



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Gus Ramsden, right, slides safely into third base for the La Grande Legacy Ford Legends during the title game of the Legacy Legends Wood Bat Battle Saturday in American Legion baseball action in La Grande.

Legends’ tournament title features three
DRAMATIC VICTORIES

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The American Legion’s La Grande Legacy Ford Legends 17U baseball team showed a flair for the dramatic during the Legacy Legends Wood Bat Battle this weekend at Pioneer Park.

Three times in four games, La Grande allowed the tying run in the top of the seventh inning.

And all three times the Legends found a way to earn a walk-off victory.

It culminated with La Grande winning its home tournament by topping Pendleton, 6-5, in Saturday afternoon’s championship game on a game-ending sacrifice fly by Isaac Zamora in the bottom of the seventh.

“This group is picking up where the guys before them have always been,” Head Coach Parker McKinley said of the team’s never-quit approach. “It’s something that we’ve always taken pride in. We’re going to go until the last out is made. We’re not going to quit. We’re going to expect to win every game.”

La Grande did just that in the tournament, going a perfect 3-0 in pool play before winning the title game of the four-team tournament. On Friday the Legends beat Pendleton, 4-3, in eight innings and topped Baker, 8-1. They finished pool play with an 11-10 win over Hermiston.

Hermiston beat Baker, 8-5, in the third-place game.

“This weekend we really got our bats going, and our pitchers worked really hard,” infielder Justin Frederick said. “We had guys going deep almost every game. The defense just made plays. We backed them up pretty well.”

It wasn’t easy for the Legends in three of those four games. McKinley, though, attributed the seventh-inning comebacks La Grande faced to those teams sharing La Grande’s fight-to-the-finish approach.

“(We were) playing against teams that were battling to the end. It was a good weekend of teams getting after each other,” McKinley said.

Pendleton rallied twice against La Grande, including in the title game.

La Grande starting pitcher Wyatt Earp, who pitched a complete game for the win, got two quick outs to open the seventh inning with La Grande up 5-4. But a

two-out infield single and an error allowed the tying run to score.

That hardly fazed the Legends.

“Our team just has a lot of character, and we never give up,” Zamora said. “If something goes bad, we’ll always have other guys picking each other up.”

Gus Ramsden earned a walk to open the bottom of the seventh, stole second, then moved to third base on a wild pitch.

Zamora then came through with a deep fly ball to drive Ramsden in and win the game and the tournament.

“I was just thinking (get a) good ball to elevate in the air and get deep so he can tag up and get the game-winning run,” Zamora said.

La Grande took a 3-1 lead in the second inning on an RBI groundout by Tyler Malone and an RBI single by Flynn Nave, and extended the advantage to 5-1 in the third on RBI singles by Payton Cooper and Malone.

Earp allowed three earned runs on six hits with two strikeouts and four walks. His was the latest of what McKinley called four good efforts by La Grande’s starting pitchers in the tournament.

“I would say Gus Ramsden, Isaac Zamora, Brody Kincade and Wyatt Earp, all four of them came and threw solid games and threw a lot of innings for their team,” the coach said. “(They) kept us in games, helped us compete and win.”

FRIDAY

La Grande 4, Pendleton 3: The Legends won their first game of the tournament in walk-off fashion after surrendering the tying runs.

Ramsden had thrown six shutout innings and went back to work in the seventh with a 3-0 lead, but Pendleton scored three times in the seventh inning to tie and ultimately send the game to extra innings.

In the bottom of the eighth, Frederick hit a leadoff single, stole second, moved to third on a bunt and scored the winning run when Malone reached on an error.

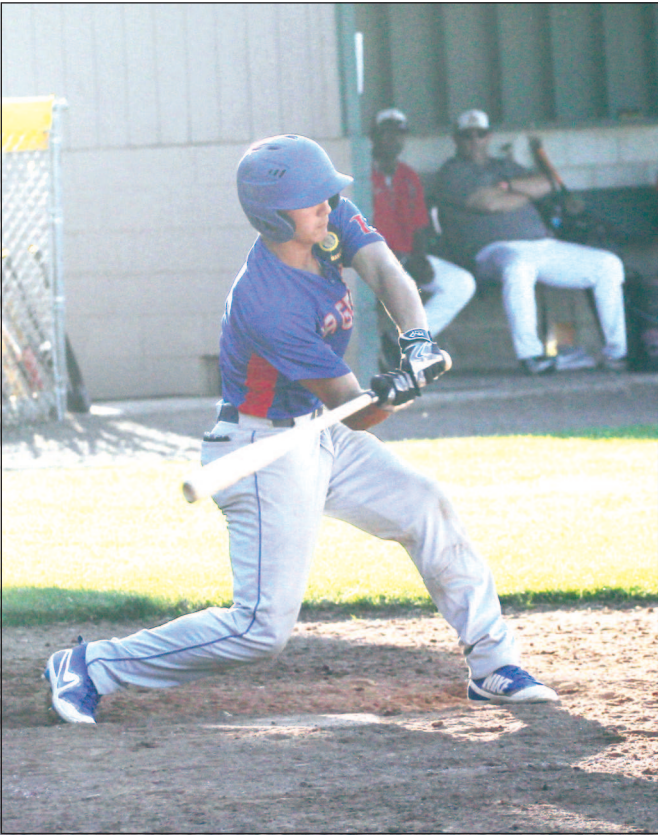
Daniel Rogers pitched an inning of relief for the win. Ramsden took a hard-luck no decision, allowing three runs on four hits with three walks and six strikeouts.

