

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Rachel Baird looks to anchor Cove volleyball after unpredictable 2020 season

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

COVE — As for most sports teams, 2020 was a one-of-a-kind year for Cove volleyball. For the Leopards, the unexpected scheduling in 2020 and the loss of five seniors has the team starting from scratch in 2021. Rachel Baird, one of three seniors on the roster, is looking to bring the team together and lead the group to a successful season.

“We’re working pretty well together so far,” Baird said. “We have a lot of new kids on the team, but it’s pretty unified and we’re working together.”

Baird has played varsity at Cove since her freshman season, but no season stands out quite like 2020. Even with eight upperclassmen, the Leopards went 4-5 during the spring season and 2-3 in league play. Through the ups and downs of a unique season, Baird is looking to find balance in a more standard 2021 season.

“I’m just really glad that we get to play this year,” she said. “It’s just really nice to be able to go out and play.”

During the 2020 season, half of the volleyball season ended up being played in the fall, while another shortened season was played in the spring. According to head coach Brett Moore, this caused havoc in having a cohesive team because different groups participated in each season.

“We actually played more games last year than we ever had because of the fall season,” he said. “We got two seasons, but I didn’t have the same group of girls either time.”

With a full slate of games scheduled for 2021, the Leopards are looking to lean on Baird and seniors Carlee Porter and Madison Harvey to bring the group together this year.

“We’ve got a long way to go, but we have a lot of good kids,” Moore said. “They just need some experience, so we’re getting there.”

Cove is certainly gaining experience early in the season. The Leopards have not lost a single set through the team’s first two games.



Cove senior Rachel Baird plays at the net in a contest against Elgin on Thursday, Sept. 2, 2021. Baird is one of three seniors on the 2021 Cove roster.

Cove defeated Elgin and Pine Eagle on back-to-back road games to start the season 2-0. Baird has been electric on the court so far, tallying 15 kills in the opening contest and eight in the victory over Pine Eagle. However, the senior knows she will need to focus on leading the team in addition to her own personal perfor-

mance on the court.

“It’s definitely different,” she said. “I definitely need to encourage the younger kids and be a leader with this group.”

Eight out of the 12 players on Cove are underclassmen, but the expectations remain high for a strong season in 2021.

ON THE SLATE

- Tuesday, Sept. 7**
PREP VOLLEYBALL
Cove at Enterprise, 5 p.m.
Wallowa at Imbler, 5 p.m.
PREP GIRLS SOCCER
Four Rivers at Baker/Powder Valley, 5 p.m.
- Wednesday, Sept. 8**
COLLEGE WOMEN'S SOCCER
Eastern Oregon University at Whitman, 6 p.m.
PREP VOLLEYBALL
Joseph at Union, 5 p.m.
The Dalles at La Grande, 6:30 p.m.
PREP GIRLS SOCCER
Baker/Powder Valley at Riverside, 5 p.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 9**
PREP FOOTBALL
Elgin at Powder Valley, 7 p.m.
PREP VOLLEYBALL
Cove at Joseph, 5 p.m.
Fruitland at La Grande, 6 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 10**
COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL
Walla Walla at Eastern Oregon University, 2 p.m.
PREP FOOTBALL
La Grande at McLoughlin, 7 p.m.
Union at Cove, 7 p.m.
PREP VOLLEYBALL
Powder Valley at Elgin, 1 p.m.
Ione/Arlington at Imbler, 2 p.m.
Cove at Baker Invitational, TBA
Powder Valley vs. Imbler, at Elgin High School, TBA
- Saturday, Sept. 11**
COLLEGE CROSS-COUNTRY
Eastern Oregon University at Central Washington Invitational, 11 a.m.
COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL
Lewis-Clark State at Eastern Oregon University, 5 p.m.
PREP VOLLEYBALL
Union at St. Paul Tournament, 8 a.m.
Cove at Helix Tournament, 9 a.m.
Elgin at Pine Eagle, 10 a.m.
Elgin at Wallowa, 1 p.m.
Imbler at Helix Tournament, TBA
Powder Valley at Burns Tournament, TBA



Rejoice in rewards.

Get points for every dollar spent. Yes, every dollar.*

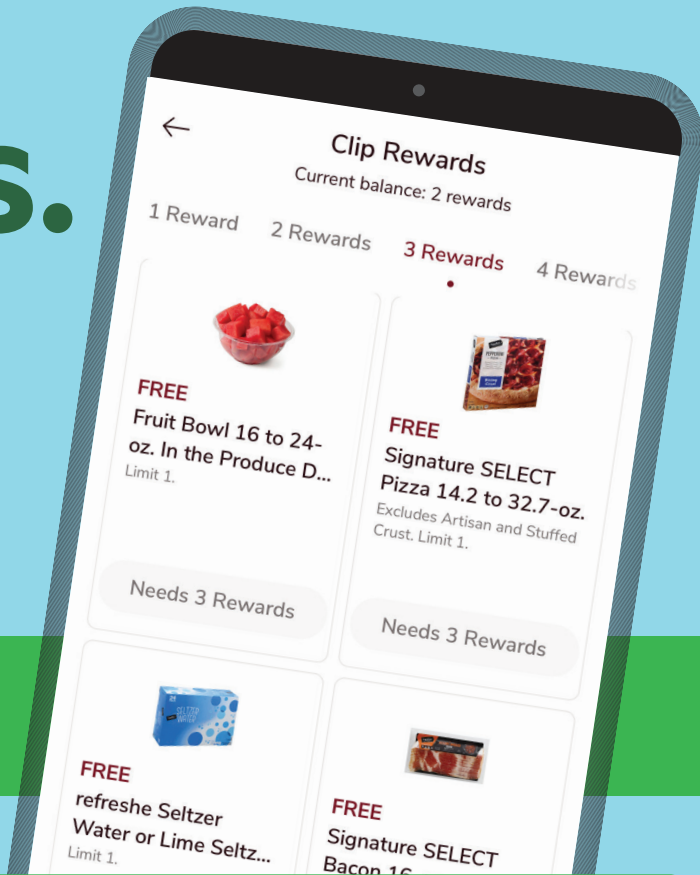
Start enjoying perks today.

- 1 Download the Safeway or Albertsons app and create an account.
- 2 Sign up for your free membership.
- 3 Start saving and earning Points.*



Become a free member today.

Scan to download the Safeway or Albertsons app.



**clip or CLICK!**

9/7/21 - 9/14/21

\$10 OFF \$50 or more*



Save on your next grocery purchase of \$50 or more* with your Club Card & this Savings Award.

*Use this Savings Award on any shopping trip you choose at any Oregon Safeway or Albertsons store and S.W. Washington stores serving Clark, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Skamania, Walla Walla and Klickitat counties by 9/14/21. This \$10.00 Savings Award excludes purchases of Alcoholic Beverages, Fluid Dairy Products, Tobacco, US Postage Stamps, Trimet Bus/Commuter Passes, Money Orders, Container Deposits, Lottery, Gift Cards, Gift Certificates Sales, All Pharmacy Prescription Purchases, Safeway Club Savings, Safeway or Albertsons Store Coupons and Sales Tax. One Savings Award redeemable per household. COUPON CANNOT BE DOUBLED. Online and in-store prices, discounts, and offers may differ.





FREE

when you use 3 Rewards

Signature SELECT® Thick Cut Bacon

16 oz. Limit 1. Clip by 9/30/21.

*Visit safeway.com/foru or albertsons.com/foru for program details.