

Neil Fendall named Outlaws football coach

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

Neil Fendall was recently chosen as Sisters High School's new head football coach. Fendall comes to the position with over 20 years experience at both the high school and collegiate levels, and has quite a list of accomplishments under his belt.

Fendall played free safety at Portland State University (PSU) 1992-1996, and graduated with a bachelor's degree from PSU, and a Master of Art in teaching from Concordia University in Portland. From there, he immediately started to coach.

From 1997 through 2006, Fendall held assistant coaching positions at Milwaukie, Grants Pass, and Oregon City high schools, and always coached more than one sport. Neil coached high school basketball, track, youth baseball and softball.

"In my first year of teaching, I coached three sports and was the ASB director," said Fendall. "It was a nightmare of a year. It's a good thing I wasn't married then."

From 2006-2012, he was an instructional associate, the assistant football coach, and the strength and conditioning coach at Linfield College in McMinnville. Neil was named the Division 3 National Strength Coach of the Year in 2012.

In 2012, the Fendalls moved to California, where

Neil was the assistant coach for defensive backs and also the special teams coordinator at Cal Poly University in San Luis Obispo.

Fendall told *The Nugget* that the move was a good opportunity for professional growth and also offered a pretty nice place to live.

Several highlights mark Fendall's coaching career thus far, the first of which was to help take his Grants Pass team to the state quarterfinals in 1999.

Several great things happened while Neil was at Linfield College. In 2009, the team made it to the National semifinals. Linfield was the NW Conference Champion in 2009, 2010, and 2011. In 2012, they were the Big Sky Conference Champion, with appearances in the FCS (Football Bowl Subdivision) playoffs.

Fendall is excited about his new coaching role and said that his coaching philosophy is rather basic.

"It has to be fun, it has to be fast, and we have to be as efficient as possible with our time," said Fendall.

Neil also shared his goal for the Outlaws football squad.

"My goal is that every kid looks back on their football experience and finds value in participating with their peers in shared struggle. Rewards come in different forms, but they never come by taking the easy path. We are often taught to take the easier, more

convenient path, and I want my players to understand that the easy way is not good for them, and there can be no authentic reward by choosing it. True reward is found through earning it. Win the lottery tomorrow and tell me if you're fulfilled five years from now ... the odds say you'll be broke and depressed."

Although Fendall has personal football experience and years of coaching experience, he said that no coaching job is easy.

"Every level, sport, age group and gender provides its own challenges," said Fendall. "My past experience has helped shape who I am, but it doesn't make my job at Sisters any easier. I will learn just as much here as I have anywhere else. It will be equally challenging and full of growth. We'll have a good time with it, though!"

Current Athletic Director Gary Thorson (Tim Roth has taken a teaching position in Germany) is thrilled that Fendall will be taking over the reins. Thorson said, "The Outlaw football program is in

great hands with Neil taking the reins. His résumé and accomplishments speak for themselves, but more importantly, he is the type of coach his players will respect and play hard for. He is not only a great football coach, but he is a great educator of young people, who makes everyone around him better. He is the type of coach and teacher I would want my own kids to play and learn under, and we are blessed to get him in this role."


Neil is married to Lynne, and they have lived in Sisters since the summer of 2015. Their move to Sisters was based on what they wanted for their kids, a son Taylor who is a freshman, and two daughters, Hannah and Gracie, sixth- and third-grade respectively.

"It was time for us to settle down, and this area and school district provides everything

we want and/or need," said Neil. "We researched the school and felt the combination of academic rigor, arts and music, as well as the athletic programs were an excellent match for our family. The flight science was a huge part of our choice, as Taylor is dying to be a pilot. Programs like the Americana Project were also a difference-maker for us. We enjoy the small town and small schools and hope that we can stick around Sisters and see our kids graduate from Sisters High."



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Neil Fendall is the new Outlaws coach.



