

FOOTBALL

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this year due to COVID restrictions, but Steele said players still will be able to see how the game — and, more specifically, the funds raised by it — help children and families.

“We still are going to get the kids exposure to what they are playing for,” Steele said.

The game traditionally generates about \$25,000 for the hospital, which provides orthopedic, burn, cleft lip and cleft palate care — all for free to families.

“The hospital, No. 1, is at no cost to nobody, ever. We do not bill parents for the cost of care,” Steele said.

Stagle said now the hope is he can get on the field, as a lingering injury has limited him in wrestling this summer.

“I guess the first thing I thought of was my injury, hoping it doesn’t hold me back,” he said. “I was really surprised, definitely. Didn’t think I was going to



Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Joseph’s Brad Wilcox, left, and Jonah Staigle put the stop on Burnt River’s Joshua Pinheiro during a 2018 home game. Staigle will be part of the 69th Shriners game, which is a major fundraiser for Shriners Children’s Hospital in Portland. The game is at 7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 7, in Baker City.

get a spot on the roster.”

There are four Union County players and one Wallowa County athlete on the alternate list who still could find their way on the field.

“If a kid declines (or

gets injured, we then go to the alternate list,” Steele said. “Every year we have five to 10 alternates who get selected to play.”

The game is at 7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 7, in Baker City.



Alisha Alexander/Lewis-Clark State College

La Grande High School alum G.T. Blackman delivers a pitch for Lewis-Clark State College during the 2021 season. Blackman earned the save in the second round of the NAIA World Series consolation bracket against LSU Shreveport on Monday, May 31, 2021.

BASEBALL

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against Corban. Blackman pitched four scoreless innings in relief, allowed only three hits and struck out six to secure the victory.

He faced 164 batters last season to rank fourth on the roster, but only started two games. His high usage out of the bullpen only goes to show his reliability later in games.

For Blackman, stepping up in crunch-time situations is something he perfected during his time in La Grande.

“He wanted the ball no matter what,” said La Grande baseball head coach Parker McKinley. “He would step up in any situation and throw well.”

During Blackman’s senior year in 2018, he led La Grande to a 1-0 victory on the road over North Marion High School in the Class

4A state semifinals. McKinley noted such a narrow, low-scoring margin of victory is often rare at the high school level.

“He puts in the work and knows that you don’t just get to that position without putting in the work to get there,” he said.

Blackman was a two-time Class 4A co-player of the year at La Grande and helped guide the Tigers to a 4A state championship in 2017. During his career at La Grande, Blackman was a multi-sport athlete who also competed in basketball and football.

“He’s comfortable being uncomfortable,” McKinley said. “There’s not a situation that seems too big for him or too heavy for him.”

One of his most memorable games this past season was when Blackman was able to return home to La Grande

early last month when LCSC faced Eastern Oregon University. He got to show his teammates where he calls home, and the Warriors were able to take three out of four games in the weekend series.

“It was still cool to bring my teammates, and the team that I play for in college back to where I grew up. That was a pretty cool experience,” Blackman said.

Blackman’s father, Greg Blackman, also played for Lewis-Clark State in the 1990s and won three national championships during his time with the Warriors.

Lewis-Clark State has won 19 NAIA World Series championships, including three straight, from 2015 to 2017.

Blackman is hoping to get at least one national title to call his own.

“I’d love to get one of my own, kind of a legacy thing,” he said.

ON THE SLATE

Schedule subject to change

TUESDAY, JUNE 15

Prep boys basketball

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

Crane at Powder Valley, 2 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

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

Crane at Powder Valley, 3:30 p.m.

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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