

# Outdoor Rec

## Online versus classroom hunter safety courses



**THE OUTDOOR COLUMN**  
By Nick Myatt



*This week's guest columnist, Nick Myatt, is the author of the popular blog GrowingHunters.com. Readers can visit that site and sign up for free updates! Hunting stories and comments are always welcome on his blog.*

Many kids in our country lead ridiculously busy lives. After school parents rush them around to piano lessons, baseball games, church groups, and other extracurricular activities. Finding time for kids to fit in the commitment of a Hunter Safety class has become increasingly difficult.

State fish and wildlife agencies have taken steps to make Hunter Safety less of a barrier to youth participation. One of the most significant changes in many states has been the addition of online hunter education classes instead of traditional classroom style courses.

Choosing between the two course types can be a tough decision for parents and I am sorry to say I am not going to have a straight answer for you.

**The Answer Is – It Depends.**

It depends on what you want your young hunter to get out of the course, their maturity level, their learning style, and many other factors that only a parent can judge.

**My Personal Preference – Online.**

Online Hunter Safety offers greater flexibility and

will likely not conflict with other obligations in your kid's complicated lives.

Taking the course online is a more efficient use of the parent's and child's time and will give the minivan a little rest after all those soccer practices.

Just because it is online, does not mean that there is not an instructor – You Are The Instructor.

The online version will allow you to move at the appropriate pace for your kid, spending more time on areas you want to emphasize or your child does not understand.

If you follow this blog and are introducing your young hunter to hunting long before they can even shoulder a gun, then your kid will likely already understand many of the things taught in the class. In a perfect world, the course will just be used to meet a legal requirement because you have already taught them everything in the course!

(On the blog online is a short video introduction to the online courses at HunterCourse.com, the online Hunter Safety company used by 28 states and 5 Canadian provinces.)

**Total Control Over Who Teaches Your Hunter.**

Another selling point for the online option is it allows you to influence and teach your kid what and how you want them to be taught.

I have worked with many incredible Hunter

Safety instructors over the years. These individuals are knowledgeable, dedicated, and often volunteering a great deal of their time to ensure the safety of our youth.

Having said that, I have also run into a Hunter Safety instructor or two where I have not agreed with their methods, their beliefs on some wildlife management issues, or their ethics so the online version gives a parent total control.

**The Benefits of Classroom Hunter Safety.**

While my preference is online, I can also make a strong case for having your young hunter attend Hunter Safety in the classroom:

A Hunter Safety instructor may expose your youth to another perspective or something that you may not have thought of. Many Hunter Safety instructors have successfully graduated more students than they have grey hairs on their head. This experience means they have "been there and done that". Lets face it, some kids just don't listen to their parents but they will listen intently to others. Frustrating but true!

A classroom session is a good way for kids and parents to meet other hunters and may open up new hunting opportunities or areas.

Hunter Safety instructors are a dedicated bunch that often put on other events and clinics after your hunter has gradu-

ated from the required basic course. By taking the online course, your youth may be missing out on those opportunities.

Hunter Safety instructors can be excellent mentors for your youth and their classroom courses are part of the heritage and culture of our sport.

**Hunter Safety Field Day.**

Regardless of whether you chose to complete the coursework online or in the classroom, there is typically a required "field day" where your youth will practice live fire and demonstrate safe handling of firearms. This field day, provides a valuable addition to the online course and may add some of the positive aspects missed by not attending the classroom course.

**Now Time For Your Decision.**

Only you can decide what is best for your kid and what you want them to get out of the training. Whatever your choice, the course will benefit your young hunter, but it will not replace a hands-on approach from you as a parent and mentor.

Some of the safest hunters I have known are youth who have recently completed Hunter Safety because it is fresh in their mind.

Hunter Safety and Education does not stop when your young hunter receives their certificate in the mail; it continues for a lifetime.

## Swim meet results

La Grande Swim Club sent four swimmers to the Howard Jones Memorial Senior Swim Meet on June 19-21, held at Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham. Swimmers had to be at least 13 year-old and have the qualifying time standard to enter this prelim/final swim meet. Two of the La Grande swimmers were from Baker City, Jared Miller (16) and Riana Scott (13).

