

A9

WEDNESDAY
March 23, 2016

Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Life

SPORTS • OUTDOORS • CLASSIFIEDS



Senior third baseman Josh Rummel makes the diving stop for the Joseph Eagles during practice last week.

Steve Tool/Chieftain

PLAY BALL!

NEW THREE-SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM MOVES UP TO 3A IN 2016

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Spring of 2016 just arrived, but it started for the Eagles baseball players Feb. 15 for pitchers and catchers and for the rest of the team on Feb. 29. Those dates were the first practice days for the ball club. With the loss of only one senior from last year's team, and this year's loss of standout Sam Beckman to a football injury, coach Calvin Word is looking for a successful season.

Out on the field 14 boys are putting their all on the line to become one of the starting nine. Baseball may look lazy to the outsider, but

it's a high intensity sport played in spurts. You can feel it in the leisurely windup of pitcher Tate Olsen followed by the hum of the fastball before it crackles into the mitt of catcher Rylie Hayward. Out at third base, senior Josh Rummel waits in a crouch for the next ball to come his way. A split second after the clink of the ball on aluminum, Rummel throws himself into a dive to snag a grounder trying to sneak its way between third and short. So much for lazy. Though the team carries the Joseph moniker, eight of 14 players are from Enterprise, with Joseph contributing two players and Wallowa four. While the addition

of Wallowa helped the Eagles field a sustainable team, it also pushed the team up a notch to Class 3A competition. That doesn't bother coach Calvin Word or his three assistant coaches, Geoff Hayward, Chris Garrett and Richard Johnson. "Baseball is baseball no matter what level you're playing at," Word said. "If you play well you can compete at any level." This year's team is fielding nine pitchers, which has the coaching staff confident that the team will do well as it enters the 3A Eastern Oregon League. Word is expecting a lot from his players, and he considers each of them a standout.

"I expect my younger players to get better every day and my older players to step up and lead and play better each day. Everyone will get a chance to play. What they do with their chances to play is really up to them. "We have a really exciting team to watch this year. We're going to throw the ball well and hit the ball well. If fans can come out and support the team, we'll really appreciate it." Before heading back onto the diamond, Word took a long look at his newest crop of players. "They're all good ballplayers, they just need room to grow," he said.

SCOREBOARD

FRIDAY, MARCH 18
Baseball
Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii 4, Wallowa Valley 2
Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii 16, Wallowa Valley 5
Softball
Scio 7, Wallowa Valley 2
Pilot Rock 21, Wallowa Valley 3
SATURDAY, MARCH 19
Softball
Central Linn 16, Wallowa Valley 5
Weston-McEwen 15, Wallowa Valley 2

SPORTS CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23
Softball
Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa at Heppner Invitational, TBD
THURSDAY, MARCH 24
Softball
Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa at Heppner Invitational, TBD
Baseball
Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa at Grant Union Tournament at John Day, TBD
FRIDAY, MARCH 25
Baseball
Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa at Grant Union Tournament at John Day, TBD
SATURDAY, MARCH 26
Baseball
Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa at Grant Union Tournament at John Day, TBD
MONDAY, MARCH 28
Golf
Enterprise boys at 2A Invitational, North Plains, noon

SKI REPORT

FERGUSON RIDGE
Likely open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 26-27
Annual Fergi Fest is April 2.
Snow levels: unavailable; warm weather has prevented grooming
Latest info, visit <http://www.skifergi.com>.
ANTHONY LAKES
Open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily through March 27; half-price lift tickets March 23-25
Snow levels: 3 inches last 24 hours as of Tuesday; 80-inch base; 238 inches season total
Latest info, visit <http://anthonylakes.com>.
SPOUT SPRINGS
Closed for the season
Latest info, visit www.spoutspringsskiarea.com.

