

Father deals with grief one step at a time

By **RALPH BARTHOLDT**
Lewiston Tribune

On a clear day this month, Tom Steigers left his house in Missoula, Montana, and went for a walk.

It was around 8 in the morning when he stepped out the front door of the brick rancher in a quiet neighborhood where his son, Dylan, was raised. He paced slowly down a lane of trees, barely budding, and passed morning traffic on a usually busy thoroughfare.

He walked south across the Bitterroot River, flush with spring runoff, and continued along U.S. Highway 12 over Lolo Pass into Idaho on his way to La Grande.

With three pairs of shoes, dozens of socks and a backpack, Steigers — who will arrive in La Grande on Saturday — is walking still.

“It was an epiphany,” the 62-year-old said. “I knew it was time.”

Tom and Cyndi Steigers lost Dylan to a traumatic brain injury after he suffered a blow to the head in 2010 at a spring football scrimmage at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. Since then, the couple have joined an effort to protect area athletes from suffering a similar

“I am walking to La Grande to tie up loose ends. I knew all along I was going to do it.”

— Tom Steigers,
Missoula, Mont., resident who is scheduled to complete his 368-mile walk from his home to EOU’s Community Stadium on Saturday.

fate. The nonprofit Dylan Steigers Concussion Project helps educate, test and protect student-athletes from concussion-related injuries. The group pushed to get the first-ever concussion legislation passed in Montana, said Julie Cowan, a spokeswoman for the group.

Steigers’ 368-mile hike from Missoula, where his son was a two-time all-state football player at Sentinel High School, is raising money for the foundation. The group has raised more than \$5,000, one step at a time, on the way to a goal of \$10,000.

Despite the publicity surrounding the trek, Steigers’ journey is more personal.

Around the time of his son’s death, he lost his job and didn’t find time for closure.

“I didn’t get a chance to grieve him,” he said.

He is using the long walk, something he planned for several years — and which

simultaneously is raising money for a scholarship fund in Dylan’s name at EOU — as an opportunity.

“I am walking to La Grande to tie up loose ends,” he said. “I knew all along I was going to do it.”

The walk will bring attention to communities along the route about the dangers of concussions, and is meant to honor his son’s memory. It was originally planned to culminate May 6 as the football team finishes spring practices at the college stadium where Dylan suffered the concussion that ended his life, but Cowan is well ahead of his schedule.

Steigers doesn’t blame the school or its athletic program, he said. He meets regularly with coach Tim Camp when the team travels through Missoula to games in Montana, and they exchange text messages. Theirs is a quiet bond of friendship, he said, with Dylan at its epicenter.

“That boy loved his football,” he said.

Steigers, who was born in Lewiston and whose parents graduated from Lapwai High School, wants athletes to be aware of the need to stay on top of any head injuries they may suffer during practices and games.

“No game is worth risking your life for,” he said.

Cyndi Steigers designed brightly colored shirts with their son’s picture on the front, so motorists can see her son as her husband walks. It hasn’t been easy, he said. The narrow route has had him on alert for traffic.

“When I see a big one coming, I step off the shoulder into the ditch,” he said.

The miles along the Lochsa River were the most fruitful for peaceful thoughts, and he was anticipating quietude as he headed for the vistas above the Grande Ronde River south of Anatone.

“A lot of things go through your mind,” he said. “I reminisce a lot about my son. I do feel his presence with me every day.”

Camp is looking forward to joining Steigers as he completes his journey.

“He supports our program and we support him,” Camp said.



Ralph Bartholodt/Lewiston Tribune

Tom Steigers of Missoula, Mont., walks Wednesday along U.S. Highway 12 east of Lewiston. Steigers is making the 368-mile trek from Missoula to La Grande, Ore., to raise awareness about concussions as part of the Dylan Steigers Concussion Project.

HEUGLY: Scored 949 points in 55 career games at BMCC

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She also finished 15th in the NWAC in blocked shots with 23.