All of the La Grande swimmers competed well and made finals every night at this large, competitive meet. The girls finished 10th and boys 14th out of 19 teams.

## Ladies bridge club winners

The Quail Ridge ladies bridge club winners for July 1 are as follow: 1st Martha Cassidy; 2nd Barb White; and 3rd Karen Lewis.

## Haines Rodeo

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Steer wrestling sponsored by Premier Auto was won by Jesse Brown at 8.25, followed by Michael McGinn at 9.12, David Clark at 11.25, and Cody Wilcox with a time of 13.53.

Junior breakaway sponsored by Baker City Carpet Express was won by Danielle Jennings with a time of 1.87, Samantha Kerns at 2.47, Kallie Roeser at 2.75, and Quincy Pendergrass finishing in 3.0 seconds.

Junior barrels sponsored by Sunfire Real Estate/Michelle Dollar was won by Jacie Jane Shaffer in a time of 17.594, followed by Milo Grubaugh at 17.814, Katy McKay at 18.003, Charmayne Briggs at 18.372, Allie McDaniel at 18.387, and Rylee Deal in at 19.14.

Barrel race sponsored by DLX Ranch was won by Samantha Kerns in at 17.179 seconds, followed by Jandi Briggs at 17.276, Remie Taylor at 17.348, Amanda Evans at 17.441, Claudia Brower at 17.714, and Maddie Pendergrass at 17.838.

Stock saddle bronc competition sponsored by Haines Steak House was won by Konnyr Merik with a 75, Cole Rawlins with a 75, Bruce Cox at 72, and Taylor Kerns with a score of 70.

Bull riding championships sponsored by McGinn Brothers was awarded to CJ Santana with a score of 86, and second place finisher Montana Barlow with a 63.

Baker/Union team roping contest was won by Riley Brown and Nick Colwell in a time of 16.25 seconds, followed by Bobby Harrell/Lexie Harrell in at 13.26, Samantha Kerns/Taylor Kerns at 28.09.

Champion cow milkers are Matt Morford and Wade Joseph.

The Cow Race was won by the team of Jacob Spar, Ethan Lowe and Patrick Green.

The Cowhide Race champs are Brent Kerns and Lance kerns of Friday and Brent Kerns and Colt Cobb on Saturday.

## Forester

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Harvey mentioned issues with timber land in the Balm Creek Reservoir area, stating that some prescribed burns have devastated the area. He said he plans to speak with Whitman Forest District Ranger Jeff Tomac soon about the related issues, including the large amount of blown-down trees, and to suggest timber sales as one solution.

Chase talked about Buck Gulch road issues, stating that a contractor working with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has caused extensive damage to a portion of the road, including felling trees and causing boulders to block the road. He discussed issues with the USFS and a couple of miners in the area, including blocked access to a mining claim due to locked gates. Harvey said that he and others discovered recently that that particular road is an RS (Revised Statute) 2477 road, having been listed in 1900, and that he will be informing the USFS that the road needs to be back in working condition.

Bainter, Executive Director of the Baker County Chamber of Commerce, voiced some concerns about some state legislation, regarding the effects of mandatory sick leave, retirement issues, and what effects there would be, with raising the minimum wage in the state, through the voting process. She said she spoke with, and explained the issues to Senator Jeff Merkely, with raising the minimum wage, and the effects on businesses.

McComb made some comments about stagnant wages in the U.S. for decades, due to the migration of jobs offshore, and automated industry. He said that workers have lost their bargaining positions, and that profits have all gone to the top 1%. There's a lot of money nationally he said, that needs to be put into the hands of working people, so they can have a living wage, and not have to worry about every penny they spend.

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- We were impressed to hear other hikers tell their kids to leave the fawn that was bedded down in the grass alone. It was up the hill and its mom had to be near. They wanted to cause no harm, and I liked seeing animals treated with sense.

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