



Fishing is best 'when rivers drop and waters clear after a rain'

Winter steelhead tips from a local pro

By **BUZZ RAMSAY**
Outdoor News Columnist

Steelheading this time of year is a challenging sport. After all, how many people think about fishing in the middle of the winter? Dealing with the rain, hail, snow, and cold rivers that fluctuate from muddy-to-clear, depending on the ever-changing weather conditions, is what makes this sport difficult for some and exciting to others. The rewards can be great (if you dress for the occasion) big hard fighting fish and scenery that at times can be breathtaking.

To be successful takes persistence, well honed angling skills and an understanding of the fish you are after. To help figure these critters out, remember that in most situations steelhead prefer to lie in water less than ten feet deep. Depths averaging five-to-eight feet and moving the speed of a brisk walk are what you should look for, especially if the river bottom is con-



toured, strewn with boulders and/or running next to a cut bank. If the water is higher than normal, fish will be found anywhere the current slows. This usually means near shore, in big, wide drifts, or along current edges.

Steelhead love to rest in the tail-out (end) of a hole, but will move farther into the drift if pressured or when the water is low and clear. They migrate most during the morning and evening time periods, on a full moon – providing there is no cloud cover, and when the river

is high, green and dropping from a recent rain storm. All these are general rules but remember that fish are where you find them and since they can be aggressive biters, it pays to try a few casts in every good looking spot.

Where you fish, high or low, on a river should depend on water conditions. The basic rule is, if the water is high, fish high. If the water is low, (and been that way for awhile) fish low on the river.

Fishing is best, when rivers drop and waters clear after a rain. Steel-

head are drawn upstream by the smell of fresh water. As water levels drop, moving fish begin to hold in the holes, mostly near the tailouts. After a storm and water fluctuation, good fishing can last from a few days to a week or more, depending on the run size.

Angling effort normally increases during these time periods. As the water levels drop and clear, most fish numbers are thinned by sport harvest – the rest disperse throughout the river. This is a time when anglers wait (some pray) for the next rainstorm and subsequent rise in water level which will encourage another wave of fish to enter rivers.

Water conditions can dictate which technique will be the most effective. Under extreme low water try drifting fishing a Corky Drifter near bottom in combination with a small egg cluster or sand shrimp, float a steelhead jig below a float, or cast-and-retrieve a weighted spinner. Under high turbid water conditions, I've always enjoyed the best success drift fishing with a larger (or two) drift bobbers like a Corky Drifter rigged with an 18-inch leader and pencil weight or large

slinky style sinker.

Rivers in the mid-Columbia offering opportunity for winter run steelhead include the Hood River, White Salmon, Wind and Rock Creek. While the Wind and White Salmon are no longer stocked with hatchery winter steelhead they are open to fishing and there is a real opportunity to capture a late-returning summer steelhead or winter steelhead that has strayed from another river system.

According to ODF&W biologist Jason Seals, the department has continued a hatchery brood-stock program on the Hood River by releasing 50,000 smolt annually. These progeny-of-wild fish start returning in late December or early January and run through mid-April – normally peaking in March.

Biologist John Weinheimer with WDFW said that although the department has stopped stocking the Wind and White Salmon with hatchery winter runs they've started a new program on Rock Creek by releasing 20,000 fin-clipped hatchery smolt. These fish should begin returning this month and remain in the system through winter.

Eagles 39, Lions 24



Team wrestling key to HRV victory

By **ADAM LAPIERRE**
News staff writer

HRV wrestling hosted its first home dual meet of the season Tuesday night, and for those in the audience expecting an exciting show, the action did not disappoint. After losing the first five matches and falling behind 18-6 (HRV picked up a forfeit at 103 pounds) to the visiting St. Helens Lions (5A Special Dist. 1), the Eagles rebounded by winning six out of the last eight matches to finish with a 39-24 team victory.

"We expected a good fight tonight and that's what we got," coach Trent Kroll said after the dual. "I'm very pleased with how we competed. This result is a great example of team wrestling. Our focus was to get pins and not give up pins to maximize points, and we did that phenomenally."

In dual meets, a pin is worth six team points, a technical fall (win by 15 points) is worth five, a major decision (win by eight or more) is

worth four points, a decision (win by seven or less) is worth three and a forfeit is worth six. While St. Helens won seven matches to HRV's six, the Eagles picked up five pins and a forfeit, while giving up just two pins.

"We talked about that before the dual, about the importance of wrestling as a team and fighting for every point possible," Kroll said. "All but two of the matches we lost were close, and the fact that we gave up just three team points in those matches, along with picking up five pins, is the reason we finished with the win."

After accepting a forfeit at 106 pounds, Jessica DeHart was up first for the Eagles at 112. In one of the most exciting matches of the night, DeHart used her signature takedown, the fireman's carry, once in the first period and once in the second to take a 4-2 lead going into the final two minutes. After getting taken down with less than a minute remaining, DeHart managed an escape to take a

one-point lead in the final ten seconds of the match. In one last act of desperation, her opponent charged in and scored the final takedown just as the buzzer sounded to take the 6-5 win.

