

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Clair Costello, who is stepping down at the end of 2022 as Riverside High School athletic director and boys basketball coach, amassed more than 400 wins during his 32 years as boys head coach and was named Coach of the Year three times. Costello will continue to coach the girls basketball team.

It's been a great ride

Longtime Riverside coach Clair Costello is retiring

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — During his 30-plus years as basketball coach at Riverside High School, Clair Costello made dozens of phone calls from a payphone outside the Safeway in Burns. He had to make sure the local paper had the results from his games.

That payphone, and likely others he frequented in small towns across Oregon during his coaching career, are long gone, but the memories he's made over the years are his to keep.

"Winning is more fun than losing, but the best part is getting to work with the kids and parents, and seeing new faces," Costello said. "Those things are neat

when you see kids from the past. I don't always know their names, but I remember faces. It has always been good. People have always treated me really well, that's why we stayed."

In two weeks time, Costello will turn out the lights in his office and cart his last box of belongings to his car. He is retiring from everything except girls basketball. He's going to stay on for one more year.

"I'm not counting the days, but I am," he said. "It's hard not to. I'm 66 years old. I think it's time for somebody else to come in."

That would be football coach Cole Ashby, who will step up to also coach boys basketball and take over the athletic director's duties.

Costello has coached the boys basketball team for 32 years, the girls team for a little less, and he's been the athletic director since 2007. All that on top of teaching six classes a day.

"I've had a few different hats in my time here," Costello said. "I had to be talked into some of it. I was happy with what I was doing, I didn't know what I was getting into when I took the AD job. I was coaching baseball, middle school football and basketball. Next thing I

knew, I would be there late catching up on emails, making sure we had officials and what not."

During Costello's tenure with the boys team, he won more than 400 games, was named Coach of the Year three times and made nine trips to state. His teams placed third at the 3A tournament in 2007 and sixth in 1999.

Dirk Dirksen, superintendent of the Morrow County School District, also is retiring this spring and started coaching with Costello in the mid-1980s.

"We coached football, baseball and basketball together," Dirksen said. "We coached for at least 10 years together. He's a great guy and works hard for the students. The fact he has stuck with it, with the travel in the Eastern Oregon League, it's phenomenal. His dedication to ride the bus to Burns, Nyssa and Vale year after year. There are bus stories going back for years when you travel that far."

One came to mind as Dirksen was recalling their time together.

"There was this one trip from Boardman to Milton-Freewater," he said. "It had

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SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Pendleton's Sauren Garton winds up to pitch against Ridgeview on May 10, 2022, at Steve Cary Field, Pendleton. The Bucks won the game 1-0.

Records collapse under weight of top performances

Pendleton's Garton sets single-season strikeout record

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton senior Sauren Garton set a single-season school record for strikeouts on Wednesday, May 11, after she fanned 16 La Grande batters in a 5-0 nonleague win.

Garton holds the record with 241 strikeouts with several games yet to play. The previous record was 229 by Lauren Richards.

Garton has helped the Bucks with a 20-2 overall record this season, and an 11-1 mark in Intermountain Conference play.

This season, Garton has pitched 102 1/3 innings, allowing 33 hits and 19 runs — 12 earned. She has walked 36 batters and hit six. She has an 18-2 record and an impressive .812 ERA.

Garton also is a threat at the plate, hitting .409 with 27 hits. She has nine doubles, three triples, three home runs and 24 RBIs.

Baseball

In the first game of their Special District 7

doubleheader May 14, Weston-McEwen's Blane Peal and Dufur's Isaac Anthony were locked into a pitcher's duel.

Peal threw a one-hitter with 17 strikeouts for the TigerScots, while Anthony threw a no-hitter with 14 strikeouts for the Rangers.

The one hit Peal gave up was a solo home run to Anthony in the top of the sixth inning as Dufur escaped with a 1-0 win. It's the first run given up by Peal this season.

Peal, who is headed to George Fox University, has thrown 47 innings in nine starts this season. He's allowed seven hits, walked seven batters and has struck out 112. He has a sterling .149 ERA.

