

Buckaroos look to continue title trend

PENDLETON SOFTBALL

COACH: Tim Cary, 12th year
2015 season: 22-8, 12-0 CRC (1st)

POSTSEASON STORY: The No. 2 seed Bucks finished as the 5A runners-up after losing to Putnam 3-2 in the state title game.

LOSSES: INF Darian Lindsey, OF Tiah Grass, C Mykal Weissenfluh, OF Shelby Harris, INF Shelby Spriet

KEY RETURNERS: OF Alexis Morrison, sr.; INF Ellie Richards, sr.; P Kiersten Murphy, sr.; OF Peyton Hergert, jr.; INF Lauren Richards, soph.

By **ERIC SINGER**
East Oregonian

The Pendleton Buckaroos have been one of the best teams in 5A over the last several seasons, appearing in the state title game four times in the last five years and winning titles in 2013 and 2014.

But this year's team has a long road to travel if it wants to reach that level again. The Bucks must replace five seniors, including three big ones in Tiah Grass (11 home runs, 38 RBI), Mykal Weissenfluh (.329 avg., 15 RBI), and Darian Lindsey — who was the 5A Player of the Year in 2015 after hitting .606 with 13 home runs.

Bucks coach Tim Cary said the team is shaping slowly but surely with several spots on the field



Ellie Richards eyes a pitch last season in the firduring a game at at Steve Cary Field.

up for grabs. Sophomores Kalan McGlothlan and Rylee Gentner are getting long looks to replace Lindsey at third base ("I don't know if you truly can replace someone like Darian," Cary said), and freshman Kila Solomon is expected to fill the catcher spot vacated by Weissenfluh.

In those state finalist teams, the Buckaroos calling card was their tremendous power on offense and the ability to hit home runs with ease. In

2015, the Buckaroos averaged more than nine runs per game and won games by an average of almost six runs apiece. While Cary expects the power to still be a strength in 2015, he believes it won't be as prevalent as in those past teams.

"Hitting will be our strength, no doubt, but it will probably be more doubles and extra base hits rather than home runs," he said.

Pendleton returns two Division I signees and all-state players in

senior shortstop Ellie Richards and senior outfielder Alexis Morrison who will likely carry the offensive load in 2016. Richards hit .487 with 13 doubles, 35 RBI and 52 runs scored, while outfielder Morrison hit .453 with nine home runs.

Another strength for Pendleton will be on the pitching rubber, as senior Kiersten Murphy returns after a 2015 season that landed her on the third team all-state and first team all-CRC rosters. She led the

2016 SCHEDULE

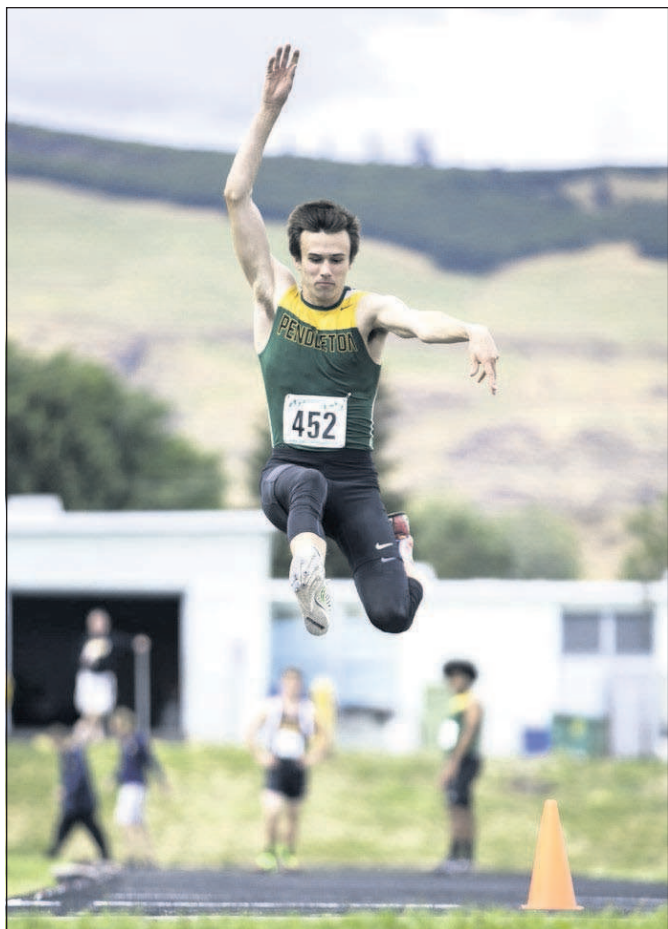
Mar. 15	vs. Hanford	4 p.m.
Mar. 18	vs. Kamiakin (DH)	3 p.m.
Mar. 21	vs. Century (at Putnam)	Noon
Mar. 21	vs. Oregon City (at Putnam)	4 p.m.
Mar. 22	vs. Central Cath. (at Putnam)	Noon
Mar. 22	at Rex Putnam	2 p.m.
Mar. 23	at Sandy	TBD
Mar. 29	vs. La Grande	4:30 p.m.
Apr. 4	vs. Walla Walla (DH)	3 p.m.
Apr. 7	at La Grande	4:30 p.m.
Apr. 12	vs. Mac-Hi	4:30 p.m.
Apr. 16	at Hood River* (DH)	Noon
Apr. 19	vs. Hood River*	4:30 p.m.
Apr. 23	at The Dalles* (DH)	Noon
Apr. 26	vs. The Dalles*	4:30 p.m.
Apr. 29	vs. Hermiston* (DH)	3 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

