

Woods:

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for the first time in many years. You want to grow those special moments.”

While the good things make the job fulfilling, there's also the headache of scheduling, bus schedules and hiring new coaches when necessary. That's just scratching the surface.

“It's so much more than buses and officials,” she said. “You are the coach of coaches. If you want them to build culture and grow leaders, you have to grow leaders too. I probably have one of the youngest coaching staffs in America. I am married to the Stanfield bus dude (Kurtis Woods), so that part is easy. We have our own buses and bus drivers.”

Still a small-town girl

Woods graduated from Condon High School in 1986. She played volleyball, basketball and track for the Blue Devils.

She went to college at Western Oregon State College with the intent of getting a music degree. She played clarinet and sang in the choir.

She made the switch to elementary education and never looked back.

“My first teaching job was in The Dalles,” she said. “Then I was in Sheridan, Oregon, for two years, and then landed back in Arlington. I was there for 20 years, and I coached volleyball for several years. I had no intention of being an athletic director. The position came open. I was surprised I got the job. I really didn't want to do the job because I was still coaching at the same time.”

Woods spent more than

five years as athletic director. At one point she had to write professional goals to keep her job. One was to be a league representative, then a 1A classification representative for the state, and then run for state secretary.

“One day I got a call that I should run for state secretary,” she said. “I skipped a couple of steps. I ran for it. I had no idea what that was. I lost by three votes. Two months later, the guy who won left and Bill Bowers from Springfield asked if I still wanted it. It's a five year sentence. Secretary, treasurer, vice president, president and past president. I got to work with the best leaders in the state. I met athletic directors from all over the country, and went to the national conference three times. It was awesome.”

Woods took the athletic director job in Nyssa, but lasted just one year.

“When you move away from everything you have ever known, it's hard,” she said. “We just needed to move back.”

In 2016, they moved back to Eastern Oregon, where Wood taught in Umatilla and Pendleton, and spent one year as a volleyball referee.

She's also back in the boardroom as the Blue Mountain Conference representative and is filling a term as the 2A state classification representative. She's also noticed a change in the athletic director position throughout the state.

“I'm going back to the steps I skipped the first time,” she said. “I was happy to do it. I would be at the meetings anyway. Since I left the athletic director world for a while and came back, the female population of athletic directors has increased tremendously, which is nice to see.”

Blues:

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Turning my attention to the head of the pool, a few more dinks challenged the fly, each brilliantly colored like jewels in a treasure chest. It seemed odd that a bigger fish didn't come from beneath the log. Shifting right a little, I cast toward the glide.

As the fly bounced against the log and floated back into the glide, a fish larger than any I had caught in this stream since 2013 swiftly rose and engulfed the meal, then quickly reminded me what it was like to fight a strong fish on a tenkara fly rod. The fish was over 14 inches, thick and deep, quick and fast, and would have been into the drag had I been using a reel. Somehow, I thwarted its attempts to blast downstream through the riffles and break me off. As the fish slid into the shallows, I admired its beauty and efforts and released it with the hope that it would grow another year.

Each subsequent bend in the stream set up a similar pool and glide, but none offered up another big fish. Hours quickly passed in the soothing rush of waters, and I decided it was time to hit the trail.

Transitioning to the mountaintop, I approached the headwaters of the stream, pulled to the shoulder of the Forest Service road and climbed on the bike. Years had passed since my last ride and I was in search of new trails, but more importantly, I sought meadows painted against a backdrop of the snowcapped



Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

Crimson Indian paintbrush steals the show among sulfur lupine.



Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

A superbly colorful rainbow trout that could not resist a big stimulator fly.

peaks of the Eagle Caps.

A short distance ahead was a blocked and forgotten two-track where I hooked left and climbed up to a small meadow glowing golden with biscuitroot and yellow fawn lily. Around the bend, another wildflower appeared on the edge of a wetland, the Bonneville shooting star, which is a lovely fuchsia with a yellow petal base and black cone.

