

SPORTS

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HERMISTON



Staff photo by Eric Singer

Tri-Cities natives Wayne Walden, left, and his son Greg Walden, right, are the newest operators of Hermiston Raceway. Wayne operated their hometown Tri-City Raceway in the 1980s and '90s and Greg used to race at Hermiston during his racing career spanning three decades.

Waldens give racetrack new life

By ERIC SINGER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The three-eighths-mile paved oval racetrack that sits off Oregon Highway 395 just north of Hermiston has been known by several different names in its existence, from Umatilla Speedway and Race City USA to Columbia Motor Speedway and Hermiston Super Oval.

This year the aging track has yet

another new name, Hermiston Raceway, and another chance at life with the help of former racer and Tri-Cities native Greg Walden. (And no, not the U.S. Representative from Oregon.) This Greg Walden, 55, signed a three-year lease with an option to buy to operate the track in February, aiming to make Hermiston Raceway a destination again for race fans at the same time that similar tracks have closed down around the region. He had interest in leasing the Yakima Speedway this winter, but turned his

focus to Hermiston when Yakima was sold and closed.

“This track was available so we were like, ‘Well, let’s see what we can do,’” Walden said during an interview inside the track’s office on Saturday. “And we’re only two races in now, but there’s hope and there’s early signs of life.”

Walden brings nearly four decades of experience in the local racing world as a driver, a promoter, and a fan. He got his

See RACETRACK/2B



Staff photo by Eric Singer

Racers drive their Legends-class cars at the Hermiston Raceway on Saturday evening.



Staff photo by Eric Singer

Winning drivers from the heat races line up in front of

Sports roundup

Buckaroos' girls golfers punch ticket to state

Hermiston senior Grace Blackhurst secures spots to state as an individual

East Oregonian

BEND — The Pendleton Buckaroos girls golf team secured a trip to the OSAA state tournament on Monday with a fourth place finish at the 5A Special District 2 tournament at Sunriver Resort.

The top four teams automatically qualify for the tournament, and Pendleton secured the final team spot with a team score of 803 — a 22-stroke cushion on fifth place Hermiston (825). Megan George led the Buckaroos with a fourth place finish individually after shooting a 84-80—164 over the 36-hole tournament. Filling out Pendleton’s card was Rylee Harris (92-98—190), Makenzie McLeod (102-108—210) and Sarah Powell (120-119—239).

Grace Blackhurst will be the only Hermiston Bulldog competing at state as she clinched an individual spot with a ninth place finish. The senior shot an 88-96—184 and finished five strokes up on 10th place. The Bulldogs that missed the cut were Sonja Peterson (112-103—215), Madison McClanahan (108-108—216), Leslie Browning (115-105—220) and Mykah Krumwiede (105-122—227).

Bend won the team district championship with a 733, followed by Crater (742) and Summit (753). Defending 5A state co-champion Olivia Loberg won the individual district championship with a 150, followed by teammate Sophie Dalphonssi’s 154.

The OSAA 5A State Championships will be held on May 14-15 at Trysting Tree Golf Club in Corvallis.

3A/2A/1A DISTRICTS — At Pendleton, the Heppner boys and girls golf teams are sitting in good position for district titles after the first day of the district tournament on Monday at the Pendleton Country Club.

The Mustang girls scored a 371 on the first day and hold a big lead over second place La Grande’s 422. Sophie Grant and Sasha Keown are tied for the individual lead with an 86 and Nicole Prophetor is close behind with a 95.

On the boys side, the Mustangs shot a 359 to sit in first place, followed by Grant Union (371), Burns (381) and Enterprise (389). Logan Burright led the team with an 80, with Reno Ferguson (85) and Kellen Grant (92) close behind.

Defending champion Riley Lankford of Nixyaawii is second place overall with a 77 after 18 holes, while Burnt River’s Stran Siddoway is in first after his 71.

See ROUNDUP/3B

Challenge of Champions brings bull riding to Hermiston

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

It was hard to tell if the cowboys were choosing the bulls or vice versa Saturday night, as the bovine competitors won the night at the Coastal Farm & Ranch Challenge of Champions Tour stop in Hermiston.