La Grande 8, Baker 1: Zamora and Justin Comfort both had three RBIs, and



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Justin Frederick charges a ground ball during Saturday’s tournament championship game.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Isaac Zamora hits the game- and tournament-winning sacrifice fly in the seventh inning against Pendleton.

La Grande broke open its late game Friday with a six-run third inning.

Zamora hit a two-run double to start the scoring in the decisive inning, and Comfort finished it with a two-run single for an 8-0 lead.

Zamora was also strong on the mound, allowing just one run on four hits in six innings with a walk and four strikeouts.

SATURDAY

La Grande 11, Hermiston 10: Frederick hit a bases-loaded RBI single in the bottom of the seventh to boost La Grande to a win

after the Legends surrendered a five-run lead.

Riley Miller and Riley Gregg both hit RBI singles during a five-run first inning. La Grande scored four more in the fifth, polished off by a two-run single by Blaine Shaw, to go up 9-4.

But Hermiston scored four runs in the sixth inning to get within 9-8, then evened the score at 10-all in the seventh.

Kincade settled down after a three-run first to pitch five innings, allowing four earned runs on eight hits with four walks and three strikeouts.

Italy’s Molinari
beats loaded
field to claim
British Open title

By Doug Ferguson
The Associated Press

There is nothing flashy about Francesco Molinari except for the players he keeps beating.

He was a forgotten figure when he teed off in the final round of the British Open, mainly because he was playing with Tiger Woods, and because of the star power around him. Jordan Spieth was tied for the lead. Rory McIlroy was one shot behind Molinari.

“If someone was expecting a charge, they probably weren’t expecting it from me,” he said. “But it’s been the same the whole of my career.”

His name etched into the silver claret jug should help with that.

Now that’s flashy.

And it wasn’t an accident. The 35-year-old Italian was the hottest player in golf in the two months leading up to the British Open with two victories and two runner-up finishes. All he did at the BMW PGA Championship was go head-to-head with McIlroy in the final round and beat him by two. A month later, he shot 62 in the final round to win the Quicken Loans National, with tournament host Woods finishing fourth and presenting Molinari the trophy.

Carnoustie tempered some of that confidence.

Reputed to be the toughest links in golf, especially in the 20 mph gusts that finally arrived Sunday, Molinari stopped playing the Dunhill Links Championship because that one stop on the three-course rotation ate him up.

“I got beaten up around here a few times already in the past,” Molinari said. “I didn’t particularly enjoy that feeling.”

And yet there he was in the final round, with major champions in front of him and behind him and Woods — the biggest one of them all — next to him in a final round so wild that seven players had a share of the lead at various times, and six players were tied on the back nine.

McIlroy and former U.S.

Open champion Justin Rose made a charge. Woods and Spieth were among five contenders to make double bogeys.

In the midst of such great theater, Molinari made his biggest move by not going anywhere at all. He opened with 13 pars, including the 12th and 13th holes as Woods lost the lead with a double bogey and a bogey.

Molinari took the lead for the first time with a two-putt birdie on the par-5 14th. He made one more birdie on the final hole by hitting a drive that narrowly avoided a pot bunker, leaving him a lob wedge to 5 feet for a birdie that secured his place in history as Italy’s first major champion.

“That putt on the last I’ll never forget,” he said.

Molinari closed with a 69, significant for two reasons. He was the only player from the final two groups to break par, and he didn’t make a bogey over the last 37 holes.

“He’s been playing unbelievable golf. He’s been working his butt off,” Spieth said. “I see him in the gym all the time, going through his routine, grinding on the range, doing his own stuff. It truly is hard work that paid off for Francesco. I’m certainly happy for him. I’ve watched this through the PGA Tour this year day in and day out, seeing him work as hard as anyone else.”

Solid off the tee, suspect at times on the green, Molinari first showed his potential in a World Golf Championship in Shanghai in 2010 when Lee Westwood made his debut at No. 1 in the world. Westwood beat everyone else by nine shots in the HSBC Champions and lost by one to Molinari.

That was the second win of his career for Molinari, and remained his biggest win against a strong field until he arrived at Carnoustie.

Molinari, whose older brother Edoardo won the 2005 U.S. Amateur and played with him in the 2010 Ryder Cup, comes from a country known more for soccer and skiing than golf.

Thatcher’s

ACE

Hardware

& La Grande

ACE

Hardware

SALE \$9.99

-\$2 with

YOU PAY \$7.99

Cutter® Backyard Bug Control, 32 Oz.

7130057

Limit 2 at this price

PREVENTS BUGS UP TO 2 MONTHS

Black Flag® Wasp, Hornet & Yellow Jacket Killer or Foaming Wasp & Hornet Killer, 14 Oz. 7355761, 7496904, 7615127,

Limit 2 at this price

SALE \$3.99

-\$2 with

YOU PAY \$1.99 ea

SALE \$12.99

-\$3 with

YOU PAY \$9.99

Ortho® Home Defense® Insect Killer

1.1 Gal. 7508088

Limit 2 at this price

Now through July 31st

Thatcher’s Ace Hardware

2200 Resort St, Baker City • 541-523-3371

La Grande Ace Hardware

2212 Island Ave, La Grande • 541-605-0152

Monday-Friday 7-6 • Saturday 8-6 • Sunday 9-5

photos for illustration only