

Swinging in the moonlight

Moonlight Tournament makes return after four-year hiatus

By **ISABELLA CROWLEY**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — After a four-year hiatus, the La Grande Moonlight Tournament returns.

The tournament, which runs Friday, Aug. 5, to Sunday, Aug. 7, at Pioneer Park, is being hosted by La Grande Parks and Recreation, along with the Pendleton Parks and Recreation and La Grande Optimist Club.

The two departments are splitting the workload — with La Grande handling logistics and registration and Pendleton managing the bracket and running of games, according to Chris Gianandrea, recreation coordinator for the City of La Grande Parks and Recreation department. While no longer the primary organizers, the Optimist Club is still involved in the tournament — running the concession stand and providing prizes.

“For a tournament that hasn’t been done in four years, we were guesstimating 16 teams,” Gianandrea said.

Fifteen teams have signed up — coming from across Oregon and as far away as Washington and Idaho, said Gianandrea.



Douglas Trice Field awaits teams to try out its new turf on Wednesday, Sept. 29, 2021, in La Grande's Pioneer Park. The field will be one of three in Pioneer Park that will host the La Grande Moonlight Tournament Friday, Aug. 5, to Sunday, Aug. 7.

Northeast Oregon has strong representation at the tournament with teams from La Grande, Cove, Pendleton, Hermiston and Baker City. Oregon's representation continues outside of the northeast, with a team traveling all the way from Hillsboro. Out of state teams include Walla Walla, Washington, Meridian, Idaho, and Boise, Idaho.

Games will be played at Optimist Field, Trice Community Field and Marcum Field at Pioneer Park. What makes the Moonlight Tournament unique is that

games are played one right after the other, meaning teams will take the field at all hours of the day and night.

Each team is guaranteed to play four games in the initial bracket, Gianandrea said. The winning teams will advance to the champions bracket while the losing teams enter into the beer league.

After the initial bracket wraps up Aug. 6, there will be the home run derby. Participants in the derby will have a set amount of time to hit as many home runs as

possible. Gianandrea said the details of the competition are still being worked out, but the Optimist Club is providing the prize for the derby.

Following the derby, the beer league will kick back off the game play. After those games wrap up, the championship bracket will begin.

For more than 20 years, the La Grande Optimist Club hosted the annual tournament, and at the height of the co-ed tournament's popularity, 40 teams signed up, said Danny Bell,

Optimist Club member and former tournament director. Slowly the number of teams started to decrease — a similar trend had been seen years prior with the men's tournament. Bell said he thought this was due to the older generation of softball players getting too old to play and the younger players not signing up.

Throughout the years the club ran the tournament, it paid for all the costs — security, prizes, game officials and food for the concession stand. Money that was earned

from the tournament was reinvested into club programs and the local youth. As team enrollment decreased, the Optimist Club decided that it was not worth running the tournament if they would be doing so at a loss. When that happened, the club turned the tournament over to the city of La Grande.

“I think it's an awesome idea to try to pull it back,” Bell said. “I 100% wish the city the best.”

Under new management from Parks and Rec there will be some changes to the Moonlight Tournament — which the department hopes will be well received.

“We're trying to partner with as many local businesses as possible. We want people to come here and enjoy La Grande,” Gianandrea said.

Each team playing in the tournament will get a packet with coupons and discount codes to local businesses in La Grande.

Parks and Rec has also partnered with Northeast Oregon Public Transportation to set up a temporary shuttle stop at Pioneer Park for the duration of the tournament. They will be running service to downtown La Grande and also out to the fairgrounds since the tournament coincides with the Union County Fair.

“We are super excited about it. We want as many local businesses and business owners involved. It benefits the whole community,” Gianandrea said.

FOOTBALL

Continued from Page A7

the battle against Enterprise, faces Pilot Rock at Eastern Oregon University Sept. 2. The Panthers open district play at Crane Sept. 16, and host Elgin a week later.

The Elgin Huskies, who

a year ago played every game on the road, open with two more road games before their home opener on Sept. 16 against Wallowa. Other key home dates for Elgin include Oct. 7 against Adrian, Oct. 14 against Union and Oct. 28 against Cove.

Union gets an early test Sept. 9 on the road

against Powder Valley, and wraps its regular season Oct. 28 on the road against defending champion Adrian. The home slate for the Bobcats includes an Oct. 7 contest against Wallowa.

Cove has an early road matchup at Lone on Sept. 9, then returns home to face Adrian Sept. 16. The Leop-

ards end with consecutive road games, including at Wallowa Oct. 21.

Wallowa spends its first month of the season on the road, with games at the Dufur Classic, Sherman, Elgin and Adrian all before

the Cougars face Imbler in their home opener Sept. 30. The Cougars' regular-season finale is at home against Crane Oct. 28 at 6 p.m.

And at the 6-man level, Joseph's schedule includes

a three-game homestand against Harper, Prairie City and Pine Eagle. The Eagles' matchup against Wheeler County, last year's de facto champion, is slated for a road matchup at 7 p.m. Oct. 14.



