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Volcanoes plan for season with fan restriction

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

The Salem-Keizer Volcanoes are still making plans to return to the field in 2020, even if it means playing with a limited number of fans in the stands.

On Thursday, May 7, Gov. Kate Brown said in a press conference that large gatherings, including sporting events, should be cancelled or modified until October — unless effective prevention and treatment for the coronavirus is available.

The announcement puts the Volcanoes in a precarious situation, especially since their home opener is scheduled for June 17.

Even though Oregon is one the only states to have made such an announcement to this point, the seven other organizations have similar concerns on how they can operate due to the coronavirus, which is why representatives from each Northwest League (NWL) organization met on Wednesday, May 13 to discuss if and how they could move forward if a restriction on fans was in place for the entire season.

“We talked about if we could operate at 50 percent

capacity or even 25 percent capacity. The league itself is hoping to have three to four different plans in place based on how things move forward from here,” Volcanoes CEO Mickey Walker said. “We don’t know how it will play out. We just want to have different plans in place.”

If the NWL is able to have a season with limited fans, Walker says that teams would request assistance from their Major League Baseball (MLB) affiliates to cover some expenses in order to make that a reality.

Earlier this month, MLB owners and league management finalized a plan that would allow baseball to start in early-July without fans — in order to proceed with an abbreviated season, all proposed ideas would need to be agreed upon by the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA).

This is a feasible solution for the MLB because of their multi-billion dollar television agreements — a luxury that isn’t available to Minor League teams.

While Walker is hoping that, if a season takes place,



Travis Perry had a record of 5-2 in 14 appearances last season for the Volcanoes.

Please see SKV, Page A11

File

KLL beginning to shift focus to fall season

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

It’s not official yet, but it’s becoming more and more likely that Keizer Little League (KLL) won’t hold a spring/summer season due to the coronavirus.

On Wednesday, May 13, the KLL Board of Directors decided that if they couldn’t get teams together to practice by June 1, then they would elect to cancel the season.

To make matters worse for KLL’s chances of an abbreviated season, Gov. Kate Brown denied Marion County’s attempt to begin the reopening process last week due to too many recent hospitalizations of COVID-19 patients and a high percentage of cases that can’t be traced.

“I think our season will



KLL is hoping to have a more substantial fall season starting in late-August.

likely get canceled,” KLL President Ryan Siegel said. “We already have parents asking for refunds.”

For the first time since 1947, there will not be a Little League World Series this summer as Little League International cancelled the an-

nual tournament last month. The decision had a trickle-down effect for programs across the state — and across the country.

State tournaments have been axed at every level and the District 7 Tournament has also been cancelled. Out-

of the 14 programs affiliated with District 7, KLL is the only one that hasn’t yet canceled their regular season.

If KLL does elect to have a shortened season, the plan would be to only have Tee-Ball, Double-A and Triple-A options available. According to Siegel, KLL’s Majors and Juniors squads wouldn’t have any teams to play since all the other District 7 programs cancelled their respective seasons.

“Our older kids wouldn’t have anyone to play against

unless we traveled up to Portland, but it looks like they won’t be reopening soon,” Siegel said.

“It’s obviously going to look different, especially because we could lose a lot of kids to other sports.”

— Ryan Siegel, KLL President

in his first year at the KLL President after taking over for Brad Arnsmeier. What looked to be like a promising first season at the helm of

KLL has turned into a trial by fire.

“We were so excited coming into this year. Our registration numbers were up and we had a great set up to rent out the facility to an outside user group. Then, it was like a huge truck hit us,” Siegel said. “The most stressful part is not knowing what’s coming next and trying to keep parents informed when I don’t even have any new information.”

However, KLL plans to put a greater emphasis on fall baseball this year if teams are able to play. Siegel is hoping to turn the fall season into what the spring season would have been. There won’t be tournament play, but the plan is to have

Please see KLL, Page A11

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