

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2022

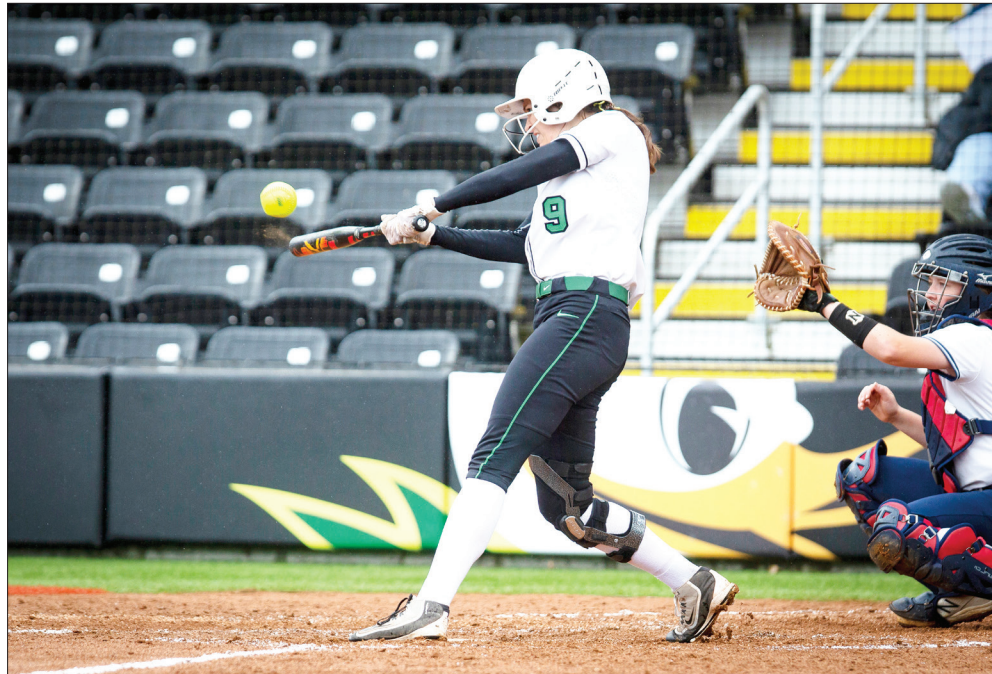
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Ben Lonergan/For East Oregonian

Pendleton third baseman Sam Wilks celebrates an out early Saturday, June 4, 2022, in Eugene in the Bucks 2-0 win over Wilsonville during the Oregon School Activities Association Class 5A state softball game.



Ben Lonergan/For East Oregonian

Pendleton center fielder Daisy Jenness hits a single Saturday, June 4, 2022, in Eugene during the Buckaroos 2-0 win in the Oregon School Activities Association Class 5A state softball championships against the Wilsonville Wildcats.

BUCKS BAG 5A STATE TITLE

Garton strikes out 17 in 2-0 win over Wilsonville

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

EUGENE — Sauren Garton has been the rock for the Pendleton softball team all season, and when the Bucks needed her most on Saturday, June 4, she did not let them down.

With two outs in the bottom of the seventh, and a runner on first, Garton struck out Mary Matthews on four pitches as Pendleton defeated Wilsonville 2-0 to win the 5A state softball title at Jane Sanders Field.

“She did what she has been doing all year,” Pendleton coach Tim Cary said of Garton. “I had a lot of faith. We were biting our nails, but Sauren had been in command the whole game and we thought she had it in hand.”

It’s the fourth state title for the Bucks, who also won in 2012, 2014 and 2018. Cary has coached all four teams.

“It’s always fun to win,” Cary said. “They did a great job today. They earned it.”

Runs were hard to come by for both teams as the game was a pitcher’s duel from the start.

Garton, who is headed to Dixie State, struck out 17 on the day and had a no-hitter going through six innings.

Wilsonville starter Madison Erickson, who has signed



Ben Lonergan/For East Oregonian

Pendleton’s Sauren Garton delivers a pitch Saturday, June 4, 2022, in an early inning at Jane Sanders Stadium in Eugene during the Pendleton Buckaroos’ 2-0 win over the Wilsonville Wildcats in the Oregon School Activities Association Class 5A state softball title.

to play at University of Michigan, allowed four hits, walked three and struck out nine.

“We knew that it would be two great pitchers in a battle,” Cary said. “We were hoping one or two runs would be enough, and it was.”

Both pitchers earned Player of the Game honors for their teams.

Garton said Erickson was as good as advertised.

“She was something else,” Garton said. “She throws hard.

It was very fun to beat her.”

The Bucks (28-2) were the first to light up the scoreboard as the Jenness sisters worked their magic in the bottom of the fourth inning.

With two outs, freshman Josie Jenness hit a double to left field, followed by senior Daisy Jenness, who laced a double down the third-base line to score her sister for a 1-0 lead.

“They came up big,” Cary said. “They got it done when

they needed to. They were a great combination today, for sure.”

In the bottom of the sixth, Faith Broadfoot drew a walk, stole second base, then went to third on a passed ball. Josie Jenness hit a 1-2 pitch to right field that hit off the top of Callie Weaving’s mitt and dropped for an error, scoring Broadfoot for a 2-0 lead.

