

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2022

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @EOSPORTS | FACEBOOK.COM/EOSPORTS

A9

Gearing up for the Eagle Cap Extreme

Dog sled race in Wallowa County returns Thursday

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Both Morgan and Craig Anderson are set for another run at the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race, which returns at noon Thursday, Jan. 20, after a year away due to COVID-19.

“It’s so nice. I’ve done no other big race yet (besides the ECX, but) it’s definitely one of my favorite races to go to,” said Morgan Anderson, an Enterprise High School graduate.

Though just 22, Anderson already is a veteran when it comes to running the Extreme. This will be her sixth time competing in the ECX, and her second time taking to the path in the 200-mile race, the longest and most grueling of the four running this weekend.

“I did the junior race my first year, then the 31-mile race three times, then the 200 and now the 200 again,” she said. “I kind of skipped the 100. Someone offered me the dogs and I said, ‘Why not?’”

Ground and pound

The younger Anderson has spent most of the last five months in Pinedale, Wyoming, training for the race with fellow ECX racer and family friend Clayton Perry. In fact, most of the dogs she’ll be running with in the race this week belong to Perry.

“At this point, we’ve been training dogs since the beginning of September,” she said.



Wallowa County Chieftain, File
Morgan Anderson and her 12-dog team start the 200-mile race in January 2020 in the Eagle Cap Extreme. The race returns Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022, after a year's hiatus due to COVID-19.

Getting the dogs’ endurance built up for a 200-mile race starts before there is snow on the ground. Anderson said at the beginning of training season, rather than a sled, they used teams of 16 dogs and would pull an ATV four-wheeler.

“We would go 5 miles,” she said. “We call four-wheeler training the weight training. It’s off and in neutral, or a lower gear.”

The early stages are not run at a high speed, with Anderson saying they would go about 5-8 mph.

“Once snow hits, we can start getting more distance and more speed going,” she said.

Top speed, she noted, is about 16

mph. It’s a pace Anderson’s group will maintain for short stretches, with the average closer to 8-10 mph.

The heavy training days are long, for racers and dogs alike. Late last week, Anderson and Perry went on about an 85-mile training run. They took off at about 11 a.m., ran until about 7 p.m., rested until about midnight, then finished the final stretch, getting back about 4:30 a.m.

The training days are wearing, but Anderson had a team largely of younger racing dogs — seven of them are “puppies” that are about 1½ years old — and their energy does rub off.

“As soon as we started getting

them dressed,” they’re excited, she said. “They are always way more hyped than I am.”

A family affair

Meanwhile, her father, Craig, will be running in the ECX for the second time. He said he entertained thoughts of running the 100-mile race, but settled for the 31-mile race, which was the distance he ran previously.

A combination of items resulted in Craig competing — previously volunteering for the race, acquiring more sled dogs, the proximity of the race to his hometown of Enterprise and his daughter racing are among

the reasons.

“It’s kind of good for the dogs, too,” he said. “It’s good for the dogs to see other dogs and pass other dogs.”

As the younger Anderson got more involved, so did Craig. In fact, four of the sled dogs he owns are siblings to Morgan’s lead dog and the one she owns, Gale.

“I moved away to college, so my dad no longer had me to look after, so I think I got replaced by dogs,” she quipped.

Running sled dogs has resulted in Morgan and Craig getting several opportunities to run together through the Eagle Cap Wilderness, which for both is a highlight.

“Just a lot of good memories. My dad and I are pretty good at going out and having fun,” Morgan said. “The first time I ever got my dad on a sled, I think it was Jan. 1 (a few years ago) and it was a super moon. It was so light out you didn’t have to have a lamp. It’s created more fun times with him.”

“It’s fun to be out there and not have headlamps on,” Craig said. “Visibility is high. That’s a pretty neat deal. It’s fun to run with her.”

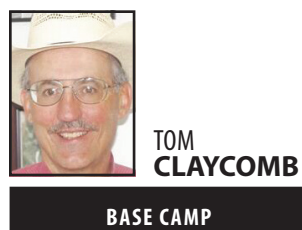
Given the two are running different races, they actually won’t be racing the trails together. Indeed, Morgan said, she likely won’t see her dad until she completes the 200-mile race sometime Jan. 22.

But she is hopeful he’ll be there at the finish line to greet her.

And as for Craig, he said getting to watch his daughter compete in the Eagle Cap Extreme is special.

“It’s a pretty neat thing. It’s fun to watch her. She does quite well with it,” he said. “To know the kind of conditions they are going through and the lack of sleep it’s a neat thing. ... It’s probably one of our favorite events of the whole year.”