The event featured 35 profes-

sional bull riders, a junior event and two demonstrations of traditional Mexican Charreada bull riding in honor of Cinco de Mayo.

Jason Mattox, a former PCRB and PCA bull rider and the founder of the Challenge of Champions, said Saturday’s event, held in the new arena at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, drew from six different stock contractors, who

each sent a selection of their best bulls. Unlike most rodeos, cowboys got to select the bull they wanted to ride instead of choosing via random draw.

Some cowboys may have regretted their draw, as only a handful of them managed to stay on their animal for the requisite eight seconds. The first of the night to do so was Jason Houston, who hung on for

an 85-point ride on Lone Wolf of 2 Bucks Rodeo Co.

Houston ended in second place for the night, behind Jordan Sammons, who scored 87 points atop Electric Avenue of 2 Bucks Rodeo Co., and in front of Zeb Lanham, who scored 80 points on Cowboy from Crozier Bucking Bulls.

On the junior side, which used smaller bulls, first place went to

Dakota Briggs with 72 points, followed by Lane Vaughan with 71 points and Cauty Jackson with 65 points.

“The Challenge of Champions Tour is always about the youth,” announcer Al Parsons told the audience Saturday. “You’ve got to build them while they’re young.”

See RODEO/3B

Sports shorts

Diamondbacks still haven’t lost a series

PHOENIX (AP) — Two starting pitchers are hurt. So is the slugging third baseman. The team’s best player is in one of his worst slumps. And yet the Arizona Diamondbacks keep winning, taking two of three from the World Series champion Houston Astros over the weekend.

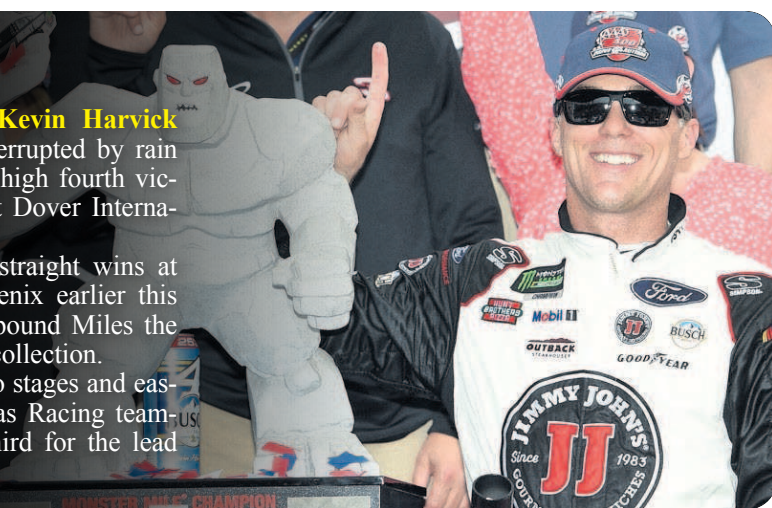
After going 4-3 last week against Houston and the Los Angeles Dodgers — the two teams that played in last year’s World Series.

The dominator!

DOVER, Del. (AP) — Kevin Harvick (right) dominated a race interrupted by rain and drove to his Cup Series-high fourth victory of the season Sunday at Dover International Speedway.

Harvick reeled off three straight wins at Atlanta, Las Vegas and Phoenix earlier this season and now has the 60-pound Miles the Monster trophy to add to his collection.

Harvick swept the first two stages and easily chased down Stewart-Haas Racing teammate Clint Bowyer in the third for the lead after a 41-minute delay.



THIS DATE IN SPORTS

1968 — Jim “Catfish” Hunter of the Oakland A’s pitches a perfect game, beating the Minnesota Twins 4-0.

1970 — Walt Frazier scores 36 points to lead the New York Knicks to a 113-99 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers and the NBA championship in seven games.

1984 — On the day the Olympic torch relay begins, the Soviet Union announces it will not take part in the 1984 Summer Olympics.

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