

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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Buffalo Peak Golf Course to host Eastern Oregon Junior Championship

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

UNION — The state's top youth golfers are set to return to Buffalo Peak Golf Course in Union.

The local course is gearing up to host the Eastern Oregon Junior Championship, the first leg of the Oregon Junior Golf Association summer tour. The tournament, which is in its second year in Union, begins Saturday, May 21,

and concludes Sunday, May 22.

"It's a pretty awesome thing for our county," Buffalo Peak General Manager Dana Londin said.

The Eastern Oregon Junior Championship is the first of a full slate of summer tournaments that stretch across the entire state. The tour extends through the months of June, July and August, with the season culmination in September. More than 80 golfers will take the fairways at Buffalo Peak

for the annual competition.

After hosting the 91st Bob Norquist Oregon Junior Amateur tournament last summer, Buffalo Peak secured the first leg of the junior tour for this season and the following four years. Golfers competing on the tour are between the ages of 8 and 18, with the highest marks in the state. The tour field primarily consists of golfers from the west side of the state, with many of the young athletes visiting East-

ern Oregon for the first time.

Last year's tournament was a success for the local golf course, serving as a showcase to the Oregon Golf Association and the golf community in the region. The tournament was a large factor in the course receiving the 2021 facility of the year award by the Oregon Golf Association — the award is given to the course with the overall highest contributions to the game of golf, the community and the Oregon Golf Association.

A major difference between last year's tournament and this year's is a new and improved pro shop at Buffalo Peak. Community members donated materials necessary for the renovations, which entailed new wood paneling and new shelving. The store is now stocked with top golf brands like Ping, Callaway, Cleveland, Titleist, Evnroll Putters, Asics, Puma and more. The Island

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Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Pendleton's Anders Oja competes in the 300-meter hurdles at the Intermountain Conference track and field championships May 14, 2022, in Prineville. Oja won the event with a time of 40.45 seconds to earn a trip to state. Pendleton swept the top three spots.

Hurdling toward success

Oja is looking to leave his mark on the Pendleton track team

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Long before Andy Oja burst onto the track scene, his grandpa George Oja was forging a path in the sport as a marathon runner.

The Pendleton senior races at the 5A state track and field meet Friday and Saturday, May 20-21, at Hayward Field in Eugene, a place his grandpa once competed.

"My grandpa did indeed run at Hayward, although he said it was not at a noteworthy event," Andy Oja said. "I'm sure excited to run there. I went down there and watched a meet. That facility is amazing. It will be fun to run there."

George Oja will be in the crowd this weekend, watching his grandson run in the 110 hurdles, the 300 hurdles, the 4x100 relay and the 4x400 relay.

"You could tell he was going to be something special his fresh-

man year, and having a year where he could work with Lane (Maher), Ty (Patrick) and Dustin (Henderson)," Pendleton hurdles coach Ben Bradley said. "We told him he was going to be Lane's replacement. He has stepped in and filled those shoes."

It has been a long journey for Oja to reach the state meet. His

able to run at the big meets," Oja said. "Lane's got that cool record of 38.75 in 300s, which is 1.2 seconds ahead of mine. It would be great to have that record."

This year, Oja has the third best time going into state in the 110 hurdles at 15.40, and has the top time in the 300s at 40.45, which he ran last weekend at

"I'm following in his (Maher's) footsteps to win a state title," Oja said. "In 300s, I'm ranked first right now. Running at Jesuit, I didn't have my fastest time, but it helps having that kind of competition."

While he is good at both, he said he doesn't prefer one over the other.

"I like them both a lot," Oja said. "They are different. They are aggressive in their own ways. In the 110s, the hurdles are closer together. The 300 is tactical in its own way, and it's longer and you are really pushing yourself that last 110. The 110s, it's a quick blast and you are done."

With the proper mindset and a good start out of the blocks, Bradley sees Oja on the top of the medal podium.

"I think Andy has a great chance at taking home first in the 110s and 300s," Bradley said. "I still don't think we have touched what he is capable of. I hope he taps into that and gets onto the

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"THESE GUYS HAVE BEEN GETTING BETTER AND BETTER ALL SEASON LONG. THAT HAS BEEN A DIFFERENCE MAKER FOR US. GUYS HAVE BEEN STEPPING UP."

— Ben Bradley, Pendleton hurdles coach

freshman year he was behind three outstanding hurdlers. The coronavirus pandemic canceled the 2020 meet, and Oja broke his arm during the third meet of the season last year.

"We had a pretty strong team back then (2019) and I wasn't

the Intermountain Conference district meet.

Oja has won every 110 and 300 hurdle event this year except one — he was fourth in the 110s at the Nike/Jesuit Relays on April 29. There was not a 300 hurdle race at the event.



BRAD TRUMBO

UPLAND PURSUITS

Learning patterns a key to tricking turkeys

Spring is upon us, and with the return of hummingbirds and the onset of flower and fruit tree bloom comes the wild turkey breeding and hunting seasons. The thunderous gobble of a dashing mature tom (male) puffed up and strutting to impress the ladies induces heart-racing, palm-sweating and immense anticipation for the fanatic turkey hunter.

A wild turkey's keen vision and hearing makes for a challenging hunt. Turkeys are notoriously difficult to call, and successful hunts often require years of practice to perfect call techniques and positioning for the bird's approach. Embracing and learning from failure is part of the game, but scouting flocks and identifying their patterns on patchwork landscapes gives the hunter an advantage, particularly when hunting the Rio Grande (Rio) turkeys of the Blue Mountains.

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ON THE SLATE

Schedule subject to change

SATURDAY, MAY 21

Prep Lacrosse
3A state quarterfinals: Hermiston at Roosevelt, TBD

Tennis
Pendleton at 5A state tournament, Babette Hornstein Tennis Center, 8 a.m. Umatilla, Weston-McEwen, Riverside at 4A/3A/2A/1A state tournament, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 8 a.m.

Track and field
Hermiston at District 8 Championships, Spokane, TBD
4A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD
5A state championships, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBD

THURSDAY, MAY 26

Track and field
Hermiston at 3A state championships, Tacoma, TBD

SPORTS SHORT

EOU women's lacrosse coach announces resignation

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University women's lacrosse head coach Monica Plut is set to resign, the university's athletic director Anji Weissenfluh announced on April 20.

Plut served as the team's head coach from January 2020 through April of this season, leading the way for Eastern's first two years as an official program.

The Mountaineers played their first official season in 2022, after the

team faced challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eastern earned the program's first official victory on Feb. 12, defeating Whitworth, 8-6. The Mountaineers tallied a 1-6 record overall in the 2022 season, which ended in early April.

In 2021 Eastern played strictly exhibition matches, taking the field for the first time. The Mountaineers tallied a 1-4 record.

Eastern is one of three schools in the Cascade Collegiate Conference that sponsor the sport as an official

program. Plut put a large emphasis on expanding the sport locally and in the region during her time as head coach at Eastern — the former coach worked with local middle schools and high schools, teaching the sport.

Plut previously coached at Adams State University, a Division II school in Colorado — she also served as a high school coach before joining the program at Eastern Oregon.

According to the press release from Eastern's athletic department, the university is in the process of conducting a national search for the team's next head coach.



Samantha Buckley (5) faces off against Catie Kawamura (19) during the match Feb. 19, 2022, between Eastern Oregon University and Willamette University at Community Stadium, La Grande. The Mountaineers lost 17-6 against the visiting Bearcats.
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