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Dylan Clemons long jumps Wednesday at the Columbia River Conference district track and field meet in The Dalles.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



PENDLETON TRACK & FIELD

COACH: Larry Brizendine and Dustin Breshears, 1st year

POSTSEASON STORY: The Buckaroos finished the season in the middle of the pack at the state meet, with the boys finishing 15th and the girls 16th.

RETURNERS: (BOYS) Nolan Bylenga, sr.; Andrew Porter, sr.; Johnny Stuvland jr.; Dylan Clemons, sr.; (GIRLS) Delaney Clem, sr.; Keegan Utter, sr.; Kiara Glover, jr.; Taryn Sokoloski, jr.; Jackie Talbot, jr.

The Pendleton Buckaroos have a big group of runners, throwers and jumpers for the 2016 season with 113 athletes participating so far.

Those numbers excite co-coaches Dustin Breshears and Larry Brizendine on the potential of this year's team.

"We're hoping with as many as we have out this year we can have a strong shot at a district crown," Brizendine said. "We have 34 seniors, too, so we're hoping that experience helps lead the way."

The Buckaroos return several participants from state competition from one year ago, with Nolan Bylenga (2nd place, 800M), Johnny Stuvland (2nd place, high jump), Taryn Sokoloski (9th place, 800M), and Kiara Glover (4th, high jump) leading



the pack.

Stuvland is not expected to join competition until close to districts, as he is still recovering from a knee injury suffered in early February during basketball.

The coaches are also excited for the first meet, when they host the Buck Track Classic on Mar. 17.

"I'm excited to see how they do in competition," Brizendine said. "It'll be fun to see who steps up and see who's hard work paid off the most."

2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 17	Buck Track Classic	Noon
Apr. 1	Mac-Hi Carnival of Speed	Noon
Apr. 8	at River's Edge (Umatilla)	TBD
Apr. 9	at Oregon City	10 a.m.
Apr. 15	Green and Gold Invite	3 p.m.
Apr. 16	at Pasco Invite	9:30 a.m.
Apr. 23	at Hermiston Invite	TBD
Apr. 30	at Ontario Invite	11 a.m.
May 6	at Hood River	4 p.m.
May 11	Districts (at Hermiston)	TBD
May 12	Districts (at Hermiston)	TBD

PENDLETON GOLF

BOYS COACH: Nels Nelson, 33rd year

POSTSEASON STORY: Pendleton finished fourth in the new 5A Special District 2 tournament to qualify for the state tournament, where they finished seventh out of 10 teams.

RETURNERS: Reilly Hegarty, sr.; Brayden Pulver, jr.; Nathan Som, jr.; Jared Geier, soph.

With one year under their belts in the OSAA's new district format, the Pendleton Buckaroos believe they can make some noise in year two.

"It's such a different format," said coach Nels Nelson. "Having so many teams in your district now, it really forces you to turn it on at the end."

Pendleton returns four state qualifiers from the varsity roster last season, led by senior Reilly Hegarty and junior Brayden Pulver. Hegarty finished tied for 13th at the state tournament last season, while Pulver finished tied for 30th. Both Nathan Som and Jared Geier finished tied for 38th.

The Buckaroos kick off the season at the nine-hole The Dalles Country Club course, which coach Nels Nelson said can be a tough course to start the season off on.

"It can be a real difficult if the conditions are right," he said. "I'd like to see the guys play well there and at Eagle Ridge before we come home where we can hopefully display our talents well at Wildhorse."

2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 18	at The Dalles CC	10 a.m.
Apr. 1	at Eagle Ridge GC	8 a.m.
Apr. 4	at Wildhorse Resort	Noon
Apr. 6	at Indian Creek GC	10 a.m.
Apr. 11	at Bend CC	10:40 a.m.
Apr. 14	at Pendleton CC	Noon
Apr. 18	at Tetherow GC	10 a.m.
Apr. 21	at Big River GC	9 a.m.
Apr. 25	at Meadowlakes GC	11 a.m.
Apr. 27	at Trysting Tree GC	TBA
May 6	at Eagle Ridge GC	11 a.m.
May 7	at Eagle Ridge GC	10 a.m.
May 16	at Trysting Tree GC	TBA
May 17	at Trysting Tree GC	TBA

GIRLS COACH: Teri Prouse, 21st year

POSTSEASON STORY: The Buckaroos finished in fourth place at the 5A Special District 2 tournament to qualify for the state tournament, where they also turned in a fourth place finish.

