



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

**La Grande's Alex Rodriguez (4) pushes past Nyssa's Zach Kausler (33) and into the free-throw lane during the Tigers' 61-43 win on Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021.**

## OSAA

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"They can't be wearing their school uniform or refer to their school or section," said New York State Public High School Athletic Association spokesperson Chris Watson.

Pyne, whose Rams won the 2021 OSAA 6A football state championship, is no stranger to student-athletes who could profit from these types of deals. Rams junior tight end Riley Williams will likely be the top recruit

coming out of Oregon's class of 2022 and would be a top target for high school NIL sponsorships.

And he's not alone. Oregon will be sending many student-athletes to compete in NCAA competition next year, including four-star football recruits Darrius Clemons (Westview) and Trejon Williams (Jefferson, Portland).

Pyne added that moving NIL rights to the high school ranks would likely lead to it filtering down to the youth ranks, including AAU and club sports.

## 8-MAN

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football runners-up Powder Valley Badgers.

"Eight-man just feels right," he said. "I see 6-man as a good thing for schools that truly don't have the student body."

The Badgers would be bumped down to the 6-man league, which Cobb is against, although Powder Valley could potentially request to jump up to the higher division. The Badgers are coming off an 11-2 season of 8-man football. There is no current deadline for teams to opt up or down in divisions, but the deadline will be determined at the next OSAA meeting in January.

"I don't want to play

6-man," Cobb said. "We have 30 kids on the team. There's not a participation issue."

OSAA emphasized in the proposal that participation in football was a key issue. The proposal noted that a transition to 9-man would allow easier scheduling between 9-man and 11-man non-league opponents, while the junior varsity levels could likely avoid cancellations if the roster size is smaller.

"The decreases in average team size over the last 10 years have been significant," the statement read.

The preference of keeping 8-man football was also expressed by Elgin head coach Kirt McClure. The Huskies are slated in the 9-man divi-

sion, which could be a challenge for an Elgin team that had only 11 players on the roster. Even so, the Huskies went 4-4 in the regular season and earned a spot in the playoffs.

"I'm not really for it. It doesn't make sense to me," McClure said.

McClure expressed a similar sentiment as Cobb in that 8-man football has seen a bump in popularity in recent years. According to Cobb, many of the other 1A coaches he spoke with objected to the proposals. The 1A championship showdown between Powder Valley and Adrian on Nov. 27 drew a packed stadium at Baker Bulldog Memorial Stadium in Baker.

"Eight-man is growing, especially in our area," McClure said.

The proposals are still in the works but could be a looming issue for local coaches and supporters of 8-man football. The next OSAA Ad Hoc Football Advisory Committee meeting is set for 9 a.m. on Jan. 5, 2022, at the Holiday Inn in Wilsonville. The meeting's purpose is to gather public input on the proposed changes to 2A and 1A football.

"High school sports are all about opportunities for young adults. Six-man football takes two to three kids off the field per team — just don't see how that is beneficial," Cobb said. "Creating opportunities for kids to compete, promoting the desire to improve as a team and individually is the concept of high school sports."

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## ON THE SLATE

TUESDAY, DEC. 28

**PREP BOYS BASKETBALL**  
Wallowa vs. Condon, Echo High School, 2:30 p.m.  
Joseph at Lone/Arlington, 3:30 p.m.  
Imbler at Weston-McEwen, 7 p.m.  
**2021 Baker Holiday Basketball X-Over, Baker High School**  
Union vs. Adrian, 12:30 p.m.  
Powder Valley vs. Burns 8 p.m.

**PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL**  
La Grande vs. Henley, Sisters Holiday Shootout, Sisters High School, 3 p.m.  
Wallowa vs. Condon, Echo High School, 1 p.m.  
Joseph at Lone/Arlington, 2 p.m.  
Imbler at Weston-McEwen, 4 p.m.  
**2021 Baker Holiday Basketball X-Over, Baker High School**  
Union vs. Adrian, 2 p.m.  
Powder Valley vs. Burns, 9:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 29

**PREP BOYS BASKETBALL**  
Joseph at North Lake/Paisley, 2:30 p.m.  
**PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL**  
Joseph at North Lake/Paisley, 1 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 30

**PREP BOYS BASKETBALL**  
Joseph at Dufur, 1:30 p.m.  
Sherman at Wallowa, 4 p.m.  
Stanfield at Enterprise, 4:30 p.m.  
Four Rivers at Cove, 5 p.m.  
Union at Weston-McEwen, 7:30 p.m.

**PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL**  
Joseph at Dufur, noon  
Sherman at Wallowa, 2:30 p.m.  
Stanfield at Enterprise, 3 p.m.  
Four Rivers at Cove, 3:30 p.m.  
Union at Weston-McEwen, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, DEC. 31

**COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL**  
Eastern Oregon at Corban, 7:30 p.m.  
**COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**  
Eastern Oregon at Corban, 5:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 1

**COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL**  
Eastern Oregon at Bushnell, 5 p.m.  
**COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**  
Eastern Oregon at Bushnell, 3 p.m.

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