

BMR seeking high school soccer referees

By **CARLOS FUENTES**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Blue Mountain Referees, the organization that coordinates high school game officials between La Grande and Baker City, is searching for soccer referees for the upcoming fall season.

The organization, which is responsible for varsity and junior varsity matches for La Grande High School and Baker High School, currently has three senior referees and two regular officials.

“There’s been a shortage of referees recently, in all sports, but specifically for soccer in this area,” BMR Soccer Referee Commissioner Brandon Torres said.

The association hopes to hire up to three referees more by late August, when the high school soccer season begins. Varsity games require three officials and JV requires two, although they have played games with just one official.

“It’s hard to find people that are passionate about the sport and want to learn, but that’s the kind of person that I want to hire,” Torres said. “I just need people. As long as they’re willing to learn, I’m willing to train them.”



Andrew Cutler/The Observer, File

La Grande’s Lewis Wright is upended during a nonconference win over Pendleton on Sept. 7, 2016. Blue Mountain Referees, the organization that coordinates high school game officials between La Grande and Baker City, is searching for soccer referees for the upcoming fall season.

According to Torres, most new referees leave the position because of unacceptable parent and fan behavior.

“Some teams and the people around them have fostered an attitude that if their team loses, it’s our fault,” Torres said. “I’ve had people scream at me, curse at me, but I’m stubborn enough to keep on doing it because I love it.”

According to Hank Hudson, a high school referee in the area since 1988,

parents should be more concerned about having referees at all. Over the last five years, several games have been rescheduled because of the issue.

“Without referees, they can’t have the sport,” he said. “Games have had to be cancelled in the past because there weren’t enough refs, so that’s what parents should be worried about.”

Sidronio Rangel, the head coach of the La Grande High School’s boys

every match.

“I’ve asked everyone to be sportsmanlike. There’s no tolerance for any sort of backtalk, abusive behavior or anything like that,” he said. “I want this to spread beyond the team itself, to the parents, fans, opponents and community members that are at our games.”

For Torres, the two main priorities for officials should be integrity of the game and team safety. He said that

anyone who is passionate about the sport and wants to uphold these values should consider applying, and Rangel agrees.

“It’s a good opportunity to get to know the sport of soccer and also make some money,” Rangel said. “We’ve had to rearrange some games, but the refs have been great and I think it’s a good chance for education for anyone who loves the game.”

WHO TO CONTACT

Those interested in being a soccer official can reach BMR Soccer Referee Commissioner Brandon Torres at kraos1.bt@gmail.com.

soccer team, said promoting a strong sense of sportsmanship and respect is key to making referees feel comfortable — something he tells his team before

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ON THE SLATE

THURSDAY, JUNE 10

Prep boys basketball

Union at La Grande, 6 p.m.

Enterprise at Joseph, 6:30 p.m.

Powder Valley at Nixyaawii,

7:30 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Union at La Grande, 4:30 p.m.

Powder Valley at Nixyaawii,

6 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 11

Prep boys basketball

Union at Wallowa, 6:30 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Union at Wallowa, 5 p.m.

Ontario at La Grande, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

Prep boys basketball

Pine Eagle at Enterprise, noon

Wallowa at Enterprise, 3 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Wallowa at Enterprise, 1:30 p.m.

Prep wrestling

La Grande at 4A-SD4 District

Wrestling Championship, La

Grande, 10 a.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 14

Prep boys basketball

Powder Valley at Enterprise,

2:30 p.m.

Union at Nyssa, 4:40 p.m.

Nixyaawii at La Grande,

5:30 p.m.

Joseph at Grant Union,

6:30 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Nixyaawii at La Grande, 1 p.m.

Powder Valley at Enterprise,

1 p.m.

Joseph at Grant Union, 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 15

Prep boys basketball

La Grande at Vale, 4:30 p.m.

Union vs. Crane, Powder Valley

High School, TBD

Crane at Powder Valley, TBD

Prep girls basketball

Vale at La Grande, 5:30 p.m.

Union vs. Crane, Powder Valley

High School, TBD

Crane at Powder Valley, TBD

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

Prep boys basketball

Crane at Enterprise, 1:30 p.m.

Crane at Joseph, 6 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Crane at Enterprise, noon

Crane at Joseph, 4:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 17

Prep boys basketball

Powder Valley at Joseph,

3:30 p.m.

Union at La Grande, 6 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Powder Valley at Joseph, 2 p.m.

Union at La Grande, 4:30 p.m.

Prep wrestling

La Grande at SD4 District Meet,

Gladstone High School, TBD

FRIDAY, JUNE 18

Prep girls basketball

Baker City at La Grande, 5 p.m.

Damascus Christian at Powder

Valley, 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 19

Prep boys basketball

Joseph at Grant Union, 3 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Powder Valley at Grant Union,

1:30 p.m.



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URGENT NOTICE: You may be qualified to participate in a special Field Test of new hearing instrument technology being held at a local test site.

An industry leader in digital hearing devices is sponsoring a product field test in your area next week and they have asked us to select up to 15 qualified candidates to participate. They are interested in determining the benefits of GENIUS™ 4.0 Technology in eliminating the difficulty hearing aid users experience in difficult environments, such as those with background noise or multiple talkers. Candidates in other test areas have reported very positive feedback so far.

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