

# Buckaroos confident under new coach

## PENDLETON

### BASEBALL

COACH: T.J. Haguewood, 1st year

2015 SEASON: 14-15 overall, 7-5 CRC (2nd)

POSTSEASON STORY: The No. 14 seed Buckaroos lost to Hood River 1-0 in the semifinals of the 5A state tournament.

RETURNERS: Quinn Cockburn, sr., P; Caden Smith, jr., INF; Kai Quinn, sr., OF; James Bradt, sr., INF/RHP.

By ERIC SINGER  
East Oregonian

In 2015, the Pendleton baseball team became a Cinderella story in the 5A state tournament as the No. 14 seed Buckaroos

knocked off the No. 3 seed Corvallis and the No. 6 seed Crescent Valley to earn a trip to the semifinals. The Bucks nearly made it to the state championship game, losing 1-0 to the eventual state champion and league rival Hood River Valley.

But with that loss ushered in a new era in Pendleton baseball, as long-time coach Greg Whitten stepped aside after 10 years. In his place is assistant and former Western-McEwen head coach T.J. Haguewood, who says that program expectations shouldn't change moving forward.

"There's always expectations for playoffs and to compete for the state title," he said. "We've had decades of successful base-

ball not because of one man but because of the community that supports the teams and develops the kids each year."

The 2016 Buckaroos are built just like the 2015 version — a good pitching staff with good hitting and great defense.

"We should be real solid defensively and we should put some pressure on our opponents by bringing good approaches to the plate," Haguewood said. "We should have a solid staff as long as they keep the ball down and let the defense do the work."

Pendleton will have to fill in the holes left by the departures of six seniors including all-league selections in outfielder Kyler Lunny, infielder Tony Papol, infielder Brady Smith, and catcher

Alex O'Rourke. In their place, Haguewood says he's intrigued to see how some of the younger players step in and develop over the course of the season.

"We have several guys that are looking to crack the varsity lineup, and we've seen guys in a lot of different positions at practice which has been interesting," he said. "Guys like (sophomore) Nick Bower, (junior) Austin Zaugg, and (sophomore) Shaw Jerome could break in quick and get a lot of varsity playing time ... we have some holes but we have plenty of guys back to help."

Pendleton will lean heavy on returners such as senior outfielder Kai Quinn, infielder James Bradt, and junior infielder Caden Smith — who was a first team all-con-

ference selection after hitting .298 with two home runs, five doubles, and 17 RBI.

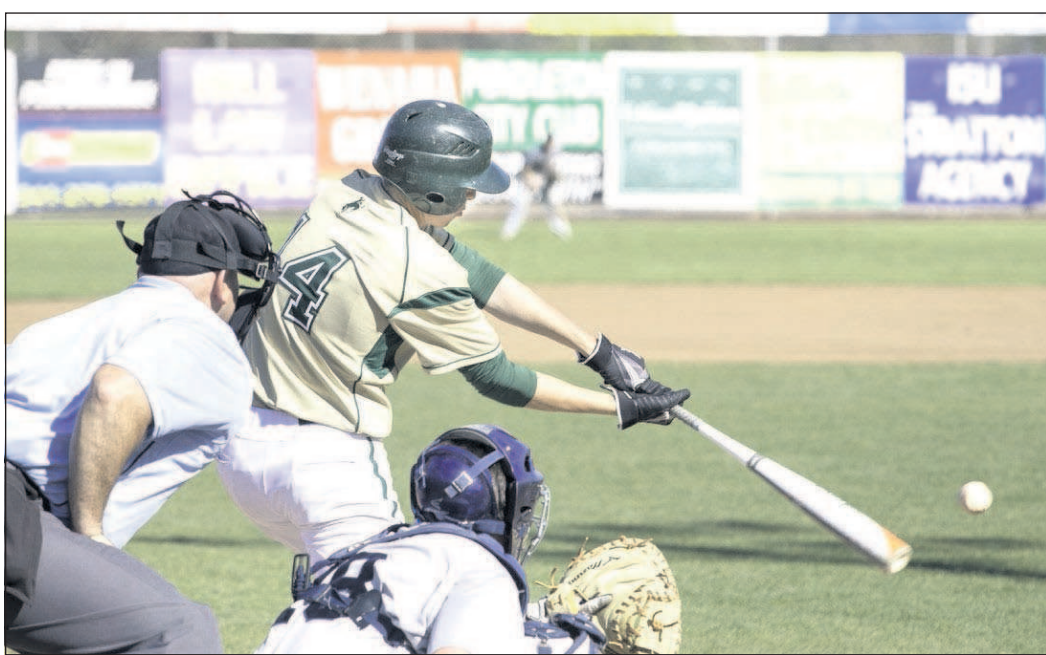
On the mound, the Bucks will once again lean on senior pitcher Quinn Cockburn to carry the load at the front end of the rotation. He turned in a solid season with a 5-5 record and a 2.25 ERA which was good enough to land on the second team all-CRC. After Cockburn, Haguewood mentioned that the rotation is still being hammered out, but guys like senior James Bradt and Wyatt Morris will be leading candidates to round out the staff.

As the first pitches are about to be thrown, Haguewood knows there are still areas of his squad that need shored up.

"As a coach I always see weaknesses," he said. "Our two-strike approach needs to improve, as well as better at the small things."

One new thing that Haguewood and his staff will have to deal with in 2016 is tracking pitch counts, as the OSAA has recommended the change from innings limits to count limits for this season as the abundance of arm injuries across the game of baseball has increased in recent years.

"Kids are throwing a lot more baseballs and pitches now with extra leagues and travel teams, so the reasoning behind it is understandable," he said. "Overall it's a good thing, it levels the playing field because you have to rely on the team instead of just one guy."



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

In this April 21, 2015 file photo, James Bradt, of Pendleton, makes contact in a bases loaded situation against Hood River at Bob White Field.

## 2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 15	vs. Southridge (WA)	4 p.m.
Mar. 18	at Hanford (DH)	3 p.m.
Mar. 21	vs. Roseburg (DH)	12 p.m.
Mar. 24	vs. Madison (at Boise, ID)	Noon
Mar. 25	vs. Skyline (at Boise, ID)	9:30 a.m.
Mar. 25	vs. Jerome (at Boise, ID)	2:30 p.m.
Mar. 26	vs. Canyon (at Boise, ID)	9:30 a.m.
Mar. 29	vs. La Grande	4 p.m.
Apr. 4	vs. Walla Walla	4 p.m.
Apr. 7	at La Grande	4:30 p.m.
Apr. 11	at Walla Walla	4 p.m.
Apr. 16	at Hood River* (DH)	Noon
Apr. 19	vs. Hood River*	4:30 p.m.
Apr. 23	at The Dalles* (DH)	12 p.m.
Apr. 26	vs. The Dalles*	4:30 p.m.
Apr. 29	vs. Hermiston* (DH)	4 p.m.
May 3	at Hermiston*	4:30 p.m.
May 6	vs. Hood River*	4:30 p.m.
May 10	vs. The Dalles*	4:30 p.m.
May 13	at Hermiston*	4:30 p.m.
May 16	vs. Baker	4:30 p.m.

\*league game



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