The petals turn up, making the flower appear comet-like and identifying its namesake. Violet showy penstemon, pink spring beauty, common yarrow and more took advantage of the open trail edges. It was slow going as I stopped to photograph the various specimens.

Veering onto another route, I came upon grand vistas dressed in sulfur lupine and accented by

crimson Indian paintbrush, and wetland seeps speckled with buttercups and the peculiar ballhead waterleaf. A final pull back up to the truck led through a field of grass widow — a delicate pink flower hung from the side of a slender grass-like blade leaf. The perfect end to an incredible day in the Blues.

There is no shortage of biking, trout and wildflower opportunities in the Blue Mountains. More info on biking and trails that may coincide with mountain stream and lake fishing is available from the U.S. Forest Service North Fork John Day Ranger District website at bit.ly/3ct3sC9.

Brad Trumbo is a fish and wildlife biologist and outdoor writer in Waitsburg, Washington. For tips and tales of outdoor pursuits and conservation, visit www.bradtrumbo.com.

Timber:

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Her favorite event is the single buck, which has competitors make one cut through 19 inches of white pine using a single man cross-cut saw. The piece they cut off is roughly 3 inches thick.

“It's a love-hate relationship,” she said. “I love the misery.”

While competitors bring their own crosscut saws and axes, the event provides the chainsaws to make sure there is an even playing field.

“It's a funny concept in Timbersports,” Page said. “They try to keep it fair, but everyone has different axes and cross-cut saws. When you get there, it's the luck of the draw. You could get the one block (of white pine) that is soft and breaks like a pumpkin, or you could get the one that is so solid. They try to take the trees from the same cluster so they are about the same age.”

Since moving back to

Oregon from Montana last year, Page has had more opportunities to train with coaches and compete in more events. She put in her final training session a week ago with David Moses Jr., of Snoqualmie, Washington.

“He (Moses) is helping me fine tune parts of my form to be faster, more precise and how to read my block faster,” Page said. “My arms move faster than my brain can process. He has been a competitor in the series for a long time.”

Page has done five shows already this season, winning two in California.

“If Erin doesn't show up, I do pretty well,” Page said.

Originally from John Day, Page works in the Heppner Ranger District on the Umatilla National Forest for the U.S. Forest Service.

She and her husband, Camron Tack, left for Arkansas the morning of July 20.

“On the way back, we are going to Tombstone (Arizona),” Page said. “When we drive, it gives us an opportunity to see new places.”

Honor:

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Nichols finished 10th at the Cascade Collegiate Conference Championships in the 800 with a time of 1:54.81. He also was seventh in the 1,500 (3:54.14). EOU won the men's team title.

Nichols qualified for the

NAIA Outdoor Track & Field Championships in the 1,500. He placed 11th with a time of 3:58.93.

Nichols, a junior, also was named to the dean's list for the 2022 winter term. Qualifying students had to achieve and maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher while completing a minimum of 12 hours of graded coursework.

SPORTS BRIEFING

HSD offers free sports physicals

HERMISTON — The Hermiston School District reminds parents that their student-athletes are required to have a sports physical to participate.

Free sports physicals (which are valid for two years) for Hermis-

ton students are offered on Aug. 9 in the gold gym at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St. Sixth through ninth grade students are from 9 a.m. to noon and grades 10-12 are 1-4:30 p.m.

For questions, contact Maria Duron at maria.duron@hermiston.org or 541-667-0036.

—EO Media Group

HIV isn't just a big city issue.

More than half of Oregonians with HIV live outside of Portland, often in suburbs and small towns like this one.

Good neighbors chip in to get the job done. And we've got work to do on HIV prevention. People in rural Oregon are more likely to get a late-stage diagnosis, and a lack of HIV treatment may harm your health, or your partner's. Detected early, HIV is more easily managed and you can live a long, healthy life. Getting tested is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Learn more and find free testing at endhivoregon.org



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