Jenness ended up on third, but was later caught in a rundown to end the inning.

“That was a little insurance run right there,” Cary said. “You could see a little wind come out of their sails right there.”

The two-run cushion was enough to get the Bucks through the top of the seventh.

The Wildcats (27-4), in the championship game for the first time in school history, had one last chance to get back in the game.

With one out, Anna Jardin broke up Garton’s no-hitter in

the top of the seventh with a single to left field.

Jardin would be left stranded as Talia Valdez and Matthews struck out.

“I was really glad the team was able to score some runs by the end of the game,” Garton said. “It makes it easier on the pitcher.”

This is the second time this season Pendleton and Wilsonville had played one another. The teams split their non league doubleheader in April, with the Wildcats winning the opener 9-1, and the Bucks the second game 10-4.

After the game, the six Pendleton seniors donned their graduation caps and gowns and had a makeshift ceremony at home plate. Once they were done, their caps went in the air, just as their mitts had at the end of the game.

“That’s always a neat way to graduate, especially when you win,” Cary said. “It was a great day for everyone. They had a lot of fun.”

Garton said she would not have traded the experience.

“It was seriously awesome,” she said. “Deep down, we were bummed we wouldn’t graduate with our classmates. It wouldn’t have been as fun had we lost.”

It was the second state softball title for the Garton family. Sauren’s older sister Aspen was a junior on the 2018 championship team. Aspen was able to make it to Saturday’s game.

“I couldn’t let my sister have a state championship and I didn’t have one,” Sauren said. “I’m glad she was able to be here.”

EOU softball’s coaching staff earn regional honor

East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University softball’s coaching staff last week received regional honors after a historic 2022 season.

EOU finished the year at 43-17 overall and as the runner-up of the Oklahoma City Bracket in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics opening round after earning an at-large bid. The team’s 43 wins now stands alone atop Eastern’s record books for the most victories in a single season.

Coaching staffs of the National Fastpitch Coaches Association’s NAIA regions on Wednesday, June 1, announced their selections for staff of the year recognition. For Region IV, the honor went to EOU softball head coach Nicole Christian and her staff.

Entering the 2022 campaign, EOU was picked to finish fifth in the Cascade

Collegiate Conference but easily exceeded expectations, according to an announcement from EOU Athletics. The team finished third in the regular season standings and at the CCC Tournament, registering a 24-6 mark in conference action.

EOU Softball ranked 15th in the final NAIA Coaches’

Poll of the regular season and finished with five All-CCC selections. Garnering All-CCC honors for Eastern Oregon was Amanda Smith (pitcher), Grace Gaither (infielder), Caitlin Crist (infielder), Shelby Starr (outfielder) and Karsyn Zaragoza (outfielder). Five All-CCC selections are the most under Christian.

Christian also had her first pair of College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-District selections in Kayla Berg and Taylor Dow. The senior duo were selected to the First

Team, Berg was selected as an outfielder, while Dow was selected as a designated player.

Christian finished her third season as head coach of Mountaineer softball in 2022. She is supported by assistant coaches Theresa Manley, Woody Wright, Bob Christian and volunteer assistant coach Taylor Smith.

Christian began her coaching career in 2001 when she was named the head softball coach for La Grande High School. She was with the Tigers from 2001-03, then spent some time in the junior college ranks as the head coach at Blue Mountain Community College 2003-05.

Christian was the softball bench boss at Umatilla High School 2005-08, then took the role as head softball coach and assistant girl’s basketball coach at McLoughlin High School, Milton-Freewater, starting in 2008. In 10 seasons as the softball coach, Christian’s squad made the state tournament nine

consecutive times. Mac-Hi also made four straight state championship game appearances and won back-to-back state titles in 2014 and 2015. During the 2018 campaign, she also picked up career win No. 300. She was inducted into the Mac-High Hall of

Fame in 2018.

As a collegiate athlete, Christian is no stranger to EOU, having been a four-year starter for the Mountaineers and was a two-time All-American. She played for Eastern from 1996-2000 and was inducted in the Moun-

taineer Hall of Fame twice. She went in with the 1999 team in 2011 and two years later in 2013, she was inducted as an individual. Christian also received multiple accolades in her career, including NAIA First-Team All-American honors in 2000.



Christian

Scramble for Scholarships Friday, June 10th

..... 1pm Shotgun Start

**GOOD SHEPHERD
COMMUNITY HEALTH
FOUNDATION**

Big River Golf Course - Umatilla

Golfers of all skill levels are invited to participate in the 29th annual Scramble for Scholarships Golf Tournament. Four person teams can sign up together or individual pairings can be made by the tournament committee. Your \$100 entry fee covers green fees, a box lunch, BBQ Dinner, and makes a charitable donation to the Foundation to use in awarding scholarships to local students pursuing careers in a medical field.

Register at scrambleforscholarships.eventbrite.com or call 541-667-3409. Entry deadline is June 6th

Putting contest to win a pair of Blazers Tickets.
Great Prize Holes and Hole-in-One on #1 & #9 wins
\$25,000 towards a new car sponsored by **ROGERS TOYOTA** of HERMISTON