Next up was the freshman duo of Angel Jones and Jason Shaner, both of whom showed great promise in their home varsity dual opener; Jones lost 12-9 and Shaner 11-7. Dylan Peterson lost by fall, then James Estes lost a close 4-3 battle before senior Jorge Ortega turned the tides with a 6-4 win off a takedown and two nearfall in the first period and a reversal in the second. Senior Chris Castro got the crowd fired up with a third round pin after trailing 1-2 through the second period.

Momentum continued with Trystan Fischer, who hammered his opponent to the mat in the opening seconds for a first round pin. Senior Steven Swafford then punished his opponent through two rounds before pinning him in the third for



Photo by Adam Lapierre

PICKING UP PINS Tuesday night in HRV's home dual vs. St. Helens are (top) James Estes and Max Lane. The Eagles had five pins in the dual while giving up two, which resulted in the 39-24 win.

six more team points. Oscar Villegas lost by fall to St. Helens all-star Myles Terry, which narrowed HRV's lead to just three points. Mark Reyes and Max Lane delivered under pressure with two pins – Reyes in the second round and Lane in the first minute – that sealed the team win. Justin Wilson finished the night with a hard-fought 5-3 overtime loss for a final score of 39-27.

Tuesday's dual, originally scheduled for Dec. 4 but delayed due to bad weather, was a special fundraiser run through the nation-wide PinCancer organization, whose motto is "The World's toughest sport taking on the world's toughest opponent." Through community donations, the kids raised \$2,000 for the organization. Pin Cancer's 2015 goal is to raise

\$250,000 to support programs at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

"Hosting a Pin Cancer Dual was a great experience for everyone involved, especially the kids," Kroll said. "It allows our wrestlers to serve in their community, while bringing great publicity to a worthwhile cause. I am proud of our team and how we all helped to fundraise for this charity."

HRV ski team sweeps last week's competition

Lucy McLean continued her run of dominance in high school ski racing last weekend with another first place finish in Mt. Hood Ski League slalom action Sunday at Mt. Hood Meadows. The win – her fourth consecutive first-place finish this season – propelled the Hood River Valley High School varsity girls ski team to an overall win for a third straight time.

The HRV boys saw a change of pace its finishing order, with No. 1 skier Austin Keillor posting the fastest run of the day on his first run, but following with a DNF on his second run. William Lamer posted two solid runs to lead the Eagles with a third place finish

behind Eli Holeman of The Dalles and Colin Howe of Columbia. Charlie Sutherland and Onar Smith posted top ten finishes to help the boys team to an overall win.

The team has a break in action this week and picks back up next weekend with a slalom race at Ski Bowl, assuming there's enough snow on the course.

Varsity boys:

William Lamer: 3rd, 49.19
Charlie Sutherland: 4th, 50.83
Onar Smith: 9th, 1:04.27
Patrick Crompton: 17th, 1:14.13
Colson Zack: 18th, 1:15.15
Oskar Anderson, 22nd, 1:28.83
Varsity girls
Lucy McLean: 1st, 48.60
Mattea Schwab (Horizon): 3rd,



WILLIAM LAMER

52.46

Kelli Clarke: 4th, 52.74

Sophie Caldwell: 21st, 1:12.29

Freestyle:

HRVHS skiers dominated rail jam and slopestyle contests over the weekend at Mt. Hood Meadows, both in numbers and in per-



HANNAH BERGEMANN

formance.

In the rail jam competition, HRV was the only school to make an appearance, so it was an intersquad contest. Top three finishers for the girls were Hannah Bergemann in first, Savannah Brentlinger in second and Avrie Van Tilburg in third. For the boys top three were Tucker FitzSimons, Trey Roeseler and Sammy Stevenson.

Slopestyle top five were as follows: Girls – Hannah Bergemann, Savannah Boersma, Savannah Brentlinger, Avrie Van Tilburg and Nicolette Paulus; Boys – Tucker FitzSimons, Reece Carroll, Patrick Crompton, Jason Lebsack and Trey Roeseler.

Teacup Classic delayed due to lack of snow

Due to lack of snow, the Teacup Lake Nordic Club has rescheduled its annual Teacup Classic race for Feb. 22 with hopes that the dismal snowpack will improve by then. The event, originally scheduled for this Sunday, is an all-abilities Nordic race that includes a kids race at 10:30 a.m., a new 20K race starting at 11 a.m. and the traditional 5K race starting at 11:10 a.m. The event is a fundraiser for the club; suggested donations are \$20 for youth and \$35 for adults. TLNC maintains and regularly grooms the popular network of trails at Teacup Lake SnoPark along Highway 35, just north Mt. Hood Meadows. For more info or to register, visit www.teacupnordic.org.