Her production did not go unnoticed, as she was chosen to the NWAC All-Star Team in 2016 and was one of just five women selected from the East Division. She was also named to the 2016 NWAC All-Eastern Region first team as well as the All-Defensive Team and Winter Term Academic Excellence Team.

“It has been a privelage to have the opportunity to coach Savannah the last two years,” said BMCC head women’s basketball coach Adam Driver in a press release. “She is an outstanding young woman off the court and an excellent student ... I truly believe Savannah will do great things at Western Oregon University and look

forward to watching her continued growth over the next two years.”

She played in 55 career games with Blue Mountain, scoring 949 total points (17.3 per game), grabbing 526 rebounds (9.6 per game) and shot a solid 52.5 percent from the floor during her career.

“It will be difficult to replace the production Savannah brought to the court,” Driver said, “but it will be infinitely more difficult to replace what she brought to the program in terms of humility and character.”

Heugly will be joining former Blue Mountain player Riley Gerlinger on Western Oregon this winter, as the Wolves are looking to improve from a disappointing 4-24 finish last season and have not had a winning season for more than eight years.

MCCOLLUM: Charlotte’s Kemba Walker second in voting

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tripled his scoring average from 2014-15 and helped the Trail Blazers finish fifth in the Western Conference after losing four starters last summer. He averaged 20.8 points per game in his third season.

His 14-point improvement is the most since Tony Campbell improved from an average of 6.2 points to 23.2 points from the 1988-89 to 1989-90 seasons.

McCollum also finished this season with 197 3-pointers, to rank him ninth in the league, and fourth-most for the Blazers in a single season. He joins Zach Randolph and Kevin Duckworth in winning the most improved award as Trail Blazers.

“This isn’t the last award he’s going to get in his long career,” said Portland general manager Neil Olshkey.

McCollum’s surge started in the opening game of the season, when he scored 37 points with 6-three pointers in a 112-94 victory over New Orleans. He said it was reminiscent of his first game on the varsity team in high school, when he scored 42.

Overall, McCollum averaged 20.8 points, 3.2 rebounds and 4.3 assists in 80 games, all starts. He scored in double figures in 79 games.

As the 10th overall pick for the Blazers in the 2013 draft, McCollum bided his time on the bench for his first two seasons while the Blazers had a starting lineup that featured LaMarcus Aldridge, Damian Lillard, Wesley Matthews, Nicolas Batum and Robin Lopez.

But a mass exodus last summer left Lillard as the only returning starter, and McCollum got his chance in

the Blazers’ backcourt.

“I’ve felt like I’ve been a good player, it’s just circumstances,” McCollum said. “I think there are lot of good players in the NBA who are in a box. Maybe they’ve got a lot of veterans in front of them, maybe they’re hurt, maybe the coach just doesn’t like to play young players. For me it was injuries, it was being a lottery pick drafted to a 50-win team.”

With one of the youngest rosters in the league (24.6 years), the Blazers were considered to be in rebuilding mode. But Portland over-achieved to earn the fifth seed in the West and a first-round playoff series against the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Blazers are down 0-2 to the Clippers, but now get to return home for Game 3 on Saturday night.

McCollum received 101 first-place votes and 559 points Friday from a panel of 130 sports writers and broadcasters throughout the U.S. and Canada. Charlotte’s Kemba Walker was second with seven first-place votes and 166 points, while Giannis Antetokounmpo of Milwaukee got four first-place votes and 99 points.

Golden State’s Stephen Curry finished fourth after winning the MVP award last season. Curry, the favorite to repeat as MVP, garnered seven first-place votes and 83 points after a record-setting season for himself and the Warriors.

“A lot of great players have received it, Jimmy Butler being one of the most recent. Kevin Love, Z-Bo, Duckworth, among many others,” McCollum said. “Hopefully I can continue to trend upward like those guys did.”

PREPS: Cougars stay perfect atop EOL standings

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for the doubleheader, as he was an absolute force at the plate. He finished a combined 6-6 on the day with two doubles, two runs scored, three RBI and a solo home run.

