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Celts may return to gridiron action

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

After the OSAA delayed making a final decision on high school football earlier in the week due to COVID-19 restrictions, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown released new guidance on Wednesday for outdoor sports that would make a return of high school football a probability this spring.

Football teams around the state began non-contact practice on Monday, Feb. 8 in preparation for a season that they weren't sure was even going to happen — contact sports have been prohibited by the state for nearly a year. Now, outdoor contact sports will be allowed to resume depending on the risk level of the county.

"It's not lost on me that this decision will allow high school football to resume," Gov. Brown said.

Following the healthy and safety guidelines from Oregon Health Authority, full-contact football practices and games will be allowed to resume in Lower Risk and Moderate Risk counties starting this week.

For High Risk and Extreme Risk counties, such as Mari-

on County, schools and youth sports organizations have the ability to opt-in to resuming football practices and games with additional protocols in place — such as site responsive testing for symptomatic individuals and close contacts, contact information for contact tracing and a waiver identifying health and safety risks as well as committing to isolation and quarantine if exposed to COVID-19.

"This has been a difficult year for Oregon's youth athletes and, as our COVID-19 numbers have dropped, I have been committed to working with our health experts to reevaluate our protocols for sports," Gov. Brown said. "School sports play an important role in fostering students' mental, emotional, and physical health. We will proceed with caution, to ensure that teams are following health and safety precautions to protect our athletes, their families, and their communities."

Schools wanting to opt-in for the football season must also have limited in-person instruction taking place with a plan to move to a hybrid model later in the school year — all counties currently meet the

requirements to hold limited in-person instruction.

"If our school gyms, fields, and weight rooms are to re-open, we owe it to Oregon's children to make sure our classrooms, libraries, and science labs fully reopen as well," Gov. Brown said.

Gov. Brown also stated that if the state experiences increases in COVID-19 cases, that outdoor contact sports would be shut down again, which is why she encouraged student athletes to be responsible in their social interactions off the field.

"To all of Oregon high school athletes: I am asking you now be leaders in your communities. We've given you the chance to play, but with that opportunity comes great responsibility. If COVID-19 numbers spike, we may have to shut down contact sports again. When you are off the field, set the example for your peers: wear a mask, maintain physical distance and avoid social gatherings," Gov. Brown said.

The OSAA Executive Board is meeting on Wednesday Feb. 17 to make a final determination for all Season 2 sports.



McNary quarterback Erik Barker runs through the South Salem defense for a first down in a game from 2019. File

The unique history of the Portland Mavericks

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

After a 44-year hiatus, the Portland Mavericks will return to action as a part of the four-team independent Mavericks League coming to Volcanoes Stadium this summer — the Volcanoes bought the rights to the Mavericks for an undisclosed amount earlier this year.

Although they haven't played an official game since 1977, the Portland Mavericks have an incredibly unique history in the minor leagues. They played their home games at Civic Stadium — now known as Providence Park, home to the Portland Timbers.

The Mavericks joined the Class A Northwest League

(NWL) as an independent club after the Portland Beavers of the Pacific Coast League (PCL) left the city in 1972 and became the Spokane Indians.

The Mavericks were owned by actor Bing Russell, an ex-minor league player — although he was much more well known for playing the role of the deputy on the show *Bonanza*. Russell was also the father of Hollywood star Kurt Russell, who played for the Mavericks in their inaugural season.

When Russell held open tryouts in June of 1973, a total of 150 of minor league castoffs and ex-big leaguers showed up to attempt to salvage their respective baseball careers.

At the time, the Mavericks were the only independent professional baseball team in the country and players were paid just \$300 per month.

Many thought it would be difficult for an independent team to compete against recently drafted players that were being groomed for the major leagues — Ozzie Smith, Rickey Henderson, Dave Henderson, Dave Stewart, Mike Scioscia and Pedro Guerrero all played against the Mavericks — but this rag-tag group of players were consistently one of the best teams in the NWL for five straight seasons.

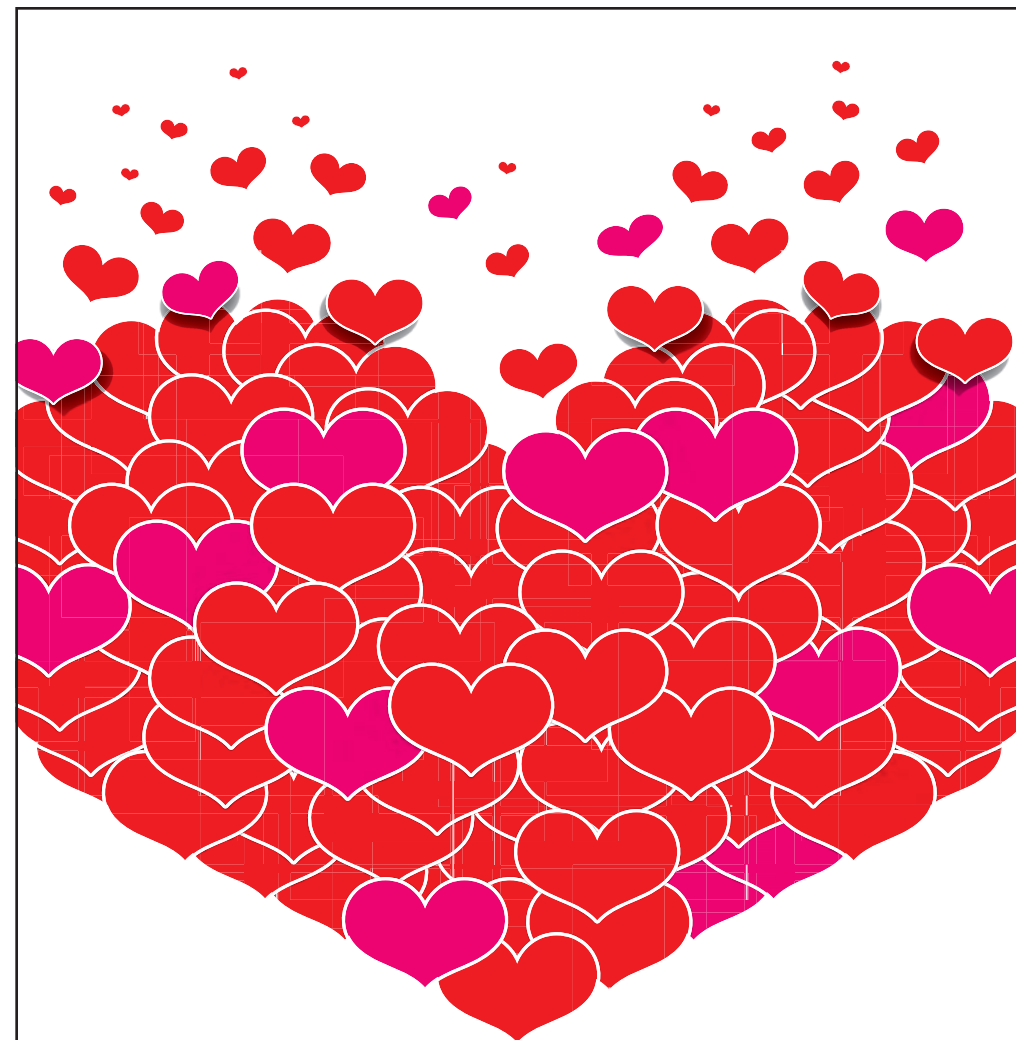
In 1973, the Mavericks finished the season with a 45-35 record and won the

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Mavericks owner Bing Russell addresses his team at the old Civic Stadium.



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