



Contributed photo by Amanda Welch
Swimming blocks installed at Veterans Memorial Pool through donations from area businesses are shown with the newly-added chocks on top, which provide better footing and a better push-off point for swimmers as they dive in to start a race. The chocks were made available due to a grant from the Wildhorse Foundation.

Footing improved for members of club, high school swim teams

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Thanks to donations from several area businesses and a grant from the Wildhorse Foundation, members of the La Grande Swim Club and La Grande High School swim teams have secured better footing for the start of their races.

A major splash already was made last fall when business donations allowed for the replacement of the starting blocks at Veterans Memorial Pool — the home site for LGSC and LHS teams. A final piece is set to be put in place with the Wildhorse grant, which allowed for the purchase of angled chocks for swimmers to push off of when they start a race.

“The club was able to buy one to try out,” swim club head coach Amanda Welch said of the chock sets, which she added are about \$700. “We asked Wildhorse to put in a grant. They very generously did.”

The Wildhorse grant provided an additional \$5,417.65 for the purchase of seven more chock sets, one for each of the blocks at the starting line of the pool.

The chocks, Welch said, are similar to starting blocks for a track runner in that they allow for a better push-off point for swimmers when they dive in to start a race. Welch said they have attended more and more meets that have them.

“The past few years they have started to get more popular,” she said. “A lot of the meets we go

BLOCK SPONSORS

Listed are the businesses or individuals who donated nearly \$24,000 for the swimming blocks:

- Mike Becker Construction
- Koza Family Dentistry
- Premiere Auto Body
- CB Construction
- Cornerstone Dentistry
- Connected Professional Accountant LLC
- Connect Wealth Solutions
- Brad & Amanda Welch
- Dot Ann Ricker Estate
- Combe Wellness Center
- In Remembrance of Jake Watterson

to — Walla Walla, Boise, Portland area — a lot of the meets we go to use those now. A lot of our swimmers weren’t prepared for them.”

She said if an athlete isn’t used to them, that “it’s hard to use them to your full advantage....It takes practice diving off the blocks with that.”

Before the chocks were purchased, an effort was started to replace the starting blocks at the pool, which Welch said were about 20 years old.

“They got really slick when the kids would get on there and (are) not quite as safe as (the new) blocks are now,” she said, “and they were smaller. The blocks were really small for a teenager to get up there (and) use them.”

She said the process of getting new blocks took about three years.

“It took us a while to decide what blocks would be best for us and our facilities,” she said.

Club members then began to reach out to busi-

nesses, several of which donated funding to help provide the roughly \$3,000 per block for the platform itself, non-skid material, assembly and freight, a total cost of \$23,967.

“We ended up getting a really fast response once we finally started asking,” Welch said. “Some of the families are involved in the club too.”

Swim Club member Kennedy Kruse also spoke of the benefits the new chocks would provide.

“Considering the wider usage of these chocks among other swim facilities, specifically at larger meets, they will allow La Grande’s swimmers to be better prepared for starts and more familiar with the equipment at out-of-town meets,” she said. “Our local meets will also benefit as more swimmers will have a heightened interest in attending them.”

The upper-end blocks, Welch hopes, will be a draw for athletes out of the area to want to attend meets in La Grande.

“We really wanted to replace our blocks and have good blocks for hosting meets as well,” she said.

The upgrade is the last that will be needed for a while, Welch added.

“A few years back we got lane lines for our swim meets so we could swap out with what the pool uses, and we have a score-board system,” she said.

“We don’t have plans to upgrade anything else anytime soon.”

Oregon’s Ionescu looks forward to pro career in WNBA

By Anne M. Peterson
The Associated Press

PORTLAND — With the spotlight on her growing ever brighter, Sabrina Ionescu is aware she’s becoming her own brand.

One of the most decorated players in women’s college basketball, Ionescu is about to go pro with the WNBA draft coming up Friday. She’s widely expected to be selected No. 1 by the New York Liberty.

She’s also being courted by shoe companies for what could be an unprecedented endorsement deal. On top of it all, she’s finishing her master’s degree, fittingly in advertising and brand responsibility.

Ionescu said Oregon

has prepared her to understand how much impact she can have in the community and on women’s basketball.

“It’s going to be a learning process of just going into a bigger market with so many things going on. And I think I’m just going to have to find my niche and find what’s important to me and what’s going to help me — and our team — and kind of use that to the best of my ability,” she said on a video call with reporters Tuesday.

Ionescu, who won AP All-American honors three times, shattered the NCAA career triple-double mark (for both men and women) with 26 and became the first

player in college history to have 2,000 points, 1,000 rebounds and 1,000 assists. She helped the Ducks win the Pac-12 regular-season and tournament titles as a senior this season while averaging 17.5 points, 9.1 assists and 8.6 rebounds. She was named the conference’s most outstanding player of the tournament and of the regular season.

The 5-foot-11 guard was also named AP Player of the Year and won the Wooden Award, the Naismith Trophy and Wade Trophy.

WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert will announce the draft picks on ESPN while Ionescu will be at home in Walnut Creek, California.



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BILL MILLER FOR SHERIFF



Though I worked for a different agency, I worked alongside Bill many times during my 25 year career in law enforcement. We partnered together on several occasions during major crime investigations with the multi-agency Union/Wallowa County Major Crime Team, the Multi-Disciplinary Team and the Union/Wallowa County Drug Task Force.

I have always known Bill Miller to be fair, consistent and honest. His loyalty to the citizens of Union County is commendable and unwavering. I witnessed Bill rise within the Sheriff’s Office to be a leader and was very impressed how he truly cared about the agency, the staff and the citizens that he was sworn to protect. Bill Miller is a man you can count on to represent the citizens of Union County and their rights! Please consider voting for Bill Miller for Union County Sheriff!

~ John Shaul, Sergeant – Retired La Grande Police Department

Look me up on Facebook: [Bill Miller For Union County Sheriff](#)

Email me: billmillerforucsheriff@gmail.com

Paid for by Committee to elect Bill Miller, Sheriff. Jared Rogers - Treasurer, 73001 Palmer Junction Rd., Elgin, OR 97827



GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL & CLINICS

DOC TALK Q&A: COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS 2019)

Q: How do I self-quarantine or self-isolate?

A: If you develop COVID-19 or have been exposed to the virus, you may be asked to "self-isolate" (if you're sick) or "self-quarantine" (if you might be sick). In some people, COVID-19 is mild enough that you can safely recover at home. Here’s how you can protect others in your household while you recover:

- Don’t leave home except to get medical care.
- Keep away from people and pets at home.
- Use a face mask, cover your coughs, and clean your hands often.
- Clean high-touch surfaces.
- Stay home until you get the green light.

-Frank Szumski, DO, GRH RMC Primary Care Provider



Your trusted GRH doctors are answering your COVID-19-related questions through this Doc Talk Q&A series. For more information on what to do if you're sick, visit cdc.gov/coronavirus.

As we navigate COVID-19, we want to be sure and remind you that the safety and health of our patients, staff and community is our number one concern. We are working closely with CHD, OHA, and other partners to respond appropriately and as effectively as possible. For the latest updates from GRH, visit our web page dedicated to COVID-19 News & Updates: grh.org/covid19.

The Doctor is IN



Grande Ronde Hospital