The TigerScots won the second game 6-5 to hand the Rangers their first league loss.

Track and field

On her final throw, in her last meet at Kennison Field, Hermiston senior Bailey Young unleashed a mighty throw of 47 feet, 1 inch in the shot put to win the event and break her own school record May 13, at the Mid-Columbia Conference Championships.

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ON THE SLATE

Schedule subject to change

TUESDAY, MAY 17

Prep baseball

EOL Playoffs: Irrigon at Joseph, 4 p.m.

Touchet at McLoughlin, 4 p.m.

Crook County at Pendleton, 4:30 p.m.

Prep softball

Pendleton at Crook County, 4:30 p.m.

Prep golf

Pendleton at 5A boys state tournament, Trysting Tree, Corvallis, TBD

Heppner, Riverside boys at 3A/2A/1A state tournament, Quail Valley, Banks, 7:30 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18

Prep softball

3A District 8: Hermiston at University, 4 p.m.

Pendleton JV at Weston-McEwen, 5 p.m.

Prep baseball

Weston-McEwen at Sherman (2), 2 p.m.

Heppner at Horizon Christian (2), 2:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 19

Track and field

1A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

2A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

3A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

FRIDAY, MAY 20

Prep baseball

Pendleton at La Grande, 4 p.m.

Prep softball

La Grande at Pendleton, 4:30 p.m.

Tennis

Pendleton at 5A state tournament, Portland Tennis Center, 8 a.m.

Umatilla, Weston-McEwen, Riverside at 4A/3A/2A/1A state tournament, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 8 a.m.

Track and Field

Hermiston at District 8 Championships, Spokane, TBD

Pendleton at 5A state meet, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

1A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

2A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

3A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

4A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

5A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

SATURDAY, MAY 21

Prep Lacrosse

3A state quarterfinals: Hermiston at Roosevelt, TBD

Tennis

Pendleton at 5A state tournament, Babbette Hornstein Tennis Center, 8 a.m.

Umatilla, Weston-McEwen, Riverside at 4A/3A/2A/1A state tournament, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 8 a.m.

Track and Field

Hermiston at District 8 Championships, Spokane, TBD

4A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

5A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

SPORTS SHORT

EOU softball team earns at-large bid to NAIA tournament

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Eastern Oregon University softball program is headed to nationals.

The Mountaineers earned an at-large bid to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics tournament during the association's selection show May 10. Eastern, which is ranked No. 15 in the latest national poll, earned a two seed in the tournament and will face three-seed Texas A&M Texarkana in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on May 16. Joining the Mountaineers and Eagles in the Oklahoma City bracket are Oklahoma City and William Woods.



Christian

Eastern is coming off a semi-final appearance in the Cascade Collegiate Conference tournament, where the team was eliminated by the College of Idaho. The Mountaineers have currently tallied a 41-15 record, which tied the program record for wins in a season.

Texas A&M Texarkana is 42-12 on the year, coming off a Red River Tournament championship title. The Eagles were ranked No. 22 in the latest NAIA national poll, but found themselves ranked as high as No. 13 earlier in the season.

Texas A&M Texarkana's Anna Westberry leads the way for the team's pitching staff with a 23-4 record. Eastern's Amanda Smith has led the pitching efforts this

season, accumulating a 19-6 record off 19 complete games.

Eastern's national tournament berth is its first since 2018, the last season the Mountaineers had a winning record. Head coach Nicole Christian, who is in her third year as Eastern's head coach, is set to make her national tournament debut with the Mountaineers.

The Mountaineers are scheduled to compete in game one of the Oklahoma City bracket on May 16, with the game time still to be determined. The four-team bracket is double elimination, with the final matchup slated for May 18.

Following the opening round, the winners will travel to Columbus, Georgia, for the world series bracket. The matchups are set to begin on May 26 and a champion will be named by June 1.



The Observer, File

Amanda Smith (14) delivers a pitch March 25, 2022, during the Eastern Oregon University Mountaineers' matchup with Providence University at the Peggy Anderson Softball Field, La Grande. EOU's softball program is headed to nationals.