

# OFFICIATING: In Oregon, basketball lost 347 officials in eight years

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equipment along with their children playing the sport, there aren't enough bodies to call a game — resulting in altering schedules and even getting parent volunteers or canceling games.

"It's not good," Rick Jagers, Blue Mountain Baseball and Softball Commissioner, told the *East Oregonian*. "In 2008, 10 years ago, I had 52 umpires — 27 for baseball, 25 for softball — and right now I have 34. I can't get by without borrowing umpires from the Tri-Cities and from La Grande, and they can't either. (The Tri-Cities) has 66 guys and it's not enough.

"These coaches here have never seen these guys and they come in with Washington stuff on their uniforms and it's total illegal," he adds, "but we couldn't get by without it."

According to the Oregon School Activities Association, which has been collecting data for the past eight years, officials in all sports have seen at minimum a 6 percent change in available referees, and at most a staggering 30.1 percent drop.

Volleyball has seen the lowest decline, going from 451 officials in the 2010-11 season to 424 this past season. The drop was the most significant in 2015-16 when there were as little as 406 officials, but a slow climb added to Blue Mountain's crop of referees.

Sports like football, baseball, softball and wrestling have all fallen victim to the same trend. But no sport has seen as big of a drop as basketball has. Over the past eight years, the sport has lost 347 officials.

While there are a number of variables that account for this change, there's a consensus that the constant berating is one of the main deterrents.

"I would say that probably the lack of sportsmanship is the number one reason people don't want to officiate in the first place and the reason why people don't stay with the sport," Debi Hanson said. "I would say 50 percent, more than 50 percent."

Hanson, Oregon Athletic Officials Association Associate executive director and an active official for over 25 years, noted that family, advancement (or lack thereof) and poor training can also detour

people, but that the taunting and yelling tops the list.

"Disrespect devalues people," she added.

Without officials in place at least at the high school level, games cannot go on as planned. This year Hermiston High School's boys and girls soccer teams had to alter their schedules late in the season to accommodate referees. Volleyball games in Pendleton often had parents volunteering as line judges to assist the two officials that were either at the net or at the scorers' table.

"I just wish there were an answer for the reasons why people aren't officiating," Jagers said. "It's just a combination of things."

Jagers also stated that in Oregon the median age for an umpire is 58 years old and the average age is just a decade younger at 49 years old. Browning, who will be entering his second year as a high school umpire, can help turn the tide in that respect.

During the championship game, and throughout the regular season, high schoolers were able to trade in their baseball uniforms for a hat and some shades to earn 25 dollars for each game they helped officiate. Browning relishes in the opportunity to teach young players the craft of officiating, and much of the support came from the Pendleton Buckaroos baseball squad.

On June 20, Nat Hunsaker joined Browning for much of the tournament. It gave Browning hope for the future. Who knows what will come of Hunsaker's baseball career, or the hundreds of other kids picking up bats, but with experience like this, coming back to the game one way or another is always an option.

It's a message Browning wants to leave not only with his children, but the countless kids he's seen go through the ranks.

"I would want to tell them, 'Hey, you didn't make it but you could possibly get someone to make it by teaching them what you know,'" he said. "Like my son, that's what I told my son and I hope he does if he ends up having a son."

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Dennis Hunt presents trophies to Nick Bower and Shaw Jerome on Friday at the Pendleton Linebackers Club Hall of Fame reception in Pendleton. Bower was awarded the Alex Stuvland Memorial Scholarship and Jerome received the Don Requa Award.

# HOF: 1980 PHS football team the 14th team inducted

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"It's a great honor," Lambert said. "We have a great community, and watching some of the players that have already been inducted and some that are being inducted tonight and getting to be a part of this group is a pretty good honor."

Lambert made a name for himself as a two-way standout on the football field and a top-notch wrestler. From 1997-2001, Lambert, a linebacker and running back earned two all-conference honors in football as was named the InterMountain Conference Co-Offensive Player of the Year with teammate Stephen Bisnett as a senior, while also compiling a 86-14 record on the wrestling mat with a seventh place finish at state.

