western University at Quinn Coliseum, La Grande. The Mountaineers have earned two victories via COVID-19 forfeit as the Cascade Collegiate Conference remains intent on pushing through the 2022 winter seasons.

which occurred in a span of four scheduled games from Dec. 31 through Jan. 8. After (results) against Northwest and Evergreen State, Eastern stands at 9-2 in conference play and 12-7 overall.

The Cascade Collegiate Conference's policy for COVID-19 limitations is that a team unable to field enough players for a contest will receive a forfeit. Cashell noted the Cascade Collegiate Conference decided to firmly establish forfeits and canceled games rather than postponing contests until further dates due to

the logistics of completing a season in time for postseason competition.

"It comes down to the distance that we have to travel in our league, the fact that we don't have bye weekends or anything like that and that we have deadlines with the (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics)," Cashell said. "So really, it's a balance between timing, finance and academics. We also want to keep people in school as much as possible."

Eastern's men's team has seen the impacts of COVID-19 limitations, with two of its opponents

forfeiting contests so far this season. The Mountaineers dealt with COVID-19 shortages themselves, relying on freshman Copper Lumsden to step up with 32 points in a 102-93 win over Multnomah when key players were missing. After a single-game weekend, the Mountaineers dropped to 10-8 on the year and 4-6 in conference play. With the Mountaineers men's team fighting for every win this year, forfeits could go a long way in determining the outcome of Eastern's season.

Cashell stated the NAIA has strict limitations handed

See CCC, Page A12



Cashell

Tips for tracking late-season birds



BRAD TRUMBO

UPLAND PURSUITS

By the time the snow flies on the Palouse, upland birds have wised up from months of dodging dogs and gunners. Finding birds in the late season requires creativity and a willingness to explore, hike further, and gamble on new covers. I typically make a hard switch from chasing pheasant to seeking covey birds like quail and Huns, and this means scouring On-X maps, driving farther from home and hiking new territory.

Parcel size means little to me past Christmas. Distance from the road to popular hunting areas and habitat quality are the metrics under scrutiny. The smallest parcels can hold a surprising number of birds. They can just as likely be vacant. It's a crapshoot. Striking it rich requires trial and error, cataloging sites and expanding your collection of coverts both good and bad for future reference.

In a good partridge year, every acceptable patch of short native bunchgrass holds a Hun covey, particularly when flanking a wheat field. These areas are easy to find with aerial imagery

COVERS AND COVERTS

Although the two words, both of which are used in this column, are almost identical, their meanings aren't. Brad Trumbo said that in most of the classic upland bird hunting literature, "covert" is used when referring to places that always hold birds, regularly visited hunting spots and sometimes secret spots. "Cover," by contrast, refers to habitat with potential to hold birds but that he has not yet hunted.

by zooming into the cover to see the small grass tufts that appear khaki-colored on aerial imagery, but don't be fooled by monocultures of common rye, which show up golden and unbroken, like a paintbrush smear. Similarly, yellow starthistle shows up drab brown, almost gray, and covers vast swaths.

One January morning, Yuba and I struck out across a parcel of Department of Natural Resources land in Washington we had yet to lay eyes on. Aerial imagery suggested enough native grasses to tempt a Hun covey along the eastern boundary with a wheat field. We worked the boundary that we found covered in hairy vetch and starthistle, then dropped

See Birds, Page A12



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