

Fishing? How bad can luck get?



We have all heard the old wag, "If it wasn't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all." Well, this winter steelhead season I gave a whole new meaning to bad luck. I brought bad luck to the pinnacle, the Rodney Dangerfield of bad luck.

Each winter I join a small rag-tag group of plunkers to fish for steelhead. Basically, the same group gets together on the river bank to plunk. What is plunking?

As one of my weird fishing buddies put it, "It's not rocket psychiatry." We cast out bait/lures, anchored to a heavy sinker, place the rod in a holder, attach a bell to the rod, and wait for an unsuspecting steelhead to swim past.

We sit back in lawn chairs, on five gallon buckets or coolers, and shoot the breeze, maybe even build a fire. It becomes a social affair.

Now, I'll admit, some of these guys seem to have better bait, pick better spots, choose better color combinations, or just have better luck. But, basically, we are all doing the same thing.

A common practice in fishing for steelhead or salmon, is "handing off the rod." The daily bag limit is two fish. A person lands a fish and tags it. He may have driven a long way and doesn't want to quit fishing.

Hooks another fish, can legally hand off the rod and let that person land and tag the fish. It seems to work well. He continues to fish.

Same thing happens boat fishing. It is amazing how one

rod may be "the hot rod." It can happen in a boat with a guide where the guide baits up all hooks the same way, yet one rod hooks most of the fish.

Back to the 2016-17 season. I am clumsy and have poor balance. I'm fortunate to have a strong, young friend to take care of me on plunking trips. He is a good fisherman. If there is a current "hot spot" on the river, he's there, catches his share of steelhead.

He lands a fish. "Next one is yours," he assures me. Now my odds double. I'm fishing two rods. He hooks #2, calls for me, I risk a mud bath lumbering through ankle-deep mud to land a big fish. It's a wild fish, has to be released.

This happens 2-3 times over the winter. Meanwhile, steelhead continue to swim past my offering, and guys on both sides of me hook them.

Then comes the "coup de grace." It has been a slow day. Four of us settle into a comfortable area we like. We are basically the appropriate 15-

20 feet apart-waiting, sharing stories. Doug, sitting down river from me, has first shot at fish heading upriver. Don is above me, and Mike above him.

Doug lands a nice hatchery fish.

"Get ready, you're next, now you're fishing two rods," he adds.

Mike hooks up and lands a twin to Doug's fish. "Ok. G.I, now you're fishing three rods."

Don hooks up and lands another. "Now you're fishing four," he offers, followed by a hearty round of laughter.

Two hours pass, and not a nibble. I begin to question it all. Can my luck get any worse?

I begin to think about my situation. Pressure is mounting. I need to hook and land a fish. Is it becoming an ego thing? I have always had pride in my ability to catch fish. I usually manage to catch my share of steelhead. Never had a season like this. Not a fish on my tag.

It's not like I don't know what I'm doing. I have even had a couple of plunking articles published. Of course, I may have casually mentioned, a time or two, that I have won the big steelhead derby of my fishing club, four of the last five years.

Am I losing sight of "fishing is supposed to be fun?" I have tried everything.

I even resort to our old "Snickers Bar" luck theory. On a slow day, no fish, break out the old Snickers bar, hook a fish. It has worked for us on trips from the Columbia to a lodge in British Columbia. Hell, I gained 10 pounds on Snickers over the season, and no fish.

"Let's go at 5 a.m. to secure a good spot," Doug suggests.

"How about 4:30?" I respond.

We get there an hour before fishing light.

April 30, most plunkers have given up, only three of us on the river. I have given in and joined Doug in an area ankle-deep in mud. But, our

bait will be the first that fish see as they head upriver.

Suddenly, my bell flies through the air, rod slams down, as a powerful fish rips off line, headed downriver. My heart is pounding. "Please fish Gods, let it be a hatchery fish."

An epic battle ensues that could have been entertaining to watch. Doug needs me to ease down a small muddy slope so he can net the fish. But, he's afraid I could slip into the river.

Scotty, has joined us, and comes up with a plan. He takes a firm grip on me from behind, and holds on until the 10 pound hatchery fish is landed.

I sit down in my lawn chair, catch my breath. First thing comes to mind, I remember what an old fishing buddy once said, after he had landed his first fish in multiple trips; "By gum, even an old blind sow will find an acorn now and then."

Relief, pressure off, I have finally found my acorn.

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OFF, continued from Page 10

The Titans added three runs in the sixth and four more in the seventh.

Danner helped herself out at the plate in the bottom of the fifth, knocking in Emma Kinler with a RBI double to tie the game 5-5 in the bottom of the fifth but the Lady Celts couldn't get anything going offensively in the sixth or seventh.

Witt led McNary at the plate, going 2-for-2 with two walks and two runs scored. Ebner and Carr each also had two hits in the loss, which was just the Lady Celts second in league play.

"It's a tough one tonight but we'll eat it," Wise said.

McNary outscored North Salem 36-0 in a double header on Friday, April 28, winning the first game 14-0 in five innings

and then the second 22-0 in four innings.

Witt was 6-for-7 with five runs and three RBIs between the two games. Carr was 5-for-7 with seven RBIs and four runs. Ebner added four hits, six runs and four RBIs.

Danner pitched eight shut-out innings, allowing just one hit while striking out eight. Carr got the final three outs of the second game to complete the series shutout.

"These guys played really well on Friday," Wise said. "The defense was there. Faith did a really good job pitching. We hit the ball well. It was just good solid wins. Everybody did a great job. Friday was fun."

