

Stevens signs with Idaho

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Cove senior Tim Stevens has always loved running — possibly even further back than he can remember.

“My dad said when I was learning to walk I took two steps and then I was running around the coffee table,” he said.

While Stevens jokingly said he cannot confirm the validity of that statement, his lifelong love for the sport has translated into an impressive high school career that has seen him win six individual state championships in track and cross country.

And his career is set to last much longer, as on Jan. 28 he has signed a letter of intent to run for NCAA Division I University of Idaho.

“It was a combination of things,” Stevens, who was also considering Wyoming, Portland and Gonzaga, said of the choice to join the Vandals. “They were very supportive. I was impressed with everything I saw academically and athletically. Really it just came down to how I felt after thinking and praying about it, and I had the best feeling about University of Idaho.”

He intends to study mechanical engineering at U of I, saying he was impressed by the labs and shops in the school’s engineering department on his visit. He also said mechanical engineering has a broad scope, which will give him more options in what to study.

Stevens will be joining both the track and cross country teams as arguably the best distance runner to graduate from Cove, which he’ll do this spring. (Alex Graffunder, a state champion runner who signed with University of Oregon a year ago, was at Cove for two years before transferring to Union.)

Stevens has claimed individual state championships in cross country for Union/Cove’s coopera-



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

Cove senior Tim Stevens, who is a six-time state champion, signed a letter of intent in late January to run at Division I University of Idaho.

He was a sophomore and a senior and was second as a junior. His time last fall of 15:33 matched a state record set by Graf-funder a year earlier (Graf-funder’s record was in Class 3A/2A/1A, Stevens’ in 2A/1A). The time was also the second best in the state regardless of classification, topped only by 5A runner Evan Holland, of Ashland.

Stevens has been just as good for the Leopards’ track team. He has won the 1A state championship in the 1,500-meter and 3,000-meter runs each of the last two years, and his time of 4:00.40 in the 1,500 at last year’s state championship was a 1A state meet record. The 3,000 state meet re-

cord could be in danger this spring, too, as he was within five seconds of the mark a year ago.

He may have been running circles around coffee tables at a young age, but he didn’t transition to running track until moving to Cove in the seventh grade. Prior to that, he spent a lot of time playing soccer.

But Stevens’ current teammate, Jack Silveira, helped turn him on to the sport during those middle school days.

“He encouraged me to go out for track,” he said, adding soccer wasn’t in the picture at Cove due to the lack of a program. “(I) realized I like to run. People were telling me to go out for track.”

It was around that time, too, that Stevens, who is a Christian, began to look at his running ability as a gift from God, and one he should put to use.

“I don’t see any explanation other than it came from (God),” he said. “Everything I have is a gift from God.”

He didn’t want to waste it, either.

“I heard other people talk about how they’ve been good at something, not used it and then lost it,” Stevens said.

His ability to use that gift was tested during middle school and into his freshman year when he developed Osgood-Schlatter disease, which is defined on orthoinfo.aaos.org as

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LHS baseball drops three in Pride Classic

■ Union/Cove softball team, meanwhile, splits a pair of games in John Day

Observer staff

The La Grande Tigers baseball team dropped its first three games of the Pride Classic Monday and Tuesday. All three games were played in either Phoenix, Arizona, or one of the city’s suburbs.

SANTA MARGARITA (CALIF.) 10, LA GRANDE 6

A late rally by La Grande fell short in its opener at the Pride Classic as it fell to Santa Margarita.

The Tigers never led, and were down 6-2 entering the bottom of the sixth before staging a two-out rally. A walk and two hit batters loaded the bases, and Parker Robinson followed with a triple to drive in all three runners and make it a one-run game.

Santa Margarita, though, put the game out of reach with four runs in the seventh inning. Wyatt Earp hit an RBI single in the bottom of the seventh, but the Tigers drew no closer.

La Grande managed just three hits — one each from Robinson, Earp and Brody Kincaide — but took advantage of 10 walks and two errors by Santa Margarita to stay in the game.

Isaac Zamora pitched four innings to take the loss, allowing five runs — four earned — on six hits. He walked two batters and struck out four.

CHATFIELD (COLO.) 10, LA GRANDE 4

Chatfield scored six straight runs — two in the fourth inning and four in the fifth — to break a 3-3 tie and pull away for a win Tuesday morning.