Admission Prices for Union County Fair

DAILY ADMISSION

Adults\$6
Kids 7-17\$4
Kids under 6Free
Veterans w/military ID\$5

THURSDAY

Seniors 60+Free

WEEK PASS
(sold Wednesday ONLY)
Dark Blue VIP wristband

Adults\$18
Kids 7-17\$12

2022 Union County Fair Schedule

Wednesday, August 3

8:00 am Fair Opens

8:30 am FFA/4-H Swine Conformation - market followed by breeding Beef breeding immediately following swine show with ½ hour break FFA/4-H Beef Breeding & Dairy follows Swine Show

8:30 am FFA/4-H Sheep Conformation - market followed by breeding Goats immediately following sheep show with ½ hour break FFA/4-H Meat Goat Conformation - market followed by breeding

10:00 am Exhibit Booths Open

10:00 am - 11:00 am Lego Time (Small Stage)

1:00pm Terry Lamont (small stage)

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Countryfied (Large Stage)

3:30 pm Randy Woody (small stage)

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Carla's Fiddle School (Small Stage)

4:00 pm FFA/4-H Market Steer Conformation

5:00 pm Open Class Sheep & Meat Goat Show Open Class Beef & Dairy Cattle Show (immediately following beef show)

5:30 pm Talent Show (Small Stage)

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Countryfied (Large Stage)

10:00 pm Fair Closes

Friday August 5

8:00 am Fair Opens

8:00 am FFA/4-H Dairy Goat Showmanship followed by breeding - Sheep/goat arena

9:00 am 4-H Citizenship Award due at 4-H Office

9:00 am ADGA Open Class Sanctioned Dairy Goat Show

10:00 am Exhibit Booths Open

10:00 am 4-H/FFA Livestock Judging Contest (beef/sheep ring bleachers)

10:00 am - 11:00 am Lego Time Championship (Small Stage)

11:30 am FFA Round Robin

1:00 pm DeLong & Ruth Becker Award Interviews

1:30 pm Women's Elk Calling Championship

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Ripple Effect (Large Stage)

2:30 pm - 4:30 pm Wasteland Kings (Small Stage)

3:00 pm Pee Wee Show

4:00 pm Fair Parade Line Up

5:30 pm Fair Parade Downtown

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Parade (Downtown La Grande)

6:30 pm Mutton Busting & Stick Horse Race - Mavericks Arena

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Wasteland Kings (Small Stage)

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Mutton Busting, Goat Tying, Stick Horse Race (Mavericks Arena)

8:30 pm - 10:00 pm Ripple Effect (Large Stage)

7:30 pm 4-H Ice Cream Social - 4-H Exhibit Building

8:30 pm - 10:00 pm Teen Dance Sponsored by Cook Memorial Library and LaGrande Wrestling

10:00 pm Fair Closes

Thursday, August 4

8:00 am Fair Opens

8:00 am Free Breakfast Sponsored by Grocery Outlet and The Observer

8:00am Blue Mountaineers (small stage)

8:30 am FFA Swine Showmanship followed by 4-H Swine Showmanship 8:30 am FFA Sheep Showmanship followed by 4-H Sheep Showmanship Goats immediately following sheep show with ½ break FFA Meat Goat Showmanship followed by 4-H Meat Goat Showmanship

9:00 am DeLong Applications due at Livestock Office

9:00 am Feed and Growth Records due at Livestock Office

10:00 am Exhibit Booths Open

10:00 am - 11:00 am Lego Time (Small Stage)

11:30 am - 12:30 pm Blue Plate Special (Small Stage)

1:00 pm Randy Woody (small stage)

2:00 pm ADGA Open Class Sanctioned Dairy Goat Show NO EARLY CHECK IN

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Lynque Oveson (Small Stage)

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Tiller's Folly (Large Stage)

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Alka Mahdi (Small Stage)

4:00 pm FFA Beef Showmanship followed by 4-H Beef Showmanship

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Becky's Dance Studio (Small Stage)

6:30 pm 4-H Archery Competition - Fair Horse Arena

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Alka Mahdi (Small Stage)

8:30 pm - 10:00 pm Tiller's Folly (Large Stage)

10:00 pm Fair Closes

Saturday, August 6

8:00 am Fair Opens

10:00 am Exhibit Booths Open

10:00 am - 11:00 am FFA Awards (Small Stage)

11:00 am - 12:00 pm 4-H Awards (Small Stage)

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm 4-H Revue Show (Small Stage)

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Sage & Stone (Small Stage)

3:30 - 5:00 pm Auction Buyers Appreciation Dinner & Check I

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Brewers Grade (Large Stage)

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Jeremy Skankel (Small Stage)

5:00 pm - 8:30 pm Jr. Livestock Auction (Livestock Barn)

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Jeremy Skankel (Small Stage)

8:30 pm - 10:00 pm Brewers Grade (Large Stage)

10:00 pm Fair Closes

Sunday, Aug 7

8:00 am Open Horse Show check-in UC Fair Arena

8:45 am Open Horse Show UC Fair Arena

8:00 am - 3:00 pm Static Exhibit Pick up for Open Class & 4-H exhibits



Fall Leagues Forming Now!



Restaurant & Sports Bar - NOW OPEN!

- ✓ Happy Hour 3-6pm Daily
- ✓ 12 Lane Bowling Alley
- ✓ Video Arcade & Pool



Open Daily at 11:30am!

BRICKYARD LANES

1212 Jefferson Avenue
Downtown La Grande, Oregon

Fall Leagues Forming Now! For more info visit:
Brickyardlanes.com/leagues