In game one, Pilot Rock did not score its runs until the bottom of the fifth inning when Thieme ripped a double into left field that scored Damon Ward and Weinke to cut the deficit to 12-2, which would stand for the final score.

Then in game two, Pilot Rock and Burns were tied at 2-2 after one inning of play, but then the Hilanders tagged Weinke for 10 runs in the third inning to blow the game open. In that inning 11 batters came to the plate before recording an out and 15 batters came to the plate overall.

The Rockets did not score again until the bottom of the fifth inning, where Thieme led off with his home run followed by a double from Pierce and a single from Sean Simmons to set up a run-scoring groundout from Ward to make it a 16-4 game.

Pilot Rock will look to end their losing streak on Tuesday when they host Mac-Hi at 4:30 p.m.

Game 1			R	H	E
BHS	207 30	—	12	10	0
PRH	000 02	—	2	6	0
Heckman and Reid (4). Pierce, W — Heckman, L — Pierce.					
2B — Lewellen 3, Heckman, Reid (BHS). Thieme, Weinke 2 (PRH). HR — Lachappelle (BHS).					
Game 2			R	H	E
BHS	2010 13	—	16	11	0
PRH	200 02	—	4	5	0
McDonald, Weinke and Ward (4). W — McDonald, L — Weinke.					
2B — Lewellen, Lachappelle (BHS). Thieme, Pierce (PRH). HR — Tiller, Reid (BHS). Thieme (PRH).					

Softball

ECHO 8, GRANT UNION 2 — At John Day, the Echo Cougars kept rolling through league play as the defeated the Grant Union Prospectors on Friday afternoon.

The Cougars (14-4, 9-0 EOL)

jumped on the Prospectors right from the start with two runs in the top of the first inning. Jamie Christopher scored the first run of the game coming in from third on a wild pitch for a 1-0 lead, and then Kenzie Blankenship made it 2-0 with a sacrifice fly that brought in Hannah McCarty.

Then in the fourth inning, McCarty scored on a passed ball to make it 3-1 Cougars, followed by a sac fly from Alex Pollock and an RBI double to right field off the bat of Raychal Campana for a 4-1 lead.

Christopher finished 2-4 with two runs scored and McCarty was 1-3 with three runs scored, while Blankenship was 1-2 with one run and two RBI.

MacKenzie Gonzales did not have her best stuff on the mound Friday, as she lasted just three innings with no hits allowed but walked seven batters. Alyssa Ray threw four innings in relief and gave up just two hits with eight strikeouts.

Echo next hosts Vale on Friday for a doubleheader starting at 1 p.m.

RIVERSIDE 11-5, NYSSA 5-6 — At Nyssa, the Riverside Pirates split a doubleheader with the Nyssa Bulldogs on Friday afternoon.

The win gave Riverside (7-10, 3-7 EOL) just its second win in the last nine games.

Skylar Wightman pitched both games for Riverside and had a solid day at the plate in game two as she finished 2-4 with a double, two RBI and a home run. Ariana Corpus and Abby Hernandez also had strong days on offense, as Corpus finished 3-7 with a triple and three RBI and Hernandez was 4-7 with a double and three RBI.

Riverside next travels to Waitsburg (WA) on Tuesday for a 4 p.m. first pitch.

Game 1				R	H	E
RHS	403014	0	—	12	13	0
NHS	300 110	0	—	5	6	0

Wightman and Corpus. Trujillo and Mitchell. W — Wightman, L — Trujillo.
2B — Hernandez, Velasco (RHS).

Game 2				R	H	E
RHS	101120	0	—	5	8	0
NHS	002121	X	—	6	7	0

Wightman and Corpus. Trujillo and Mitchell. W — Trujillo,
L — Wightman.

2B — Wightman (RHS). 3B — Corpus (RHS). HR —
Wightman (RHS).

Tennis

HERMISTON 11, PASCO (WA) 4 — At Pasco, Wash., the Hermiston Bulldogs boys and girls tennis teams combined for a dominating win on the road against Pasco on Friday.

