

PENDLETON

Championship swim meet makes big splash at Aquatic Center

Swimmers travel as far as Spokane, Moses Lake

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Like the rest of the natural world, the ecosystem of a swim meet revolves around the water.

More than 350 children and their families from across the inland Northwest gathered Friday at the Pendleton Aquatic Center, the pool teeming with youth competing in the breast-stroke, butterfly and freestyle as a part of the 2017 Inland Empire Long Course Championship.

Kids in swimsuits walked to and fro as parents and coaches shouted words of encouragement to the young competitors in the main pool. A smaller pool provided a space for practice laps.

In the grassy area surrounding the pool, participants and their families lounged under canopies and camping tents, biding their time between events. Further out still, vendors sold food, screen-printed t-shirts and swimsuits.

This is a typical swim meet championship in an atypical location.

Fred Robinson, the meet director and the president of the Pendleton Swim Association, said this is the first time Pendleton has hosted the Inland Empire championship.

Although Pendleton hosts swim meets every year, it took four years to secure the winning Inland Empire bid for the Round-Up City.

Teams from across Oregon, Washington and Idaho converged on Pendleton for the championship, with the event winners qualifying for the sectional competition.

Teams from as close as Walla Walla, La Grande and Tri-Cities went up against swimmers that traveled as far as Spokane, Coeur d'Alene and Moses Lake, Wash.

Tony Nelson coaches the 29-person strong Pendleton Swim Association team and spent the day with a variety of duties, ranging from critiquing his swimmers performances to making sure they were staying hydrated on another bright summer day.

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.



A lifeguard watches swimmers race Friday afternoon during a preliminary heat of the Inland Empire Long Course Championships at the Pendleton Aquatic Center. The swim meet continues through Sunday.



Ian Walsh, left, and Charles Cutter play cards during downtime at the Inland Empire Long Course Championships at the Pendleton Aquatic Center. The swimmers came from Wenatchee Valley to compete in the meet, which continues through Sunday.

Sixteen-year-old swimmer Landry Huth was competing in several events and has spent the past five years as a member of the Pendleton swim club.

Although she's unsure if she wants to keep swimming competitively after high school, she plans to keep using the skills she was taught in the association well after graduation.

"You can do it anytime," she said.

Nelson echoed Huth's sentiments, calling it a "life-long sport" that both promotes individual achievement and

team work, and helps keep you healthy and in shape.

Nelson, who is a lieutenant for the Pendleton Police Department in his day job, said Friday's poolside scene was characteristic of the family atmosphere most events take on.

"It definitely becomes a tent city," he said.

Mike Kitsler was one of seven family members who rolled into Pendleton from Spokane to support his two children who were competing.

Although Pendleton lies on the outer edge of Inland Empire's radius, Kitsler said

he likes Pendleton's restaurants and amenities.

"I don't like to pump my own gas though," he said.

While Pendleton Swim Association members may have worked for years to host a championship, their work isn't over.

Time is running out on the Blue Mountain Community College pool, which has more maintenance issues than the college is willing to pay for but is also the only indoor facility the swim association is able to use year-round.

Robinson, the swim association president, said he's currently working with Mayor John Turner to figure out a proposal to build a cover over the aquatic center.

In addition to giving young swimmers the option of swimming throughout the year, Robinson said it would open up more competition options when Pendleton hosts meets.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

PENDLETON

Lybrand sentenced to four years in prison

Pleads guilty to drug charges

East Oregonian

Downtown Pendleton business owner Jason Lybrand has been sentenced to more than four years in prison after admitting to possession and delivery of methamphetamine Friday in Umatilla County Circuit Court.

Lybrand, 46, pleaded guilty to two counts of possessing meth and two counts of delivering meth for consideration, charges that stemmed from two different episodes in May.

Circuit Court Judge Jon Lieuallen sentenced Lybrand to 25 months with the Oregon Department of Corrections on each of the delivery charges, to be served consecutively. Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus said it was an enhanced sentence, based on Lybrand's persistent criminal involvement and the fact that he

was already on probation for separate drug convictions at the time the latest offenses were committed.

The possession charges also carried six-month DOC sentences, though they are to run concurrent.

As per a plea agreement, prosecutors agreed to drop all other pending charges against Lybrand, which included multiple sex crimes, witness tampering and using a minor to help commit a drug crime.

Lybrand, who owns Wicked Kitty Tattoo and Piercing on South Main Street, had

previously avoided jail time earlier this year after pleading guilty to separate charges of meth possession and marijuana delivery, instead receiving three years probation and \$3,200 in fines. His latest legal troubles arose following raids by the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team on March 17.

A jury trial scheduled to begin Friday against Lybrand was canceled after he changed his pleas.



Lybrand

BRIEFLY

Harvest Town Produce open for season

BOARDMAN — With watermelon season in full swing, Harvest Town Produce is now open for business in Boardman.

People can shop for a variety of produce, including locally grown watermelons from Hermiston Melon Company.

The produce stand is open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Boardman's Front Street next to the Splash Pad.

Chamber includes all entities report

HEPPNER — To help people catch up on area happenings, the Heppner Chamber of Commerce's upcoming meeting features an all entities report.

The no-host luncheon is Thursday, Aug. 3 at noon at Heppner City Hall, 111 N. Main St. The cost is \$10. The meal, which is catered by Willow Creek Diner, features a chicken rice wrap, broccoli salad and a maple bar.

To ensure there's enough space and food, those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by Tuesday by contacting 541-676-5536 or heppnerchamber@centurytel.net.

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