

## Eagle will play in Shrine Game

Joseph's Jonah Staigle to take part in 69th annual all-star football game

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Jonah Staigle was excited when he saw the email telling him he had been selected to take part in the Shriners East-West All-Star Game, which returns in August after a year away due to COVID-19.

"Oh, man, it's an honor," the Joseph senior said. "(Head coach) Duncan (Christman) talked to me, he put me and Juston (Rogers) both in there."

"I got the email the other day. That was crazy."

Staigle and 43 others received that email, telling them they would be part of the 69th Shriners game, which is a major fundraiser for Shriners Children's Hospital in Portland.

"It's amazing to be able to have the game back," said Zachary Steele, first vice chairman and player personnel manager. "This year would have been our 70th game."

"It's the largest fundraiser in the Northwest for Portland Shriners Hospital. Being able to have a game and get those dollars to help kids walk is amazing."

The pandemic canceled last year's game, but there was hope the game would be able to resume this summer. Steele said the big lift came when state sanctions on full-contact football in Oregon were lifted.

"It's always been the goal since we canceled the game last year," he said.

Steele said the players that get selected among the nominees are those who coaches believe are not only talented, but who are tops in character. The players are nominated and selected by coaches.

"No. 1 we want high-character kids, and No. 2 we want your best athletes," Steele said, noting the game is, after all, an all-star game.

Staigle does know some about the history of the game and the impact it has.

"I've heard a little bit about. I know it's been going on for quite a while. I remember telling my mom, and she freaked out telling me how it was a big deal when she was in high school here," he said. "It definitely is an honor to get picked for it."

Past traditions have been for players to tour the Shriners campus in Wilsonville to meet children who are in the hospital.

That won't be possible

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## EASTERN OREGON LIVESTOCK SHOW



Trainer Scott Stewart prepares his horses in the stalls prior to the races at the 2021 Eastern Oregon Livestock Show on Saturday, June 12, 2021.

Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

# Back in action

### Horse racers embrace the return of EOLS

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

UNION — It's a long trip from Fruitland, Idaho, but horse racing trainer Scott Stewart has been participating in the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show for nearly 30 years.

Following the postponement of last year's EOLS, horse racers were back in action for a full slate of races at this year's livestock show in Union.

"We're just glad to be back and we really try to support (EOLS) and win races," Stewart said.

The stakes were high, with attendees at the livestock show lining up to place their bets on the horse races on Saturday, June 12. Six races took place with more than \$20,000 being awarded across all the horse races.

One of Stewart's biggest races of the day was the second race, a thoroughbred allowance race for 3-year-old or older horses that have not won in 2021. Cosmic Tripster, a 6-year-old mare originally bred in Washington, entered the race with high hopes from Stewart and the racing team.

The horse, whose owner is Dustie Crystal, earned more than \$25,000 in winnings from 2018 to 2020. The second race of the EOLS entailed a 5-1/2 furlong-contest between three horses. The race was originally set to have four horses competing, but 6-year-old mare Blingin was scratched.

Right out of the gate, Cosmic Tripster and jockey Jamie Lopez took a sizable lead over the



Jamie Lopez rides Cosmic Tripster through the finish line on the second race of the day on Saturday, June 12, 2021, at the 2021 Eastern Oregon Livestock Show. Cosmic Tripster bolted out to a large lead and never looked back as she won the race handily.

Davis Carbaugh/The Observer



Chad Ekins walks Cosmic Tripster through the paddock in the buildup to the second race of the day on Saturday, June 12, 2021, at the 2021 Eastern Oregon Livestock Show.

Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

other two horses and led by multiple horse-lengths through the first straightaway. With a cushion between first and second place, Cosmic Tripster completed the final lap and galloped through the finish line to take first place with a time of 1 minute, 3.40 seconds.

The purse was \$3,100, but the return of horse racing at EOLS was a prize within itself.

"It's fun to be able to have horses here," Stewart said. "Sometimes you get some horses in the paddock and they buck a couple of bulls out there and the horses get a little

under the weather."

Stewart is referencing the bull-riding and other rodeo events taking place in between the horse races throughout the livestock show. Between the races, rodeo contestants took in steer wrestling, team roping and tie-down roping.

"We're just glad to be back racing in Union and out here competing with these horses again," said training assistant Chad Ekins.

Ekins, a former jockey in the 1990s, serves as hotwalker and exercises many of the team's horses during training sessions, in addition to working on many of the horses' shoes.

The warm spring weather presented fast track conditions for the horses, an element that has been hard to predict over the years at the EOLS.

"I've been here when it's raining quite a bit and I've been here when it's snowed," Stewart said. "It's tough to have races but (EOLS) seems to always come through with it."

## Tigers alum shines at CWS

G.T. Blackman shuts door on LSU Shreveport in second-round game

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

LEWISTON, Idaho — With the season on the line for Lewis-Clark State College, La Grande High School graduate G.T. Blackman came up big.

Blackman entered an elimination game Monday, May 31, with the bases loaded and no outs in the bottom of the ninth inning to close out a 9-6 ball game against LSU Shreveport in the second round of the NAIA World Series consolation bracket.

Facing the potential game winning run at the plate, Blackman struck out the first two batters to bring the game to its final out. The La Grande native forced a pop up on the last play to secure the victory for the Warriors and earn the save.

"It was sort of a blackout moment, where you just kind of believe in yourself, I'm in the zone and it's time to go to work," Blackman said. "It was a relatively big moment for our team, we kind of needed to get out of that. I did my job to the best of my ability and I got the job done."

Lewis-Clark State went on to win its next game against top-seeded Southeastern in Round 3 before losing to second-seeded Central Methodist by a score of 8-5 on June 2. The Warriors were just one game shy of facing Georgia Gwinnett, the eventual champions, in the NAIA World Series finale.

"I thought our team was amazing, I haven't been more proud of a team in a while," Blackman said. "We just really fought our hearts out."

Blackman, a red-shirt-sophomore, concluded a 2021 season with a 5-0 record, a 2.86 ERA and 45 strikeouts, while holding opposing batters to a .256 batting average out of the bullpen. A former state champion at La Grande High School, he has an 8-0 record and 3.29 ERA in his career at Lewis-Clark State.

Blackman was a contributing part of Lewis-Clark State's impressive 44-6 record in the 2021 season, which included a 22-game winning streak.

The Warriors won the Cascade Collegiate Conference title behind Blackman's performance in Game 2 of a best-of-three

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## SPORTS SHORT

### Oregon State headed to Providence Park to play Montana State in 2022

By NICK DASCHEL  
The Oregonian

CORVALLIS — Oregon State plans to move its Sept. 17, 2022, home game against Montana State from Reser Stadium to Portland's Providence Park.

It is the first time the Beavers have played in Portland since 1986.

Oregon State athletic director Scott Barnes said he saw an opportunity to move a 2022 game because of Reser Stadium's

west side construction project. The Beavers play seven home games in 2022.

Construction begins at the conclusion of the 2021 football season, with completion slated for spring of 2023. Construction will halt during the 2022 season, but most of Reser's west side won't be available to fans.

Without the west side, Reser Stadium has a seating capacity near 33,000. The 2022 season is the only schedule year affected by construction.

Providence Park is expected to have seating capacity close to its soccer limit of 25,218 seats.

"We have such a large alumni base in Portland that we think this is a wonderful opportunity for our university to engage our alumni," Barnes said.

Details of the game and festivities are in the planning stages. Game time for Montana State-Oregon State will be determined early next summer when the Pac-12 announces television times.



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Oregon State plans to move its Sept. 17, 2022, home game against Montana State from Reser Stadium to Portland's Providence Park.