

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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CALEDONIAN GAMES



HEAVING THE STONE

Andy Puncochar, 30, of Hillsboro, tosses the heavy stone 30 feet, 1 inch Saturday, July 9, 2022, in competition at Athena's Caledonian Games. Dozens of Highland games athletes competed in the local games.

Photos by Phil Wright/East Oregonian



Scottish highland games competitors gather around judge Alan Wernsing, right in yellow, before events begin Saturday, July 9, 2022, at Caledonian Games in Athena.



Sean Taylor, 50, of Vancouver, Washington, tosses a weight over the 13-foot high bar Saturday, July 9, 2022, in competition at Athena's Caledonian Games.

Vikings under new leadership with Sipe

Robotics instructor was an assistant coach for years

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

UMATILLA — When Kyle and Heidi Sipe first arrived in Umatilla for job interviews in the summer of 1999, they thought they would use the interviews as a practice run as they looked for employment.

The Umatilla School District offered both teachers a job on the spot, and they have been there ever since.

Kyle Sipe taught math and science at the middle school, was an instructional coach working with new teachers and now heads up the high school's robotics team and teaches manufacturing.

Recently, Sipe added high school football coach to his list of duties.

"Post COVID, we have struggled to find people," Sipe said. "It was kind of my time. I've got plenty to do, but it's a really good



Mackenzie Whaley/East Oregonian

New Umatilla high school football coach Kyle Sipe poses for a photo Friday, July 8, 2022, in the school's weight room. Sipe has taught math and science and head's up the high school's robotics team, along with other duties.

group of kids and I want to see them succeed. It was cool to see their faces when I announced it. I don't want to let them down."

While building players in the robotics lab might seem a little "Weird Science," a good portion of the players out for football are part of the robotics program.

"I have a lot of kids who do both — robotics and football," Sipe said. "Out of 45 football players, 20 are crossovers. We have so many freshmen because of Dan (Durfey). We will have a full JV program for the first time in about 10 years."

Sipe replaces Chad Smith, who coached the

Vikings for one season, posting a 3-3 record in the Blue Mountain Conference and 4-4 overall.

Durfey put in five years with the Vikings before stepping down to watch his son Trent play football at Carroll College. He coaches at the middle school and said he would lend a hand as long as it doesn't interfere with his son's games.

"I was one of Dan's assistants when he was here," Sipe said. "I cannot speak as to how much Dan did for the program. Making academics first, family next and then we will get to football. I wouldn't be coaching or even considering this if not for coaching with Dan. I am working on getting him to come back. It's kind of a win-win. He attracted so many kids at the middle school the past two years."

Sipe is no stranger to football. He played four years at Kettle Falls High School in Washington, and was an all-league lineman on both sides of the ball his senior year.

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Hermiston LL wins the state softball title 10-12

Team is headed to Northwest Regional Tournament in California

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

MEDFORD — Gracelyn Tyree struck out five, and Kylie Virgil drove in three runs as Hermiston beat Bend South 9-8 on Sunday, July 10, in the championship game of the 10-12 state Little League softball tournament in Hermiston.

"They worked their tails off to get where they are at right now," Hermiston coach Travis Rood said. "Gracelyn came in and pitched a phenomenal game after pitching just two innings at district. She got innings from the defense."

Hermiston advances to the Northwest Regional Tournament in San Bernardino, California, playing its first game at

noon on July 23 against Idaho. Also in the regional bracket are Wyoming, Washington, Alaska and Montana.

The regional champion will advance to the Little League World Series in Greenville, North Carolina.

"They are excited to show what they have at San Bernardino," Rood said.

Against Bend South, Hermiston took a 4-0 lead after the first inning, and Virgil hit a two-run triple in the second inning to help her team to a 7-5 lead after two innings.

After the fourth, Hermiston led 9-6, and Bend South added another run in the fifth to make it 9-7.

Kenley Virgil went 4-for-4 with four singles and an RBI for Hermiston.

"Bend South came back and strung a couple of hits together, but we had some errors that allowed runs to score," Rood said. "The girls kept their composure

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