PREP ROUNDUP

Eagles open with pair of losses at Pilot Rock

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The county's combined high school baseball team opened its season with two losses in a doubleheader at Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii on Friday. The Eagles lost the opener 4-2 and fell 16-5 in the second game. Coach Calvin Word was unable to attend the game due to a work-schedule conflict. Assistant Coach Geoff Hayward said the Eagles played well in the first game, with senior Enterprise pitcher Justin Exon throwing 65 pitches before being pulled from the game. Exon gave up two hits,

struck out six and issued two walks. The Eagles defense faltered, though, with five errors committed in the loss. There was more of the same in the second game, as the Eagles committed seven errors and the pitching staff allowed five walks. "Errors will always kill you," Hayward said. "Add that on with a few walks, and it's tough." Wallowa freshman Gus Ramsden had one of the team's few hot bats. He went 3 for 6 in the two games and accounted for half of the team's hits in the second contest. Hayward said that the lack

of outside practice showed out on the field. "We did some pitching and hitting indoors, but we really couldn't do defensive drills because it's too small. I think we've got a lot of talent, but we just had some first-game jitters." The Eagles' next play in a March 24-26 tournament at Grant Union High School in John Day. **SOFTBALL**
Rough start for Cubs
The Wallowa County Cubs had a busy opening weekend on the road but returned home with an early 0-4 re-

cord. The team, comprised of players from all three of the county's high schools, played two games each on Friday and Saturday at the Rocket Softball Tournament at Pilot Rock. Darby Gassett of Enterprise had two hits and scored both runs in a season-opening 7-2 loss to Scio on Friday. The Cubs were blistered by the host team, 21-3, in Friday's second game. On Saturday, the Cubs fell 16-5 to Central Linn and 15-2 to Weston-McEwen. The team next takes the field at 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 23, at the two-day Heppner Invitational.

GOLF Golf teams open at Echo

The Enterprise High School and the combined Wallowa/Joseph golf teams took a sojourn to Echo Hills golf course in Echo to compete in the Heppner Invitational on Friday. Enterprise brought five golfers to the tournament at the par-72 course. Brycen Locke paced the Outlaws with a 99, while Boone Harrod shot a 112. Jordan Collins and Curtis Sanders each carded a 125, and Sunny Galli tallied a 128. "It was our first tournament, so we're taking it as a learning experience," said Outlaw as-

sistant coach Kyle Crawford. "We walked away feeling like we had fun, but knowing we have a lot to improve on. I think they're all pretty happy just to be golfing." Wallowa/Joseph brought both boys and girls to the tournament. For the boys, Kai Oliver shot a 102, followed by Caeven Murray at 110 and Thomas Jamerson with a 126. Chance Goebel and Leon Kern shot 132 and 138 respectively. For the girls, Kana Oliver carded a 171 and Haven Johnson shot a 166. Both the Enterprise and Joseph/Wallowa teams next play at the Pendleton Country Club Invitational on April 1.

Hunters slowly embracing lead-free ammunition

By Kathy Aney
EO Media Group

Scott Peckham remembers the moment he decided to switch from lead ammunition to copper. Peckham, big game ecologist for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and a hunter, had

just dug into a plate of venison spaghetti when he bit into a hard object. "It was a large lead fragment about half the size of a raisin," Peckham said. "It was a sizable chunk of bullet in my mouth and I crunched it." He laid his fork down. Lead is highly toxic. Knowing this, Peckham had

carefully cut out the blood-shot portion of the deer while butchering and thought he had gotten all the bullet fragments before grinding it and using some of the burger for the spaghetti sauce. The health-minded Peckham finds the idea of eating hormone- and antibiotic-free game appealing and the possibility that he and his

wife were ingesting lead bothered him. After the spaghetti episode, Peckham stocked up on non-toxic copper bullets for his next hunting trip. Lynn Tompkins rejoices every time she hears that a hunter such as Peckham has converted to non-lead bullets or shot.

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Lynn Tompkins and Bob Tompkins take a blood sample from a red-tailed hawk that was brought in to Blue Mountain Wildlife with high lead levels.

E.J. Harris/East Oregonian

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