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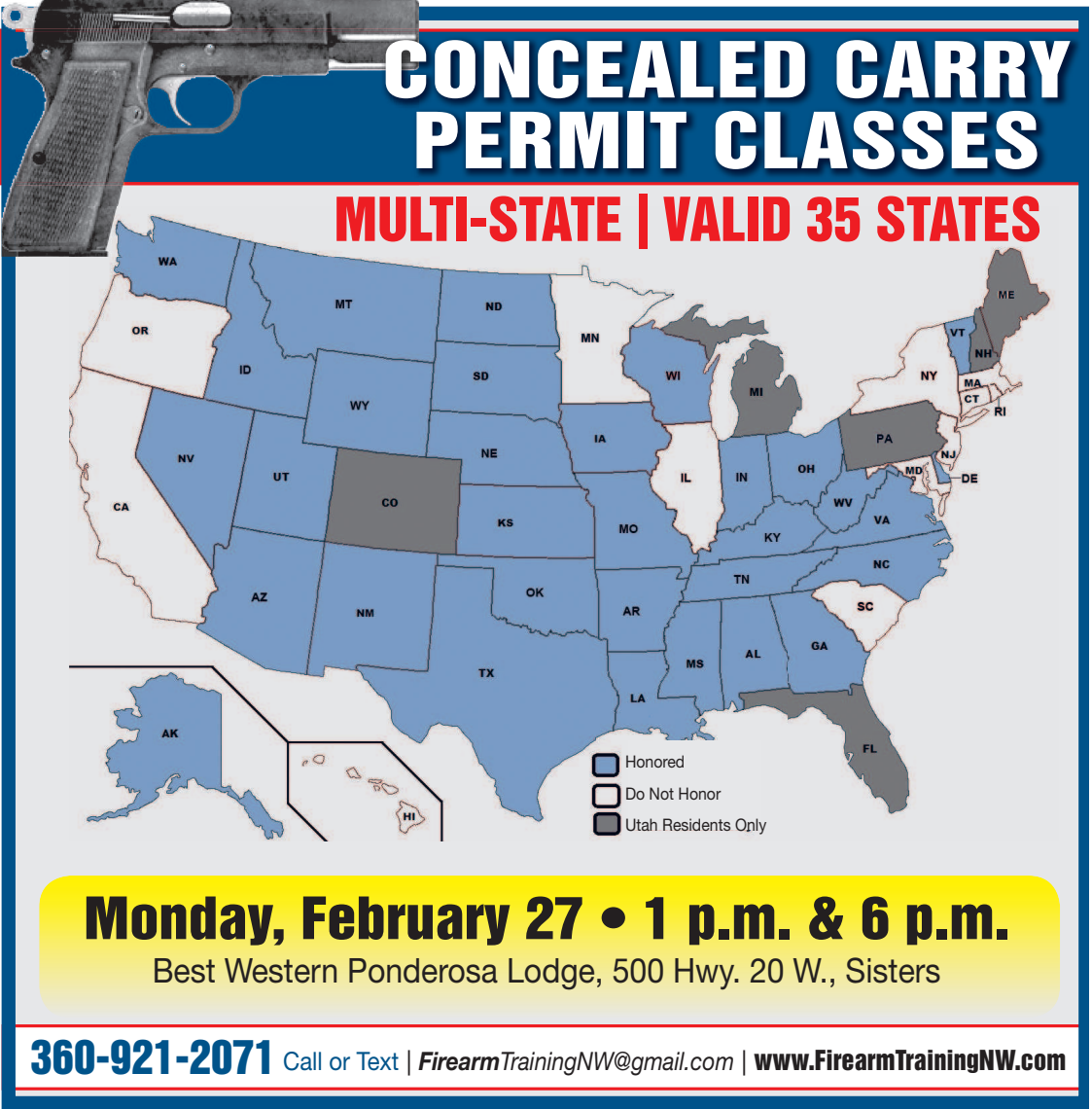


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