

Outlaws boys tennis returns strong core

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The boys tennis team return seven players to their squad this year. Sisters lost six seniors to graduation last spring, had one key player transfer, and a couple more didn't return for the 2015 season. With the loss of nine players, it will be somewhat of a rebuilding year for the Outlaws.

Seven returning seniors, Billy Biggers, Shawn Horton, Ethan Stengel, Connor Schaab, Andrew Stengel, Ben Johnson, Gus Georgyfalvy and junior Michael Commins will be the nucleus of this year's squad.

Shawn Horton and Ethan Stengel look to be the Outlaws No. 1 doubles team. The duo has played together under Coach Bim Gander for the past three years. Unfortunately, Stengel broke his thumb, and won't be able to practice for at least another week.

At the district tournament the past two years, Horton and Stengel have fallen just one round short of going to state. Gander is hopeful the team will make it to state this year, but noted it is questionable due to Stengel's injury. Stengel hopes to play with a hard cast on his left wrist, but Gander stated that the cast will effect Ethan's serve and back-hand.

Billy Biggers and Connor Schaab will most likely play No. 2 doubles.

Both Biggers and Schaab switched from baseball to play tennis for the first time last year. Schaab is an imposing player at the net due to his height (6 feet 3 inches).

Gander noted that Biggers and Schaab are

both good athletes and the most-improved doubles team from last season.

Andrew Stengel, Johnson and Georgyfalvy will most likely see action as experienced seniors somewhere in the line-up.

Commins is a three-year varsity starter and will most likely play at the No. 2 singles spot. Michael is the tallest player on the squad at 6 feet 4 inches.

"We hope to add power to his (Commins) game to compliment the steadiness he's shown in years past," said Gander.

Senior Colin Reinert, a foreign exchange student from Germany, will join the Outlaws this year and play No. 1 singles.

"Colin is our most experienced player," said Gander. "The majority of the top male tennis players on the professional circuit all come from Europe, and we are fortunate to have a young German player on our team this year."

Seniors Kennedy Hall and Gabe Willitts will join the team as first-year tennis players, as well as junior Pierce Wehrle. Four sophomores,

Jonathan Gurney, Josh Kizziar, Anson Ricker and Sean Willitts will round out the new players.

"These new players are showing signs of early promise," said Gander. "It's nice to have some younger players on the team since we have so many seniors."

Gander told *The Nugget* that the strong core of players they have back from last year, along with Reinert, should give them a very competitive team again this year.

Although the Outlaws look to be competitive, their competition has improved also. Henley looks to be strong this year, North Bend is always a tennis powerhouse, and Klamath Union has a couple of very good young players.

"Given the strengths of the other district teams, we'll have to perform at the highest level this year to duplicate our No. 2 finish at district last year," said Gander.

The Outlaws will open their season with a three-way match at Madras on Tuesday, March 17, and will compete against Madras and Redmond.

ODFW plans new youth fishing pond

An abandoned fish hatchery site near Camp Sherman could find new life providing youth fishing opportunities under a plan being proposed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The agency will discuss its plans to create a small fishing pond on the 15-acre property it owns on Spring Creek at a public meeting on Tuesday, March 17, at the Camp Sherman Community Hall. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

According to Jen Luke, ODFW fish biologist in Bend, the one-acre pond would be stocked with trout and open only to anglers 17 years old and younger.

"We think a small, youth-only fishing pond would strike the right balance between creating a new fishing opportunity while maintaining the natural environment of the site," she said.

The pond could also be used for smolt acclimation and egg hatchboxes for Chinook salmon.

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— Coach Bim Gander



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