

SHS hopes to boost sports participation

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

Fall sports at Sisters High School got underway officially on Monday, August 16, and Athletic Director Gary Thorson has a message for all high school students:

“Get involved!”

The official Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) fall sports season, which includes cross-country, cheer, football, volleyball, and soccer, is scheduled to be back to normal after more than a year of canceled and truncated seasons due to COVID-19.

During that span, participation plummeted. Thorson wants to reverse that trend.

According to Thorson, turnout for sports during the pandemic took a plunge, and he wants sports rosters filled to the brim this year.

“It’s not too late for kids to join teams,” he said. “The sooner the better obviously, but all the teams can take on kids over the next few weeks.”

“We are very excited to have our fall sports returning for our athletes, coaches, and fans. As we stand right now we are back to normal in terms of scheduling and there are no mask requirements for our athletes while they are competing, and we are grateful for that.”

Registration for fall sports can be completed on the high school athletics page by clicking on the “Register Here” button for the Family I.D. portal.

To encourage participation, pay-to-play fees for the school year have been waived for in-district athletes, so there is no cost to join a team.

“It’s the best deal in town,”

said Thorson.

All freshman and junior athletes must get a sports physical to be cleared to practice, according to Thorson, as well as sophomores and seniors who did not take part in a sport last year.

Thorson says he feels confident and excited about the coaches for the fall season.

One new face to Outlaw athletics is Clayton Hall, who will lead the football program. Hall will be assisted by Hayden Hudson, Eric Beckwith, and Randy Gardner. Hall takes over from last year’s co-coaches, Thorson and Neil Fendall. Fendall took a teaching position at Bend’s new Caldera High School, where he has also been installed as the head football coach.

The first game of the season is September 3, before school starts, and Hall wants athletes to be reminded that they need to have taken part in at least nine practices in order to play.

Hall, who will be teaching physical education at Sisters High, spent last season coaching at Ridgeview and spent the previous three seasons at Neah-Kah-Nie High School in Rockaway Beach.

Charlie Kanzig will be back in the saddle as the coach for cross-country with assistance from Sarah Thorsett and volunteer Dennis Dempsey. Kanzig held the position from 1995-2013 before taking a leave to work internationally and returning as an assistant to Josh Nordell in 2015.

Rory Rush returns for her fifth year as head volleyball coach. She is assisted by Katherine Bradbury and Jennifer Noble.

Brian Holden will start his fifth year as head coach of girls soccer and is assisted by David Rowell.

Sisters Middle School teacher Jeff Hussmann is in his third year at the helm of the boys soccer program and is assisted by Roger Alvarez and Kevin Eckert.

The cheer squad is also beginning the fall season under the tutelage of Anne Christmas, who is in her second year as coach. She has been involved with the program for five years.

Thorson is committed to doing everything possible to ensure a successful athletic program.

“Our kids deserve a great experience and we are going to make that happen for them,” he said.

Practice schedule

Boys Soccer: Monday-Friday; 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Girls Soccer: Monday-Friday 6:30 to 8 p.m. and Wednesdays and Fridays, 8 to 10 a.m.

Football: Week one practice is daily 8 to 10 a.m. and 5 to 7:30 p.m. Contact Coach Hall at clayton.hall@ssd6.org for the full schedule.

Volleyball: Contact Rory Rush at volleyballrush@gmail.com.

Cross-Country: 8 to 9:30 a.m. Meet at the track.

Cheer: M-W-F from 3:45 to 5:30 p.m. Meet in the commons.

MUSIC: Irish music filled hearts, pantry, and nonprofit’s coffer

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coolest venue the band has ever played.

The band, featuring musicians from Sisters, Redmond, and Bend, offered up songs like “The Fields of Athenry” and “Galway Bay.” Michael Long played uilleann pipes, or Irish bagpipe, much of the evening. He also played percussion. At one point he brought out what Lundgren called “the cosmic drain-pipe” — a low-D penny-whistle — and played a fine tune.

Local musician Michele Sims delighted on her flute and took a turn on button accordion. Another local, Jeff Sims, played guitar. Vocal duties were shared by Amanda Wrenn, who also played fiddle, and Jason Herzog, who also played bouzouki and whistle. They harmonized on several numbers, and closed the evening with a goodbye song.

Then McGrady got on the mic for an unexpected announcement: an anonymous donor in the crowd had made a last-minute offer to match all the donations made

to Warfighter Outfitters that night — up to \$5,000.

“Cort Horner and I counted the cash donations,” said McGrady later. They counted \$560 with a promise of another \$100, “plus matching funds from the anonymous donor.”

Horner said of the event, “It was great! It’s always a privilege just to share with people about the organization and our mission. The anonymous donor coming forward was a huge surprise but not unprecedented. So many people have family members who are veterans and really understand how valuable resources like Warfighter Outfitters are to their reintegration into society and continued well-being after separation.”

He said the organization “truly appreciated” being the recipient of the community garden’s fundraising.

“At an average cost of under \$20 per veteran for our outings — free to the vets, of course — we really make our funds go a long way,” he said.

Music in the Garden offered “a beautiful setting, wonderful and generous attendees, perfect weather, and great music,” Horner said. “What more could you ask for?”

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