McNary needed 11 innings to sweep the series with South Salem as the Lady Celts won 5-4 on Wednesday, April 26.

McNary tied the game 3-3 in the bottom of the fifth as Ebner doubled to score Witt. But

neither team was able to score in the sixth or seventh, sending the game into extra innings.

Even beginning the eighth and ninth innings with a runner at second base, neither team was able to cash in and the game remained tied 3-3 heading to the 10th. South Salem scored in the top of the inning but the Lady Celts were able to answer as Ebner doubled on a line drive to left field, scoring Kendyl Jennings.

Duran then scored the winning run in the bottom of the 11th when Bingenheimer put the ball in play and South Salem made an error at first base.

Danner pitched all 11 innings to earn the win.

"In my coaching career, 15-16 years, I don't ever remember going 11 innings," Wise said.

LESTER, continued from Page 10

"There's a lot of amazing super talented athletes that will be at that event," Lester said.

"Never in a million years would I of thought that I could be there. Even if I don't win, I still can't thank them enough for this opportunity. I can't thank my coaches and OSAA for giving me the opportunity to help people. Even if I don't win, the scholarship is going to someone who helped people, too, so I can't be upset about that."

Lester wants to be a nurse and would be the first in her family to go to college.

Lester's volunteer work includes the OSAA foundation, which provides athletes in need with clothes, shoes and equipment.

The foundation gets lists from different schools, goes shopping at DICK'S Sporting Goods and then boxes the items up at the OSAA office in Wilsonville.

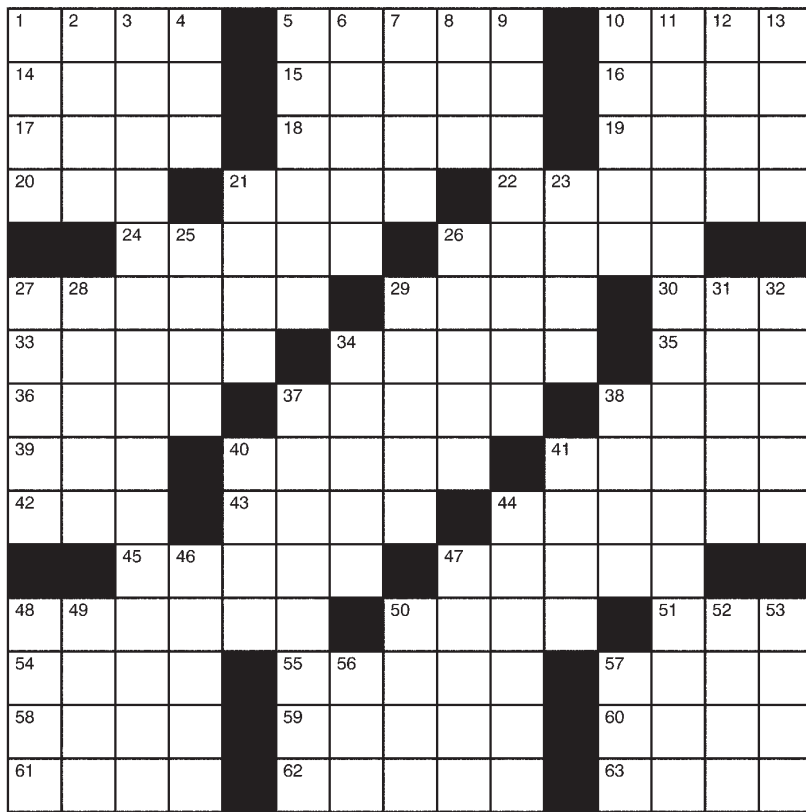
"That's one of my favorite things to do because then I feel like I can help athletes all over Oregon," said Lester, who also volunteers at different championship events—football, volleyball, wrestling and track and field.

Her main job is social media.

"I love sports and I just love helping out," Lester said.

crossword

Illustrious Italians



CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Type of tax
- 5 Chastises
- 10 Salad
- 14 Bread spread
- 15 Heaven
- 16 Insect stage
- 17 Hit hard
- 18 Footloose fellow
- 19 Maple tree genus
- 20 Chinese river
- 21 Uncultured
- 22 Ascending
- 24 Quartz variety
- 26 Soothing
- 27 Martial art
- 29 Wasteland tract
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- 35 Great general
- 36 Hebrew prophet
- 37 Infective agent
- 38 Champion jumper
- 39 Invitation
- 40 Greek letters
- 41 Things stored
- 42 ___ standstill
- 43 Soviet sea
- 44 Crude

DOWN

- 1 Elegant
- 2 Earthen jar
- 3 Illustrious Italian
- 4 Record
- 5 Early English king
- 6 Habitation
- 7 Alaskan locale
- 8 Stowe's Little ___
- 9 Painstaking
- 10 Bring forth
- 11 Illustrious Italian
- 12 Copycat
- 13 City section
- 21 Be worthy of
- 23 Reduce

- 25 Dames
- 26 Not genuine
- 27 Islam shrine
- 28 Confess
- 29 Righteous
- 31 Evil glances
- 32 Gettysburg general
- 34 Essential
- 37 Open galleries
- 38 Young farm animal
- 40 Author Grey
- 41 Difficulty
- 44 Vegetable
- 46 Acid salt
- 47 Enclosed
- 48 GI offense
- 49 Frog genus
- 50 ___ ranches
- 52 In a competent way
- 53 Thickens
- 56 Cordoba cheer
- 57 Weapon

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