"Growing up as a kid, you go down on Friday nights to the Round-Up Grounds to watch the guys in the gold helmets, you want to be a part of that," Lambert said. "And finally getting to be a part of that, getting to contribute on the field and get your name called out there was awesome."

Making up the rest of the Hall of Fame's Class of 2018 were David Stuvland (1975-1979), baseball coach Lyle Phelps (1976-1994), Sam Haynes (1952-1956), Kyle Garrett (1993-1997), Jim Warberg (1969-1973), Stephen Bisnett (1997-2001), basketball coach Dale Warberg, volleyball coach Colleen Hunt (1975-1995), Tom Dearborn (1962-1966), Laura Moore (1988-1989), Jerry Lilly (1971-1975), Larry Applegate (1953-

1956), Ronda Lusty Gibor (1987-1990) and Larry French (1959-1963).

The 1980 Buckaroos football team became the 14th team to be inducted as well. That squad went 10-2 overall and advanced all the way to the state quarterfinals before falling 31-28 in overtime to Sheldon.

As attendees were finishing their dinners, 2018 Pendleton High graduates Shaw Jerome and Nick Bower were honored with the Linebacker's Club's two most prestigious student awards, while Kalan McGlothlin and Lauren Richards received Linebacker's Club scholarships. Jerome, a standout wide receiver who will play football at Western Oregon University, received the Don Requa Award that comes with \$10,000 for college.

Bower, a two-year starter at quarterback who will play football and baseball at Pacific University, received the Alex Stuvland Memorial Scholarship with a \$4,000 value.

And before the night came to a close, the newest inductees mingled with longtime friends, teammates and coaches and enjoyed remembering the fun experiences they had while being Buckaroos.

"I just went and played hard with my teammates and for my coaches, and I enjoyed every minute of it," Lambert said. "And this is just the icing on the cake."

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# OSU: Compiled a 185-55-2 record during last four years

Continued from 1B

summer, was a three-year starting outfielder for OSU.

The Lake Oswego High graduate finished his career as a .276 hitter with 67 RBIs. He started Thursday's clinching win in center field for the injured Steven Kwan, who missed most of the CWS with a left hamstring strain.

A walk-on turned all-Pac-12 selection, Anderson grew up rooting for OSU's 2006 and 2007 title teams.

"These last five years have been everything I could've dreamed of," Anderson said. "All I wanted to do was play a game at Goss Stadium when I first got there, and I wasn't sure that moment was

ever going to come at times. But to keep going at it, to get here, to be a part of this and win a national championship is everything I could've dreamed of."

A part-time player his first two seasons in Corvallis, Gretler was OSU's starting third baseman the past two years.

Gretler drove in 100 runs during his career and finished with 13 home runs and a .285 batting average. He was drafted in the 10th round by the Pittsburgh Pirates and will be in the minor leagues before long.

"Playing here is not like anywhere else," Gretler said. "You really get to become a family, you get to spend every day with 35 of your

best friends and your brothers. And when you get a bunch of guys that love each other like that, anything is possible."

Heimlich, the two-time Pac-12 pitcher of the year, is tied with Ben Wetzler for the most wins in school history. The left-hander is OSU's all-time leader in innings pitched (387) and strikeouts (385).

Despite going undrafted the past two seasons, Heimlich also hopes to begin his professional career shortly.

"It's been a fun journey and I wouldn't trade it for anything," Heimlich said. "These guys are my brothers now, some of the best guys I've been able to be around. I'm excited to end it this

way."

Nobach transferred to OSU from Everett Community College and started in 2015-16. He redshirted last season following knee surgery and worked his way back into the lineup this spring.

The outfielder closed his career with a .299 batting average, 10 home runs and 82 RBIs. But all Nobach cares about is the team's legacy.

"If I never play a baseball game again, and it's tough for me to say that because I've played baseball my whole life, I'll be satisfied because I'm going out as a winner," Nobach said. "A national champion."

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