

A Scots tradition, acted out in the Imnaha Unit



GARY LEWIS

ON THE TRAIL

“Let’s stay 30 to 50 yards apart,” I whispered. “Watch the horizon.”

James walked the edge where the canyon dropped away to the creek 2,000 feet below us, a tributary of the Imnaha. My path took me through groves of yellowed aspens. Brittle leaves rattled in the breeze.

We walked and stopped and took a few steps and started again, on the lookout for the horizontal line of a back, for the shine of antlers, for the flick of an ear. What we saw were cattle, mostly black Angus, and after we had walked better than half a mile, we turned and retraced our steps.

We had a cow between us, a short-horn white-faced old girl. She looked at me then swung her head and looked at James. Then she stretched out her neck as if to vent her displeasure. She bawled, long and loud.

Alerted and spooked, two mule deer broke from cover and ran across the opening we’d just walked through. James had his binocular up.

“They’re bucks,” he whispered.

And as soon as they’d disappeared, they had turned around and begun to run back to where they started. A 150 yards across the little prairie. James shot the first buck. My crosshair swung through the second buck and I fired.

When the echoes died away we started up through the trees and found them where they’d come to rest, 5 yards apart. It was the work of an hour to skin and quarter the animals. And half the day left.

I remembered the Macnab Challenge. I had accomplished it once on a hunt in Eastern Washington. Up here in the Imnaha Unit, I guessed, I might be able to pull it off again.

The late outdoor writer Ed Park told me about it. A hunters’ tradition out of English literature, the Macnab is named for the fictional John Macnab, and a challenge to poach a red stag or a salmon from a landowner’s favorite beat with the landowner’s full knowledge.

So the Macnab has come to embody the classic challenge to take a red deer, an Atlantic salmon and a partridge, all in one day, between sunrise and sunset. But the challenge changes depending on the environment. In Eastern Oregon, for example, Ed explained, the hunter must tag a mule deer, catch a steelhead and shoot a chukar. In the finest sporting tradition, the fish must be caught on a fly, the bird must be taken on the wing.

Because it was early, and because I was in the Imnaha Unit, I took a shotgun and walked up to the ridge top where I had found the buck rubs and where I had seen blue grouse. In fact, I had walked around the blue grouse early in the morning to avoid flushing them and maybe spooking a deer. They were still there. The birds flushed and I picked one out and shot it going away. I had to climb over a barbed wire fence to pick it up. I carried my prize back to camp, cleaned it and then finished getting my deer meat on ice. When our deer meat was cooling, my friend James and I drove down to the Imnaha River.

It was early October and the river was low. Steelhead and salmon were out of the question. I tied on a grasshopper pattern and floated it down the foam lines and a trout took the fly. It was a small fish, but it was a rainbow and it completed my second Macnab.

Sometimes it all lines up. A hunter in the breaks of the Snake, the Imnaha or the Minam could pull off a Macnab this fall. It can happen all in one action-packed sunrise to sunset span. A buck deer or bull elk, a partridge on the wing and a trout, steelhead or salmon on a fly. Pack a shotgun, bring the pointing dog and take the fly rod, too.

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Gary Lewis/Contributed Photo

A hunter with a deer tag, an upland bird stamp and a fishing license can pull off the Macnab Challenge in one day, but it can take a few seasons to get everything to line up right.



James Flaherty/Contributed Photo

This small rainbow trout obliged by taking a deer hair hopper pattern on the surface, completing the Macnab Challenge before sunset.



James Flaherty/Contributed Photo

In pursuit of the Macnab. After taking a mule deer buck in the morning, it was the matter of a few minutes walk to go back up on the ridge and find a blue grouse.

Pink:

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At Ione/Arlington, the Cardinals are going pink on Oct. 14 in their Big Sky League match with Condon.

“Our funds are going to the Susan G. Komen Foundation,” I/A coach Dawn Eynetch said. “We will have a 50/50 raffle, and the girls are also taking sponsors for a serve-a-thon.”

Pilot Rock, which is hoping to be back in its gym for the first time this season on Oct. 14, will host Heppner for its pink night.

Hermiston will go pink on Oct. 12, when they host Kennewick in a Mid-Columbia Conference match, while Blue Mountain Community College will host its Dig



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Pendleton head volleyball coach Amanda Lapp talks to her team between matches against Redmond on Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021, at home on Warberg Court.

Pink night on Oct. 13, when Walla Walla Community College comes to town.

BMCC will welcome back fans for the game after a COVID-19 outbreak closed the

campus for a couple of weeks. Irrigon will hold its pink night Oct. 15 against Burns.

Bulldogs:

Continued from Page B1

“Cydney is such a phenomenal runner,” Blackburn said. “She has had health issues that have held her back. Hailey has had to drop out of the last two races. She did 400 miles this summer. We just have to keep her feet under her. We have a strong group of girls. If one goes down, there’s another one there to take her place.”

Serna has been the No. 2 runner for Hermiston, with junior Ashley Treadwell, freshman Elizabeth Newman, and sophomores Madeline Franke and Jacqueline Garcia Sandoval figuring into the scoring on a regular basis.

“Alexia is miss consistent,” Blackburn said. “She had been in the mid-20s since

her sophomore year, and now she’s in the low-20s. Liz did cross-country last year for three weeks. Every week she is getting faster and faster. Ashley fought injuries the first two years, now she is healthy and has been really consistent for us and is a team captain.”

Serna first started running cross-country in the eighth grade, and now is a leader for the Bulldogs.

“I don’t lead by my words, but by my actions,” Serna said. “We all work together and hold each other accountable. We work as a team. Megan has gotten so much faster since I first started running with her.”

Serna said she is a little nervous and excited for the race Oct. 9.

“I’m excited for my competition to see how much better I have gotten,” she said.

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