The girls team left with a 5-3 victory, which included sweeping all four doubles matches. In singles action, Hermiston’s only victory came in the No. 2 match where Jaycee Ternes defeated Kendra Smith for the 6-1, 6-3 win.

In boys action, Hermiston dominated Pasco to the tune of a 6-1 victory, with the lone loss coming in the No. 3 doubles match. Perhaps the most impressive win of the match came at No. 3 singles where Hayden Cissna dropped the first set 6-3 and then roared back to win 6-2 and 6-2 over the next two sets for the win.

Hermiston next competes on Friday when they travel to Boise, Idaho to compete in the Capital Invitational.

Girls Singles
Eden Snyder (H) def. Mackenzie Hill 6-3, 6-1
Jaycee Ternes (H) def. Kendra Smith 6-1, 6-3
Anjelica Guzman (P) def. Lindsey McAllister 6-1, 6-4
Cameron Iverson (P) def. Kayley Hamilton 6-2, 6-1

Boys Singles
Jacob Snell (H) def. Jacob S. 6-2, 7-5
Tino Whitesell (H) def. Aiden B. 6-3, 6-2
Hayden Cissna (H) def. Alan O. 3-6, 6-2, 6-2
Jose Sanchez (H) def. Isai G. 6-2, 6-1

Girls Doubles
Chy Peterson/Katelyn Millard (H) def. Esmerelda Garci-lazo 6-2, 6-1
Whitney McMahon/Kylie Markwick (H) def. Mariza Viegas/Myra Ramirez 6-2, 6-1
Breena Wadekamper/Reed Middleton (H) def. Ruby Aguilar/Mitzy Ramirez 6-1, 6-4
Paola Sanchez/Adrian Stewart (H) won 6-0, 6-3

Boys Doubles
Race Latham/Cameron Meade (H) def. Eloy Lara/Michael I. 6-1, 6-0
Stefano Pieris/Skyler Grigg (H) def. Eduardo C./Luis V. 6-1, 6-4
Austin B./Christopher R. (P) def. Matt Eckhardt/Thomas McCullough 6-2, 6-4

RODEO: Pederson hoping for first win at hometown event

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He was the first rider of the event to leave his saddle, and the only one that would record a time for the night.

Currin had both horns caught and his boot heels in the dirt within just a few seconds of leaving the gate, but didn’t have good leverage and had to re-situate himself before being able to turn his steer.

Like Smith in tie-down, Currin would have preferred a cleaner run, but could appreciate just being able to get a time on a tough night for bulldoggers.

“I knew I needed to take a good start, (the steers) obviously ran hard,” he said. “My feet didn’t land exactly where I’d like them, kind of got tangled up and it took me a little longer. I’m not complaining, it’s awesome, fun.”

Currin’s sister Jacee held the early lead in barrel racing, but didn’t make it out of the performance in first. She is second though, with an 18.177 that was bettered only by Williams with a



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton’s Calgary Smith runs down his calf on his way to a 12.71-second time in tie down roping Friday at the Intermountain High School Rodeo in Hermiston.

17.623.

Also sitting in position to pick up a win in the first of two rodeos being contested this weekend is Hermiston senior Preston Pederson.

He’s third in tie-down with 14.93 after drawing a calf the broke hard to the left directly out of the gate.

“I didn’t recognize him, we roped these calves at Klamath Falls and I didn’t know what he was going to do,” Pederson said. “He

in team roping on Friday and will compete in steer wrestling as well. Currin, Smith and Pendleton’s Phoenix Everano are also vying for all-around titles in Hermiston as multiple-event entrants.

Other event leaders after the first performance were: Leandra Millard of Eagle Point, breakaway, 3.24; Bailey Beall of Redmond, goat tying, 9.2; Orrin Ouska of Dundee, bareback, 64 points; Chase Dougherty of Woodburn, bull riding, 72. No saddle bronc riders scored points on Friday and pole bending was not completed in time for inclusion in this report.

The first rodeo will end this afternoon with a performance at 1 p.m. The second rodeo begins later at 6 p.m., and will conclude with a performance on Sunday at noon.

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