

FUTURE IN QUESTION



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Casey Vaughan (4) and Kaden Krieger (5) lead the Powder Valley Badgers back onto the field following halftime at Baker High School on Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021. Powder Valley lost to the Adrian Antelopes 46-38 during the final match for the OSAA 1A State Championship in a heartbreaking finale that saw a successful comeback attempt in the fourth quarter by Adrian.

OSAA may consider NIL for prep athletes

BY NIK STRENG
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — In the summer, new rules allowed college athletes the ability to profit off their name, image and likeness (NIL).

Immediately, college stars like Oregon football player Kayvon Thibodeaux and basketball player Sedona Prince were able to start cashing in on their brands, including sponsorship and non-fungible token (NFT) deals.

But could the same rules be extended to those in the high school ranks? It's a little closer than one might think.

While the National Federation of State High School Associations was quick to respond in July that high schoolers would not be able to profit from NIL, many states have since switched their positions. High school student-athletes in states like California and New York can profit via NIL. And Oregon could be joining those ranks soon.

Oregon School Activities Association Executive Director Peter Weber told the Oregonian/OregonLive that the OSAA and the OSAA's Executive Board have had discussions on the topic. Weber said the OSAA has been monitoring what is happening in New York and will have language for the board to review during the Feb. 7 meeting.

Central Catholic football coach Steve Pyne said he was not aware that this was something that the OSAA was discussing, but raised equity concerns as the only student-athletes who would likely profit from their NIL are those who also would benefit at the college level.

"It makes sense to me at the college level as the NCAA makes millions of dollars off of the athletes," he said. "My hope is that it does not happen."

Weber agreed that NIL deals could lead to equity concerns, adding that the OSAA is monitoring what other states are doing before creating their own language.

To avoid certain inequities while allowing student-athletes to profit from their NIL, California and New York both employ a rule that student-athletes are able to participate in commercial endorsements so long as they are not affiliated with their schools or the state athletic association.

See, OSAA/Page A8

OSAA proposal about 8-man football sparks negative reaction from local coaches

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

WILSONVILLE — The future of 8-man football in Oregon is currently up in the air.

The Oregon School Activities Association Football Ad Hoc Committee released its first proposal for the 2022-2026 football time block on Tuesday, Dec. 20, which suggested doing away with 8-man football among 2A and 1A schools. The public meeting on Dec. 20 proposed divisions of 9-man and 6-man leagues,

which would alter the landscape of football in Union and Wallowa counties.

"It's a bummer they'd be getting rid of 8-man," Powder

sion to begin the initial stages of reclassification. The committee also took into consideration the Oregon Athletic Coaches Association's small

mation on hand, the committee came away in support of three divisions between 2A and 1A schools. Based on school enrollment, two potential sections of 9-man and one division of 6-man teams were drafted.

The potential divisions slated Enterprise, Cove, Elgin, Imbler and Union in the 9-man leagues, while Powder Valley, Wallowa and Joseph would play 6-man. The proposal raised eyebrows among several local coaches, such as Cobb and the 2021 1A state

See, 8-man/Page A8

"It's a bummer they'd be getting rid of 8-man. People are really starting to get behind this."

— Josh Cobb, Powder Valley head coach

Valley head coach Josh Cobb said. "People are really starting to get behind this."

At the meeting, the OSAA Ad Hoc Committee met virtually and conducted a work ses-

school survey, which took place in the fall and collected trends from the last five years of 11-man, 8-man and 6-man football.

After reviewing the infor-

SPORTS SHORT

Former La Grande quarterback to transfer from Utah State

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LOGAN, Utah — Utah State quarterback Andrew Peasley has entered the NCAA transfer portal, according to an announcement on his Twitter on Thursday, Dec. 23.

The former La Grande standout split reps with junior quarterback Logan Bonner throughout the season. Peasley is coming off his junior year, but will have three years of eligibility remaining with his new school.

"Thank you Utah State University. Four years of meeting amazing people and creating relationships that will last a lifetime. I have entered the transfer portal with 3 years of eligibility. Thank you Aggie Nation," Peasley wrote on Twitter.

Logan Bonner ended up as Utah State's full-time starter at quarterback, throwing for 3,628 yards and 36 touchdowns. Bonner has another year of eligibility. In addition,

after Bonner was injured in the second quarter, with Peasley already out with an injury, third-string Cooper Legas was a star in Utah State's 24-13 win over Oregon State in the Jimmy Kimmel LA Bowl. Legas threw for 171 yards and two touchdowns in his first collegiate action.

During the 2021 season, Peasley threw for 415 yards and three touchdowns, while accumulating 212 rushing yards and one touchdown in 25 attempts. His biggest game of the season came in a 49-45 comeback win over Air Force, in which he threw for three touchdowns. Utah State went overall 11-3 in 2021, including a 46-13 win over a top-25 San Diego State team in the Mountain West Championship game.

During his time at La Grande, Peasley recorded over 100 total touchdowns and threw for over 4,000 yards between his sophomore and junior seasons. He was also a key part of the basketball and baseball teams at La Grande.



Utah State University Athletics/Contributed Photo

Utah State quarterback Andrew Peasley takes the field before a game. Peasley entered the NCAA transfer portal following the 2021 season, according to a Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021, announcement on his Twitter.