



Andy Dieckhoff/Pamplin Media Group

Cove's Tim Koza competes at the 4A Special District 2 swim meet in Madras on Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022. Koza took home first place in the 200-yard IM and 100-yard breaststroke.

# Ready to dive in

## Local prep swimmers gear up for state championships

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

**M**ADRAS — Two local swim programs recently excelled at the district championships and will be looking for similar success at the state level.

The La Grande boys and girls teams earned runners-up placements on each side of the team standings, while Cove made a big impression despite its small roster. Both teams are set to travel to Tualatin to compete at the 4A/3A/2A/1A State Championships on Saturday, Feb. 19.

"I was thrilled," Cove head coach Steve Koza said. "Our team has come a long way."

Cove earned eight state qualifiers among four total swimmers. Tim Koza and Kaleo Theis placed first overall in two events each at the district meet, while Sarah Koza earned two individual district titles on the girls side. Taylor Fox earned qualifiers based on time in two events.

Theis, a senior, placed first in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 22.40 and took top marks in the 100-yard freestyle at 49.33. The transfer from Pendleton has been a big boost to Cove's overall efforts this year.

Senior Tim Koza has been on a roll to end his prep career at the top, taking the district crown in the 200-yard IM (2:23.37) and the 100-yard breaststroke (1:00.58). He enters the 4A state tournament as a five-second favorite in the 200-yard IM and a two-second favorite in the 100-yard breaststroke.

Sarah Koza has produced similar results this year, culminating her season with first-place finishes in the 50-yard freestyle (25.08) and 100-yard breaststroke (1:10.43). The sophomore swimmer has the second-best times in each event heading into the state championships.



Andy Dieckhoff/Pamplin Media Group

La Grande's McKinley Kruse competes in the 200-yard IM at the 4A Special District 2 meet in Madras on Saturday, Feb. 12. Kruse helped guide the Tigers to a second-place team finish.



Andy Dieckhoff/Pamplin Media Group

La Grande's Zane Ricker receives a medal for placing third in the 200-yard freestyle at the 4A Special District 4 meet on Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022. The Tigers scored 195 points on the boys side to place second.

"In her 50 free, (Sarah Koza) has swam faster than the first-place time right now. It's her race to try to go get," the coach said.

Fox, a junior, earned his place at the championships on time qualifications. He placed fourth in the 50-yard freestyle at

districts with a time of 24.19 and placed sixth in the 100-yard butterfly at 59.12.

"I'm really hoping to see us come home with some state champions," Steve Koza said. "Nothing is a given, but I like where we're sitting."

### Tigers aim for title contention

La Grande had a strong team showing at districts, hauling in 236 points on the girls side and 195 on the boys side. The Tigers earned 14 individual spots in the state championships, while qualifying three relay teams.

Sophomore Shiloh Lynch garnered an individual district title for La Grande, taking first place in the 100-yard freestyle with a time of 58.01. She also earned state qualifications in the 50-yard freestyle and as part of the 400-yard freestyle and 200-yard medley relay teams.

La Grande's 400-yard free relay team of Lars Langens, Drake Adair, Glenn

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# Crawford retiring at season's end

## Enterprise girls basketball coach has roamed sidelines for 33 years

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Longtime Enterprise girls basketball coach Mike Crawford has announced he'll call it a career and retire following this season.

Crawford is in his 33rd year leading the girls team, with his first season being in 1989-90. Along the way, success has been a theme for the program. On Saturday, Feb. 12, Enterprise secured its 24th season under Crawford with a record of at least .500. The Outlaws have reached 20 victories 14 times in that span, made it to the state playoffs 17 times and 10 times placed at state, with the peak being a 58-54 state title victory over Santiam Christian in 1996.

The program was most dominant from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, a stretch during which Enterprise won the league eight years in a row and claimed six district titles.

The team also won 20 games or more each of those years and followed the '96 title with a third-place finish in '97 and a runner-up performance in 2001. The team's record during that time was 182-31.

Crawford told the Chieftain last year that his players are a major factor in the success he and Enterprise have had over the years.

"I've been incredibly blessed to be at one school and have the people around me in that entire time to be able to accomplish the feats we have done together," he said.

The coach was honored with a ceremony during halftime of the boys game on Feb. 12 where more of the accolades achieved by Crawford and the program were highlighted. Along the way, Crawford has amassed a record of 519-273, having coached in 792 games. He picked up his 500th win when Enterprise defeated Heppner in overtime, 40-38, during a Blue Mountain Conference district tournament contest Feb. 22, 2020.

His tenure at one school is the longest of any coach in Oregon girls basketball history. His win total is eighth all-time in girls hoops, and his games-coached total is second behind only Mark Stevens of Cascade, who coached the Cougars for the 800th time over the weekend. Crawford's been named state coach of the year, and in 2021 was named the National Federation of State High School Associations Section 8 Coach of the Year, which put him in the running for national coach of the year.

Crawford wanted to wait to speak on his retirement and career until the conclusion of the season, so the Chieftain will follow up with more on Crawford's career in the coming weeks.

He did say Feb. 12, though, that it was emotional as the final seconds ticked away in the Outlaws' 50-30 win over Weston-McEwen — his final regular-season home game.

"Kind of had to catch my breath and grab a hold of myself," he said. "There's a lot of finality in it."



Crawford

## SPORTS SHORT

# Timbers unveil new 'Heritage Rose' pink uniforms

By RYAN CLARKE  
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — In a full social media blitz that included a hype video and plenty of close-up photos, the Portland Timbers debuted a new secondary uniform Tuesday, Feb. 15, that serves as a nod to the City of Roses.

The "Heritage Rose" kits are, as described by the team, "Vapour Pink" with "Victory Crimson" rose patterns across the design, featuring other details that focus on one of the franchise's signature phrases.

Inside the collar reads, "Rose City 'Til I Die," which is commonly shortened by fans to the acronym RCTID. The

same message appears translated to Latin on a patch near the bottom of the kit, which features a skull sitting on a stack of books with a rose in its mouth and a king of clubs playing card in the corner — a nod to the Timbers Army.

"In collaboration with our partners at Adidas, we are excited to push the boundaries of our traditional design aesthetic and expand the club's brand iconography and color family," Mike Golub, president of business for the Timbers, said in a release. "We think this is one of our most unique and distinct kits in the history of the club and are excited to share it with our supporters."

The Timbers noted that the

Heritage Rose kit is the club's first outside its traditional color palette. The team will debut its new kits in the regular season opener against the New England Revolution Feb. 26 at Providence Park.

"When we started developing the Heritage Rose with the Timbers, our combined objective was to pay homage to the Rose City by developing a bold and unique pattern, introduce a new and vibrant color palette, and stay authentic to the city and Timbers fans," Skate Noftinger, director of sports marketing of Adidas soccer, said in the release. "Our design process led us to a jersey that both fans and players will wear proudly for Rose City."



Craig Mitchell/Dyer/Portland Timbers

The Portland Timbers revealed new "Heritage Rose" kits on Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022, a pink ensemble featuring rose patterns throughout.

Timbers defender Dario Župarić modeled the uniform in a video posted on the Timbers' social media accounts that

included rose-themed graffiti on the wall behind him, unique lighting and a bass-heavy beat underneath.