If it’s winter, then it’s show season



TOM CLAYCOMB
BASE CAMP

I had planned to write about varmint hunting, but maybe next time.

A more time-sensitive topic popped up. I’ve been writing columns since 2014. You might think after a year or two I’d run out of topics to write about. But if you love something there’s always something new, a new angle or maybe you just get up in the mountains and get refreshed and have five more articles you’re dying to write.

Like right now I’m sitting in the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport leaving the Dallas Safari Club Convention and Expo. Suddenly it hit me. I miss Katy. I’d pay \$100 if she was sitting here with me right now for 10 minutes holding hands.

It’s weird, we just celebrated our 38th anniversary, and I think I love her more now, than when we got married.

OK, I better switch back to hunting because if Katy sees that I’m comparing our love with my love for hunting this could be my last column.

Anyway, now is the show season and it makes sense. Hunting season is pretty much over. So due to being a dead time, January to March is the perfect time to schedule the shows. The SHOT show is the mother of all shows. It’s Jan. 17-21, so everything else falls somewhere around it. Although this year for some reason the



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo
The Diamond Blades/Knives of Alaska crew poses for a photo at an outdoor show. They’re the leaders in the hunting knife world, and their products have stood the test of time.

Safari Club International Convention moved back to Vegas and is on the tail end of the same week at SHOT. Usually, it is in February.

But with all the above said, let’s talk about why you ought to hit the shows. We’ll start with the SHOT.

Monday is Media Day at the range. They invite writers to test out all of the new (and old) rifles, pistols, shotguns, crossbows and ammo. Of course, that’s a fun day. The show actually runs Tuesday-Friday. All of the big manufacturers are there. I don’t know if every country is there but nearly.

Firearm manufacturers, ammo, backpacks, knives, optics, outdoor clothing, backpacks — you name it.

The reason I’m there is to see all of the new gear for 2022. I’ll be finding new product to test and write about, lining up sponsors, trips, etc. It is by invitation only, but if you ever get to go, you should.

Next let’s talk about the club conventions like SCI and DSC. Probably two-thirds of the booths

are guides. If you want to book the hunting/fishing trip of a lifetime, these are the shows to hit. I want to take Katy and Kolby on a South Louisiana redfish/spec fishing trip and to Alaska for some fishing, so I hit some of those booths. I met a good sounding group of Cajuns that run Saltgrassoutdoors.com. Then I talked to Waterfalls Resort, which is where I went for my first Alaska fishing trip years ago which instigated my writing career. I may take them there.

Then you have the state shows like the Idaho Sportsman Show, The Great Northwest Outdoor Expo (I hope they’re having it this year) and so forth. I love these shows. They’re local so you meet a lot of local manufacturers with a new product that they’ve invented. That’s how I met the Sneaky-Hunter BootLamps crew.

Then of course there are a lot of guides there too. You can usually tell by talking to them if they’re legit but check references.

You don’t want to save your pennies for the trip of a lifetime only to end up with some bozo for a guide.

Then I love hitting the seminars. But take with a grain of salt seminars put on by celebrities if they’re promoting their sponsors’ products. Like any shopping check around and do some research. I conduct 40 to 60 seminars each year. I had a seminar at the DSC, two at SHOT and three at the SCI convention. I try to give honest reviews because if I say this airgun is the best some kid may be saving up his paper route earnings to buy that airgun. If it’s a dud he’s stuck with it until he gets out of college and gets a real job.

But still, here’s a couple of words of warning:

- Remember the old proverb — A gift blinds the eyes of the wise. If the speaker is sponsored, the gift will sway his opinion.

- Marketing is made to create discontent. A few years ago the .300 Win. Short Mag was advertised as the best rifle ever and the .30-06 was relegated to the museum. Then the 6.5 Creedmoor came out and overnight the .300 Win. Short Mag was deemed worthless. Manufacturers have to breed discontent or you’ll use the same rifle your dad did, you kid will use it and your grandkid will. That’s bad for business. They want you to buy a new rifle every year.

Everyone likes new inventions, but products also have to stand the test of time. So investigate and make wise buying decisions.

Tom Claycomb is an outdoor writer from Meridian, Idaho.

ON THE SLATE

THURSDAY, JAN 20

Prep girls bowling
Southridge at Hermiston, 3 p.m.

Prep girls wrestling
Hermiston at Hanford, 6 p.m.

Prep boys wrestling
La Grande, Redmond, Ridgeview at Pendleton Duals, 5 p.m.
Hermiston, Chiawana at Hanford, 6 p.m.

