



In this May 21, 2015 file photo, Echo's Kelsey Ranger competes in long jump at the OSAA track and field state championships at Hayward Field in Eugene.

EO file photo/Kathy Aney

Cougars focused on working hard

Echo's Kenzie Blankenship makes contact during a game last season in Echo. Blankenship is one of several returners that has the Cougars excited for another successful season.

EO file photo/Sam Barbee



ECHO SOFTBALL

COACH: Bryan Bailey, 4th year
2015 SEASON: 18-11, 10-4 EOL (2nd)
POSTSEASON STORY: The Cougars lost 12-2 to Dayton in the state quarterfinals.
LOSSES: INF Bailey Srofe, INF Haley Shockman
KEY RETURNERS: P/OF Mackenzie Gonzales, sr.; INF Kenzie Blankenship, sr.; C Erika Parks, sr.; INF Cynthia Curiel, sr.; OF/INF Beth Milbrodt, sr.; U Hannah McCarty, jr.

Bryan Bailey has been working to build the Echo/Stanfield softball program, and 2015 was a step in the right direction. "Right now our expectation's to out-work everyone else. That's our goal and that's our motto this year is we're gonna work harder than everyone else and let the game come to us." The Cougars lose just one starter and two players from last year's playoff team, but get a transfer to fill to hole at shortstop vacated by

2016 SCHEDULE

March 17	vs. Union	3 p.m.
March 22	at Riverside	TBD
March 23	at Riverside	TBD
March 24	vs. Colton	3 p.m.
March 28	at Heppner	4:30 p.m.
April 1	vs. Umatilla (DH)*	1 p.m.
April 5	at Riverside	1 p.m.
April 5	at Riverside*	3:30 p.m.
April 8	vs. Burns	2 p.m.
April 9	vs. Heppner	11 a.m.
April 12	vs. Weston-McEwen*	1 p.m.
April 15	vs. Elgin	1 p.m.
April 18	at Dayton	4 p.m.
April 22	at Grant Union	1 p.m.
April 29	vs. Vale	1 p.m.
April 29	vs. Vale*	3:30 p.m.
May 6	at Nyssa	2 p.m.
May 13	at Enterprise (DH)*	1 p.m.

*League game

Bailey Srofe's graduation. Cheyenne Hilliard transferred from Pendleton after playing two years for the Bucks. As a freshman, Hilliard played at Echo. "She brings different talents and different drills and things that she's worked on. She's a natural leader on the softball field. It just to her. She's played the game a long time. And to have her step into that shortstop role and pick up where Bailey left off last year (is huge). And she's good at the plate, so she's an all-around good player."

ECHO TRACK & FIELD

COACH: Ryan Ross, 2nd year
2015 SEASON: The Cougar girls finished fifth at last year's state meet. Kelsey Ranger won gold in long jump and silver in triple jump.
LOSSES: Elizabeth McCarty
KEY RETURNERS: (Girls) Kelsey Ranger, sr. (jumps, throws); Taylor Swaggart, soph. (sprints); (Boys) Michael Thompson, sr. (throws)

Despite having a relatively small turnout last season, the Echo Cougars send two to state, with one, Kelsey Ranger, winning a state title in the long jump. Sprinter/jumper Taylor Swaggart, who runs the 100 and 200 meters in addition to long jumping, missed last year's district meet due to an illness, and Michael Thompson shows potential. "I hope I can send Kelsey back to state," Ross aid. "Track's anyone's game. Hope to send Taylor, she was sick before district meet. Hopefully Micheal goes, just gotta get his technique down." "We have a bunch of new kids this year, I haven't seen what they can do yet. We're gonna work on (Ranger), get her going for the season. She wrote down some goals. I haven't looked at them yet, but she knows what she wants to do." Ross will be helped by assistant Tyler Watson this year. Ross is excited to have some help shouldering the load after coaching by himself in 2015.

2016 SCHEDULE

April 1	at Mac-Hi	Noon
April 2	at Sherman	Noon
April 8	at Umatilla	Noon
April 9	at Stanfield	10 a.m.
April 15	at Pendleton	3 p.m.
April 23	at Union	11 a.m.
April 27	at Hermiston	TBD
April 30	at Condon/Wheeler	11 a.m.
May 6	at Baker	11:30 a.m.
May 14	at Districts (Moro)	10:30 a.m.