RETURNERS: Haley Greb, jr.; Shelby Greb, sr.; McKenna Pratt, sr.

Just like their boys counterparts, the Buckaroos girls golf team returns three out of five varsity starters from the state qualifying team from 2015.

The team is headed by sisters Haley and Shelby Greb, who each turned in top-10 finishes at the state tournament a year ago. Haley, a junior, finished third in the 5A state tournament last season after shooting a two-round total of 147 to sit just three shots above par and seven shots out of first place, which has led to some high expectations from Prouse for the coming season.

Pendleton also returns senior McKenna Pratt who finished 38th at the state tournament.

The team will have to replace starters Whitney and Britney Bahns, and Prouse has several players competing for their spots with two seniors, two juniors, one sophomore and three freshmen competing against each other.

Prouse also stated that she's intrigued to see how the team performs at Indian Creek Golf Course on Apr. 6, which is the same course where the district tournaments will be held on May 9-10.

2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 15	at The Dalles CC	10 a.m.
Apr. 1	at Eagle Ridge GC	1:30 p.m.
Apr. 4	at Wildhorse Resort	Noon
Apr. 6	at Indian Creek GC	10 a.m.
Apr. 12	at Awbrey Glen GC	TBA
Apr. 18	at Bend CC	TBA
Apr. 26	at Pendleton CC	Noon
Apr. 28	at Quail Valley GC	TBA
May 9	Districts (at Indian Creek)	TBA
May 10	Districts (at Indian Creek)	TBA
May 16	State (at Quail Valley GC)	TBA
May 17	State (at Quail Valley GC)	TBA

PENDLETON TENNIS

BOYS COACH: Chris Holdman, 6th year

POSTSEASON STORY: The Buckaroos did not advance past the district tournament.

RETURNERS: Henry Holdman, sr., Lincoln Johnson, jr.

Buckaroos coach Chris Holdman said that 2016 could be a 'learning season' for his team as he tries to replace four seniors with years of experience under their belts with a several inexperienced underclassmen.

Pendleton's returning players are senior Henry Holdman and junior Lincoln Johnson who should be the Buckaroos' top two singles players. On the doubles side, Peter Wallace and Silas Johnson are expected to be the top pair for the team as well.

2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 29	vs. Baker	4 p.m.
Apr. 1	at Mac-Hi	4 p.m.
Apr. 4	vs. La Grande	4 p.m.
Apr. 6	vs. Hood River	4 p.m.
Apr. 8	at Baker	4 p.m.
Apr. 12	vs. Hermiston	4 p.m.
Apr. 14	at The Dalles	4 p.m.
Apr. 18	vs. Mac-Hi	4 p.m.
Apr. 20	at Hood River	4 p.m.
Apr. 22	at La Grande	4 p.m.
May 3	vs. The Dalles	4 p.m.
May 5	at Hermiston	4 p.m.
May 10	vs. Umatilla	4 p.m.
May 13	Districts (at Hermiston)	TBD

GIRLS COACH: Rocky Dillenburg, 12th year

POSTSEASON STORY: The Buckaroos lone representative at the state tournament was Matilde Cittadini, who lost both of her matches.

RETURNERS: Anna James, sr.; Julia Livingston, sr.; Jenna Senter, jr.

The Pendleton Buckaroos lineup is wide open heading into the 2016 season as the team tries to fill the holes left by five top players from 2015.

Seniors Anna James and Julia Livingston move up into the teams' top doubles pair this season, and junior Jenna Senter moves up from the No. 3 doubles team into the No. 1 singles player to start the season. Hannah Flanagan was expected to move into the No. 1 singles spot, but she is expected to miss the entire the season with a knee injury.

2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 29	vs. Baker	4 p.m.
Apr. 1	vs. Mac-Hi	4 p.m.
Apr. 4	vs. La Grande	4 p.m.
Apr. 6	at Hood River	4 p.m.
Apr. 8	at Baker	4 p.m.
Apr. 12	at Hermiston	4 p.m.
Apr. 14	vs. The Dalles	4 p.m.
Apr. 18	at Mac-Hi	4 p.m.
Apr. 20	vs. Hood River	4 p.m.
Apr. 22	at La Grande	4 p.m.
May 3	at The Dalles	4 p.m.
May 5	vs. Hermiston	4 p.m.
May 10	vs. Umatilla	4 p.m.
May 13	Districts (at Bend)	4 p.m.

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