College women’s wrestling
EOU vs. Southwestern Oregon CC, Salem, TBA
EOU at Corban, 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 21

Prep girls wrestling
Hermiston at Othello, 5 p.m.

Prep boys wrestling
Heppner at Grant Union, noon

Prep girls basketball
Riverside at Vale, 5 p.m.
Redmond at Pendleton, 5:30 p.m.
Pasco at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.
Pilot Rock at McLoughlin, 7:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Burns, 6 p.m.
La Grande at McLoughlin, 6 p.m.
Umatilla at Nyssa, 6 p.m.
Enterprise at Heppner, 6 p.m.
Union at Stanfield, 6 p.m.
Griswold at Pine Eagle, 6 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Joseph, 7:30 p.m.
Echo at Trout Lake, 6 p.m.
Ione/Arlington at South Wasco County, 6 p.m.

Prep boys basketball
Riverside at Vale, 6:30 p.m.
Redmond at Pendleton, 7 p.m.
Pasco at Hermiston, 7:30 p.m.
La Grande at McLoughlin, 7:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Burns, 7:30 p.m.
Umatilla at Nyssa, 7:30 p.m.
Enterprise at Heppner, 7:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Weston-McEwen, 7:30 p.m.
Union at Stanfield, 7:30 p.m.
Griswold at Pine Eagle, 7:30 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Joseph, 7:30 p.m.
Echo at Trout Lake, 7:30 p.m.
Ione/Arlington at South Wasco County, 7:30 p.m.

College men’s wrestling
EOU at Missouri Valley Invitational, Marshall, Missouri, TBA

College women’s basketball
EOU vs. Oregon Tech, 5:30 p.m.

College men’s basketball
EOU vs. Oregon Tech, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 22

Prep girls wrestling
Hermiston at Othello, 10 a.m.

Boys prep wrestling
Hermiston at Post Falls, TBD

Prep girls basketball
Umatilla at Vale, 2 p.m.
South Wasco County at Echo, 2 p.m.
Irrigon at Nyssa, 3 p.m.
Riverside at Burns, 3 p.m.
Hermiston at Hanford, 3:15 p.m.

Grant Union at Pilot Rock, 4 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Union, 4 p.m.
Enterprise at Stanfield, 4 p.m.
Wallowa at Griswold, 4 p.m.
Lyle/Wishram at Ione/Arlington, 4 p.m.

Prep boys basketball
Umatilla at Vale, 3:30 p.m.
South Wasco County at Echo, 3:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Nyssa, 4:30 p.m.
Riverside at Burns, 4:30 p.m.
Hermiston at Hanford, 5 p.m.
Grant Union at Pilot Rock, 5:30 p.m.
Enterprise at Stanfield, 5:30 p.m.
Wallowa at Griswold, 5:30 p.m.
Lyle/Wishram at Ione/Arlington, 5:30 p.m.

College women’s basketball
Columbia Basin at Blue Mountain, 2 p.m.
EOU vs. Southern Oregon, 3 p.m.

TUESDAY, JAN. 25

Prep girls bowling
Walla Walla at Hermiston, 3 p.m.

Prep girls basketball
Kamiakin at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.
Stanfield at McLoughlin, 6 p.m.
Umatilla at Irrigon, 6 p.m.
Condon at Echo, 6 p.m.
Ione/Arlington at Bickleton, 6 p.m.
Pendleton at La Grande, 6 p.m.

Prep boys basketball
Pendleton at La Grande, 7:30 p.m.
Kamiakin at Hermiston, 7:30 p.m.
Stanfield at McLoughlin, 7:30 p.m.
Umatilla at Irrigon, 7:30 p.m.
Condon at Echo, 7:30 p.m.
Ione/Arlington at Bickleton, 7:30 p.m.

Prep girls wrestling
Hermiston at Sunnyside, 7 p.m.

Prep girls wrestling
Hermiston at Sunnyside, 7 p.m.

College women’s basketball
EOU vs. College of Idaho, 5:30 p.m.

College men’s basketball
EOU vs. College of Idaho, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 26

College women’s basketball
Yakima Valley at Blue Mountain, 5:30 p.m.

College men’s basketball
Yakima Valley at Blue Mountain, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN. 27

Prep girls wrestling
Kennewick at Hermiston, 6 p.m.

Prep boys wrestling
Kennewick at Hermiston, 7 p.m.

Prep girls basketball
Riverside at Umatilla, 6 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Powder Valley, 6 p.m.

Prep boys basketball
Riverside at Umatilla, 7:30 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Powder Valley, 7:30 p.m.