

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Hermiston's renovated weight room is TOP NOTCH



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Hermiston High School's newly renovated weight room offers an expanded variety of equipment and 14 stations, an increase from the five previously available.

Track coach Emilee Strot was a driving force behind the renovation

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — You could see it in her eyes. Paige Palzinski is in her happy place in the weight room, and now that Hermiston High School has renovated its facility from the ground up, the incoming junior is in seventh heaven.

"I love lifting weights," Palzinski said. "It makes my day. The people I work out with, I feel I can accomplish anything."

Hermiston track coach Emilee Strot was the driving force behind getting the weight room redone. At first, she was hoping to get the floors fixed for safety reasons, and maybe a few new benches.

"I brought Larry (Usher, athletic director) and Tom (Spoo, principal) in here, and our original idea was to replace the floor," Strot said. "I showed them the benches that were breaking down and a few other things."

It wasn't long before Strot got the OK put together a proposal for an entirely new weight room (in the same space).

"Tom and Larry were big supporters of this," Strot said. "They saw the potential, and what it could do for our student athletes and classes. This would not have happened without their support."

Strot and Hermiston football coach David Faaeteete worked together with Columbia Fitness in Kennewick to design a layout and choose the equipment.

"We had the same goal in mind," Strot said. "We went from five platforms and seven squat racks, to 14 stations that you can do almost everything on. We doubled the amount of equip-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Kaylee Young, left, spots Jazlyn Romero as she bench presses in Hermiston

ment in here that we had before. We will be able to have a lot more kids in here at one time, with everyone doing something."

Worth the wait

Once Strot had her proposal together, it didn't take long to get the approval from the school district.

"It had been 17 years since the weight room had updates," said Tricia Mooney, the superintendent of the Hermiston School District. "It was a safety issue. I have been through there; they did a great job. It is much appreciated by our kids."

The renovation cost right about \$98,000, according to Mooney. The money came from the general fund.

"Over the course of the past year, there has been some belt tightening," Mooney said. "Some positions were not filled. We got a good deal and it worked out well."

Strot waited until she got the green light from the school district before telling her students and athletes.

"I didn't want to jinx anything," Strot said. "This is every coach's dream. We want it to last a long time. We have some rules. I'm trying to create a culture in here."

The revamped weight room has a new rubberized surface on the floor, there is a rack of free weights on the far end of the room, and there are 14 purple and black multi-use stations in the middle of the room. There also are plenty of bars and plates to go around. There are even 15-pound bars (the regular ones are 45 pounds) for those just starting out.

"It's important that they learn proper form," Strot said. "Technique and safety are important."

Senior Jazlyn Romero, a point guard on the basketball team, and a state champion in the javelin, was impressed by the new facility.

"It's one of the best high school weight rooms in the state," she said. "Coach Strot has brought a new culture

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BRITISH OPEN

Mickelson awarded for 25 straight years in top 50

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

PORTRUSH, Northern Ireland — Phil Mickelson received a crystal award Tuesday at the British Open.

No, it wasn't for most days without eating.

One of the hallmarks of Mickelson's career is playing for so long at a consistently high level, and the Official World Golf Ranking board honored him for a feat that might be as remarkable as his 47 wins worldwide or his five majors.

Starting with a runner-up finish at the Casio World Open in Japan in November 1993 — the same year Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas were born — Mickelson has never been outside the top 50 in the world. The award was for 25 consecutive years, and he's still going.

"To play for this long, I'm very thankful and appreciative," Mickelson said.

Peter Dawson, the former R&A chief who now chairs the OWGR board, said Mickelson has been among the top 50 for 1,338 consecutive weeks. The second-longest streak belongs to Ernie Els, at 965 weeks. Among active streaks, Rory McIlroy is next at 556 weeks.

How has Mickelson done it?

"I don't have a great answer for that," Lefty replied, though he suggested a long swing has led to a long career because it has kept him largely free of injuries.

As for the motivation, Mickelson has never lacked that.

"I love that I do," he said, referring to golf as being a soothing, almost spiritual feeling. "I need it to function."

Even with this remarkable accomplishment, Mickelson can't avoid questions about his six-day fast in which he says he lost 15 pounds. He posted a message on Twitter that begins, "Let's get real."

He says he hasn't been at his best and wanted a "hard reset." So he did a six-day fast, drinking nothing but water and a special coffee blend designed for wellness. Mickelson says he craved food for the first day but was fine after that.

"I don't know if it will help me play better, but it makes feel better about myself," he said.

TIGHT SCHEDULE

Justin Rose isn't alone in trying to adjust to a schedule that stacks one major on top of the next one during four months — the Masters in April, PGA Championship in May, U.S. Open in June and British Open in July.

He mentioned earlier this year that previously, no one had to think about a major for nearly two months after the Masters. That's no longer the case with the PGA moving to May, and Rose said he's had a hard time finding a rhythm.

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SPORTS SHORTS

Legal sports betting begins in upstate New York

By DAVID KLEPPER
Associated Press

SCHENECTADY, N.Y. — New York joined the growing list of states allowing wagering on sports after an upstate casino cut the ribbon on a new betting lounge Tuesday and took its first bet — \$20 on the Seattle Mariners.

The state's entry comes more than a year after the U.S. Supreme Court lifted the ban that had restricted sports betting outside of Nevada. Gambling officials and casino executives in New York are eager to catch up to New Jersey, where gamblers have placed more than \$3 billion worth of sports bets in the first full

year since wagering became legal in that state.

"Right now, Jersey is cleaning our clock when it comes to sports betting," said state Assemblyman Gary Pretlow, D-Westchester County, who placed the inaugural bet Tuesday morning at Rivers Casino and Resort in Schenectady. "We're a little bit behind."

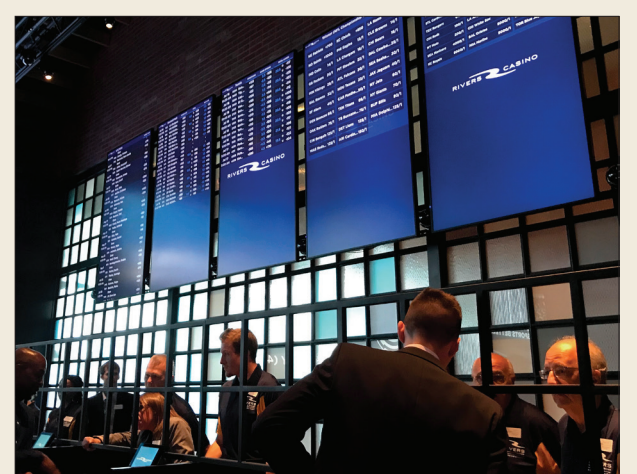
Several other upstate casinos — both state-licensed and tribal facilities — plan to begin offering sports betting in the coming weeks and months, in time for the fall football season. Tioga Downs Casino Resort in the Southern Tier has announced plans to offer sports wagering starting Friday.

Rivers' betting operations will employ 25 people, general manager Justin Moore said.

New York is the ninth state to permit and regulate sports betting after the state's Gaming Commission approved regulations earlier this year.

In May, New Jersey edged ahead of Nevada in the amount of monthly sports bets placed, with \$318.9 million wagered, about \$1.5 million more than Nevada.

In New York, some lawmakers want to authorize wagers at sporting venues or on mobile devices, but the proposal didn't get a vote before lawmakers adjourned their session last month.



AP Photo/David Klepper

Employees at Rivers Casino and Resort prepare for the opening of its sports betting lounge on Tuesday in Schenectady, N.Y.