La Grande scored three times in the third on an error, a passed ball and an RBI single by Devin Bell to tie the score before Chatfield took off. Bell added a second RBI single in the fifth inning for the Tigers.

La Grande hurt itself with five errors that led to seven unearned runs. Robinson pitched 3-1/3 innings, allowing five runs, three earned, on six hits with three walks and four strikeouts.

GREEN MOUNTAIN (COLO.) 9, LA GRANDE 4

A seven-run fifth inning was La Grande’s undoing in its second game Tuesday as Green Mountain rallied to knock off La Grande.

The Tigers had taken a 3-0 lead in the third inning when Justin Fred-

erick scored on an error and Zamora hit a two-run home run.

But Green Mountain responded in a big way with the fifth-inning onslaught highlighted by a three-run triple by Danny Wisor for a 6-3 lead. The lead eventually reached 9-3 before Casey Cornford hit an RBI single in the bottom of the sixth for La Grande to wrap up the scoring.

Daniel Rogers pitched 1-1/3 innings in relief, allowing six runs on four hits.

La Grande (2-5 overall) wraps up play at the Pride Classic today against George Washington (Calif.).

Union/Cove softball splits two at John Day

The Union/Cove Ladycats softball team went 1-1 in its first two games at the Grant Union Spring Break Invite Tuesday in John Day, defeating Sutherlin, 10-0, but losing to Clatskanie, 11-1.

UNION/COVE 10, SUTHERLIN 0

Callie Glenn tossed a two-hit shutout with 10 strikeouts and was one of seven players to drive in runs as Union/Cove rolled over the Bulldogs.

The Ladycats, already up 4-0, broke the game open with six runs in the fifth. Taylar Daggett hit an RBI single, Kylie Marriott followed with a two-run double and Kylie Bruce added an RBI double to make it 8-0. Kaylee Lantis then had an RBI groundout and Kaylin Nowak hit an RBI single to enforce the 10-run mercy rule.

Marriott and Lantis both had two RBIs, and Glenn, Daggett and Bruce each scored twice.

CLATSKANIE 11, UNION/COVE 1

The Ladycats managed just two hits against the Tigers, the top-ranked team in Class 3A.

Clatskanie, which hit two home runs, jumped out to a 5-0 first-inning lead. Union/Cove pulled within 5-1 in the third when Glenn scored on an error, but the Tigers responded with a run in the fourth and five in the fifth, capping the rally with Shelby Blodgett’s two-run single.

Glenn allowed 11 runs — eight earned — on nine hits in five innings.

Union/Cove (2-1 overall) finishes play in John Day today against Rainier. ■

Dodd wins heptathlon at Forest Grove

Observer staff

Paige Dodd claimed the top spot and Olivia Lane was third to lead a trio of athletes on the Eastern Oregon women’s track and field team in the heptathlon Monday and Tuesday at the Boxer Combined Event in Forest Grove.

Dodd, who was an all-American in the pentathlon during the indoor season, scored 4,503 points to win the seven-discipline event. She finished ahead of Corban’s Valerie Schmidt, who was second with 4,383 points, and Lane placed third with 4,247 points.

Dodd was first or second in three events, winning the high jump with a mark of 5-feet-3-1/4, and taking second in both the 100-meter hurdles (15.10 seconds) and the long jump (16-feet-11-1/8). Her highest-scoring event was the 100 hurdles, where she brought in 828 points. Dodd’s effort in the high jump, which netted her 747 points, gave her a lead she never relinquished.

Dodd also achieved marks of 32-feet-1-3/4 in the shot put and 99-feet-6-1/4 in the javelin, and times of 27.07 in the 200 and 2:35.97 in the 800.

Lane hung between fourth and ninth throughout the event, but surged to third after winning the 800, the final event, with a time of 2:22.25 and scoring 793 points. Lane’s other top effort was in the high jump, where she finished in a tie for third with a height of 5-feet-1-1/4.

Lane added times of 16.27 in the 100 hurdles and 27.53 in the 200. She also had marks of 31-feet-4-1/4 in the shot put, 15-feet-9 in the long jump and 88-feet-5-1/4 in the javelin.

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