STANFIELD TENNIS

COACH: Lisa Logan, 13th year
2015 SEASON: The Tigers did not advance any players to the state tournament.
LOSSES: None
KEY RETURNERS: (Girls) Guitzell Chavez, sr.; Yazzmin Chavez, sr.; Natalia Esquivel, jr.; Amanda Carrillo, jr.

Coach Logan thinks her best chance of sending Tigers to state could be top doubles team Guitzell Chavez and Yazzmin Chavez, who finished third at districts last year, but in an expanded district it's not going to be easy. "We have to work a lot harder, that's for sure," Logan said. "They have to put their heads in and get to where they need to go."

2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 15	vs. Umatilla	4:30 p.m.
Mar. 17	at Riverside	4:30 p.m.
Mar. 18	at Condon	4 p.m.
Mar. 29	vs. Helix	4:30 p.m.
Mar. 31	at Ione	4:30 p.m.
April 1	at Condon	3 p.m.
April 5	vs. Ione	4:30 p.m.
April 8	at Sherman County	2 p.m.
April 12	vs. McLoughlin	4:30 p.m.
April 14	vs. Riverside	4:30 p.m.
April 21	at Umatilla	4 p.m.
April 22	vs. Molalla	4 p.m.
April 23	vs. Molalla	9 a.m.
April 26	vs. Sherman County	4:30 p.m.
April 30	at Helix	9 a.m.
May 3	at Helix	4 p.m.
May 13-14	at Districts (Ontario)	TBD

STANFIELD TRACK & FIELD

COACH: Eric Jensen, 3rd year
2015 SEASON: The Stanfield boys finished 15th at state last year. The girls didn't score any points. The Tigers took seven individuals and both girls relays teams to state, and Carlos Flores had their highest finish in sixth in the 3,000 meters.
LOSSES: (Boys) Milan Davchevski, Hunter Braithwaite, Uber Hernandez, Elvis Lockwood; (Girls) Cassidy Hopper
KEY RETURNERS: (Girls) Bailey Watson, sr.; Anna Lemmon, jr.; Larissa Castellanos, sr.; Shyanne Connell, sr.; (Boys) Carlos Flores, sr.; Trevor Shockman, jr.

After winning the 2A girls district track title last season, third-year head coach is expecting big things. "This team is gonna be absolutely lights out," he said of his girls. "Winning the (district) title last year was contagious." Jensen described his girls as "loaded" with four state participants returning plus a handful of really good athletes and some transfers. Larissa Castellanos, who placed in the high jump and helped Stanfield's relay teams to top ten finishes, is trying the pole vault this year and matched the school record on her third day jumping. Bailey Watson is looking "much stronger" after qualifying in the 200 meters, and distance runners Anna Lemmon, Chelsey Lemmon and Jenny Garcia are "ready to tear it up," Jensen said. Also joining the team is year are new track additions Britton Braithwaite and Natalia Esquivel who will both throw, and Hermiston transfer Maya



Stanfield's Bailey Watson competes at a track meet in Umatilla last season.

EO file photo/Sam Barbee

Gadsden, who Jensen said was the best girls high jumper he's coached. The boys side is down, Jensen said, in terms of numbers. State placer Carlos Flores is still around and looking good. Jensen expects him to once again qualify for the state meet in Eugene, and perhaps finished in the top three or four. Idaho transfer Justin Shelby will spring and long jump, and Jensen is excited about him, as well. "I have 11 boys this year, so we're down on that side," Jensen said. "But as far as quality, we got some really good kids."

2016 SCHEDULE

Mar. 17	at Pendleton	Noon
April 2	at Sherman	11 a.m.
April 8	at Riverside	Noon
April 9	Dick Horyna Invite	10 a.m.
April 14	at Heppner	11 a.m.
April 15	at Pendleton	3 p.m.
April 23	at Salem	11 a.m.
April 23	at Union	11 a.m.
April 26	at Weston-McEwen	TBD
April 30	at Condon/Wheeler	11 a.m.
May 6	at Baker City	11:30 p.m.
May 13	at Districts (Athena)	TBD

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