



orthopedics
of oregon

**SAME DAY URGENT INJURY CARE
CALL 503.540.6300**

MONDAY - FRIDAY, 8AM - 5PM | BY APPOINTMENT ONLY | HOPEORTHOPEDICS.COM

KeizerSports

KEIZERTIMES.COM

“Let Them Play” group fights for youth sports

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Over the last three-and-a-half months, virtually all sports have been put on hold due to the spread of COVID-19.

While professional and college sports have a strategy on a return to action, parents all over the state have been pleading with government officials to let all youth athletes return to playing their favorite sports.

A petition, intended to catch the attention of Gov. Kate Brown, called “Let Them Play! Oregonians for Athletes” has received more than 18,000 signatures and has more than 25,000 Facebook members. The purpose of the petition is to urge Gov.

Brown to prioritize youth and high school sports across the state.

The “Let Them Play” group also organized a rally outside of the state capitol on Sunday, June 14.

McNary Youth Football (MYF) President Kyle Hughes has been a big advocate for the “Let Them Play” movement, and even organized a two-day phone call campaign to Gov. Brown’s office.

“It’s a good way to get different voices out there on behalf of kids. Kids need that sports outlet to get them back to normal life,” Hughes said.

The vast majority of the state is in the phase two re-opening process, which means that many kids have been allowed to participate in athletic-related activities.

Earlier in June, the OSAA released their second phase of guidance for high school athletics, which allows student-athletes to come back to their school facilities and participate in modified workouts, conditioning and individual drills — Salem-Keizer prep athletes aren’t allowed to participate until July 1, which

is when local facilities will open back up.

Youth sports, where physical contact is limited, have been able to start competition back up under the state’s phase two guidelines — there were a small number of youth baseball and softball games taking place in Oregon over Father’s Day weekend. However, sports that involve participants coming into bodily contact are prohibited under phase two restrictions.

“It’s a good way to get different voices out there on behalf of kids. Kids need that sports outlet to get them back to normal life.”

— Kyle Hughes,
MYF President

this category, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

This did not sit well with Jackson County Commissioner Rick Dyer and several parents in Southern Oregon — who are responsible for getting the petition started.

“There is no question that this situation will lead to numerous adverse effects to our children’s physical and mental health, attendance and performance in school, personal and professional growth and too many more negative consequences to mention. It will also create far-reaching ripple effects that will be felt in Oregon for many years. With the world in the state it is in currently, it is more imperative than ever to ensure our kids are able to be involved in these positive and constructive activities,” the petition says on their website, letthemplayoregon.com

Members of the “Let Them Play” group also believe that college and professional athletes in the state are getting preferential treatment — Brown has allowed Oregon college athletes to return to their facilities to begin



Pierce Walker runs to daylight in a McNary Youth Football eighth grade game from last season. McNary Youth Football has been involved with the “Let Them Play” campaign for the last few weeks.

voluntary workouts. Since June 1, when the NCAA began permitting voluntary workouts on college campuses, more than 100 positive COVID-19 cases have affected collegiate athletes throughout the country. However, the NCAA is still preparing to play games this fall, even if a vaccine or cure isn’t found.

“It was also reported that there will be exceptions made for college and pro sports teams to play. This not only acknowledges the fact that these activities can be engaged in safely, it creates an unacceptable disparity that needs to be rectified. Our kids need to be represented fairly in this decision and a plan to allow them to engage in their activities needs to be developed and adopted,” the petition says.

“There are thousands of concerned parents, teachers, coaches, athletes and other citizens ready to be a part of that solution. We need swift

and decisive action on this immediately so our kids can begin to engage in their fall sports programs without unnecessary delays.”

As of Tuesday, June 22, there have been 703 cases of COVID-19 among residents ages 0-19 — a group that represents 23 percent of Oregon’s population. However, there have been no deaths and only 11 hospitalizations.

Hughes knows that having football, and other sports, return to normalcy right now isn’t realistic. He just wants more transparency from the Governor.

“I feel like the line just keeps adjusting. It would be nice to know what the

thought process is behind making these restrictions,” Hughes said.

Earlier this month, MYF started holding voluntary workouts at the grass fields at Keizer Little League.

The workouts mostly consist of speed and agility drills, but Hughes did mention that he’s able to split kids in multiple groups to work on quarterback and receiver drills. There is one football in each group, which is cleaned and sanitized after every repetition.

“We’re just trying to get kids out of the house and give them the ability to see their friends and stay in shape,” Hughes said. “But we

are also doing what we need to do to stay safe.”

Hughes admitted that he isn’t concerned about the outbreaks at different colleges. But while he and the “Let Them Play” group fight for making fall sports happen, Hughes wants to make sure his players are being incredibly cautious during their workouts.

“It doesn’t worry me being out there. We take every precaution we can. Because (COVID-19) may not effect one of our kids, but it could effect someone’s parents or grandparents. If any of our kids are feeling any symptoms whatsoever, they need to stay home,” Hughes said.

Volcanoes hosting 13th annual patriotic tribute



Although there won’t be baseball at Volcanoes Stadium this Independence Day due to COVID-19, the Volcanoes are still planning their annual patriotic tribute with a drive-in celebration that will feature recognition of military heroes, swearing-in of members to the armed services, a fallen warrior memorial and many tributes to those who have defended our country with multiple deployments.

A concert by JT & The

Tourists will precede the patriotic ceremony.

The night will conclude with a fireworks show, presented by McDonalds and supported by the Volcanoes’ new beverage partner Coca-Cola.

“In light of all that is going on, we feel it is vital to continue this great tradition and are adding a concert to help lift the spirits of all who will attend,” said Volcanoes CEO Mickey Walker. Gates will open at 5:30 p.m.

The concert is scheduled to take place from 6-8 p.m. followed by the patriotic tribute from 8 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. The fireworks show will begin around 10 p.m.

There will be a limited number of tickets available — must be purchased in advance of the event online at www.volcanoesbaseball.com.

The admission is \$20 per carload. Social distancing protocols are expected to be followed.

Keizertimes

Wheatland Publishing Corp.

142 Chemawa Road N. • Keizer, Oregon 97303

Phone: 503.390.1051 • www.keizertimes.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Eric A. Howald
editor@keizertimes.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Matt Rawlings
news@keizertimes.com

COMMUNITY REPORTER

Lauren Murphy
reporter@keizertimes.com

ADVERTISING

Stephanie Wittman
advertising@keizertimes.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER & GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Andrew Jackson
graphics@keizertimes.com

LEGAL NOTICES

legals@keizertimes.com

BUSINESS MANAGER

Leah Stevens
billing@keizertimes.com

RECEPTION

Lori Beyeler



EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Lyndon Zaitz
publisher@keizertimes.com
2019-2020 President
Oregon Newspaper
Publishers Association

facebook

facebook.com/keizertimes

SUBSCRIPTIONS

One year:
\$35 in Marion County,
\$43 outside Marion County,
\$55 outside Oregon

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

Publication No: USPS 679-430

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:

Keizertimes Circulation
142 Chemawa Road N.
Keizer, OR 97303

Periodical postage paid at
Salem, Oregon

twitter

twitter.com/keizertimes