

# SPORTS

## After stumble, snowboarder FitzSimons conquers trick

By **GABRIEL BRAVO**  
News staff writer

Hood River's hometown boy, Sean FitzSimons, competed in the Visa Big Air Dec. 20 at SunTrust Park in Atlanta. The event was sanctioned as an International Ski Federation snowboard and free ski world cup.

FitzSimons placed fifth behind Justus Henkes, Ryoma Kimata, Nicolas Laframboise and Chris Corning.

In the morning, participants slid down a 65-foot scaffold jump and had two runs to land a trick. Qualifiers got to run in the finals later that day.

During his qualifying runs, FitzSimons landed a front triple 1440. This trick entered FitzSimons into the finals in eight place.

This feat was not easy for

FitzSimons since the last time he attempted this trick, he landed on his head. During the Modena Skipass Big Air World Cup in Italy, FitzSimons failed a jump and was shaken by the incident.

"I can't remember anything on that trick," FitzSimons said. "The last flip is really scary because you go right over your head just before you land. So, I was a little bit nervous coming to this one because it was kind of the same build as in Italy. This one was also scaffolding so I was kind of tweaking. I was like, 'Oh god, I don't want to do this again.'"

Despite FitzSimons' failed triple 1440 attempt in Italy, the 19-year-old kept decided to try it during his qualification run.

"Before they were going to close practice I said, 'Alright. I



File photo

**SEAN** FitzSimons of Hood River boards down a rail in previous event.

guess I got to front triple real quick just to get it out of the way before the comp," FitzSimons

said. "I still had Modena, Italy, in the back of my head and didn't want to land on my head again.

So I just chucked it so hard and I didn't open my eyes until I felt myself come around three times

and then I just dropped out of the sky, broke my board's nose and tail and I had to run back into the athlete lounge and grab my other board."

FitzSimons had 15 minutes to get his backup board before qualifying runs began.

"There was a bunch of people in the stands," FitzSimons said. "I guess there was 11,000 people that showed up. Then I got a ton of snapchat and stories of all the homies back home that were watching. Shoutout to Hood River, who were watching."

For his next event, FitzSimons will compete in the Laax Open in Switzerland Jan. 13-18. Last year FitzSimons made it into finals and said if he rides well and consistently he can make it into finals again.

## Sandy Pioneers defeat Eagle boys, 89-61

By **GABRIEL BRAVO**  
News staff writer

In the final game of the year, Hood River Valley's varsity boys basketball team was defeated by Sandy High School 89-61 Friday, Dec. 27. Jason Maki, head coach for the Pioneers, said it was a much closer game than the score indicated.

"I played Hood River a bunch of times," Maki said. "We used to be in the same league back when it first started, and we've kept a rivalry going. We've even played them in the playoffs before. We knew they'd have a lot of energy; knew they had some shooters and knew they were going to play hard."

The Pioneers came out strong at the beginning of the game with seniors Pierce Roeder and Kaleb Hubbard sinking three three-pointers back to back. This built a lead that which Sandy was able to capitalize on.

Sandy had the upper hand at the end of the first quarter with a score of 26-14. At the end of the second quarter they had a similar point difference at 45-26.

During halftime Maki talked to the team about preserving their lead.

"We talked at halftime about playing defense and trying to make them take some tough shots," Maki said. "I felt our defense tightened up a bit, they had to take some tougher shots and we were able to out-run them a little bit. So, we got some transition baskets that were able to push the lead a little bit."



Photo by Gabriel Bravo

**HRV** senior Noah Webster looks to pass the ball as Sandy senior Orion Shaw closes down on him and other Sandy players scramble to guard Eagle players.

Lead scorers for Sandy include Roeder with 34 points, senior Colby Carson with nine and junior Laden Weathers with seven.

Even with the lead slowly slipping away, HRV senior Noah Webster kept hustling,

driving and making plays.

"I love the way Noah is playing," Dirks said. "He is working hard and competing every second no matter the score. The whole team is resilient. They want to win, and they are willing to sacrifice to make that

happen. The way we compete has never been in question from my point of view. I'm am proud of how hard we play."

Lead scorers for HRV include Webster with 22 points, junior Ian Searcy with 11 and junior Zac Wells and sopho-

more Emanuel Romero with eight each.

"I think (the loss) is a little humbling, and shows we have work to do," Dirks said. "We want to compete with the best teams, and at this point in the season we aren't there yet. I

have all the faith in the world that we can get there, but it's a process."

HRV is back in action Jan. 3 as they host Reynolds High School at 6:30 p.m.

## Local crossfit athlete raises money for competition trip in Italy

By **GABRIEL BRAVO**  
News staff writer

In a warmly lit dinner party on Friday, Dec. 27 at Farm Stand in Hood River, Alex Willis was serving food and raising money to go to the CrossFit Italian Showdown in Riccione, Italy, from April 24-26. The dinner party featured a menu of leafy greens and beet salad, festive chicken squash platter, flourless chocolate torte and berry cobbler.

"I got addicted really fast. I went to my first few classes and I was sold. I almost didn't even play lacrosse because I was so into it. Now I love it so much I want to pursue it as a competitor and maybe as a coach someday."

**Alex Willis**

With dinner attendees had a chance to enter a raffle and win a massage, a goodie bag and a Garmin Forerunner watch.

As a full-time student pursuing a degree in kinesiology, working part time at Farm Stand, and dedicating her time to the gym at CrossFit Viento, Willis is admired by many.



Submitted photo

**JEREMY LOVEBREED**, Sarah Guemperlein, Alex Willis, Brittany Douthit and Raquel Sanders at Farm Stand Friday, Dec. 27 after Willis' fundraising dinner. Attendees had a five course meal which included a chicken squash platter, lentil loaf with potato mash and mushroom gravy and berry cobbler.

Johannes Loschnigg, member at CrossFit Viento gym, is one of those people.

"She got incredibly good incredibly fast to the point where she is potentially going to competitions," Loschnigg said. "So everyone from the gym is super excited for her because she's doing so well and training so hard. I really was happy to

be able to play a part and do something in helping her go to one of these competitions."

Willis first began doing crossfit two years ago when her health teacher persuaded her to take a class and gave her the phone number for CrossFit athlete Regan Huckaby of Hood River.

"In my head it sounded

super expensive, but Regan said to come work out and not worry about the cost," Willis said. "I got addicted really fast. I went to my first few classes and I was sold. I almost didn't even play lacrosse because I was so into it. Now I love it so much I want to pursue it as a competitor and maybe as a coach someday."

Willis is addicted to cross fit because there is always something to work on, she said. The community also plays a big part in her dedication to the sport.

"I'm surrounded every day by such strong amazing women that are so selfless," Willis said. "There's people that are 65 and 16 working out

in the same gym and doing the same work out. It's super supportive and it's super fun too, in a weird sick way."

Willis said she's super grateful for everyone who's helped her out and blown away by their generosity.