

July 26

WEDNESDAY
July 26, 2017

Wallowa County Chieftain Wallowa County Life

SPORTS • OUTDOORS • CLASSIFIEDS



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Chris Bathke is ready for his senior year of baseball. Bathke, a star centerfielder and pitcher for the Wallowa Valley Eagles is currently treading up the diamond playing for the La Grande Legacy Legends American Legion team.

Baseball season still going for Bathke

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Baseball season has come to a close in Wallowa County. Unless you're Chris Bathke.

The pitcher and centerfielder is a ball-player dedicated to his sport.

When high school baseball season ended, he wasn't content to hang his spikes until March. So, he did what he's done the past few seasons: donned the uniform of the La Grande Legacy Legends American Legion baseball team, coached by Parker McKinley, the OSAA 4A baseball coach of the year.

Bathke isn't a high school kid who wants to play ball to avoid a summer of work before he enters his senior year. The 16-year-old has bigger plans.

"I want to play college baseball," he said. "More baseball is better, and the Legends are a good team — more competition."

As it happens, competition is something Bathke thrives on and one of the differences he sees between American Legion and high school ball.

"There's more competition," he said. "We're playing some college red-shirt teams that even include players from Division 1 schools. I just like it better. I'd rather be learning how to play against harder teams like that."

The lanky six-footer currently divides his time between centerfield and pitcher and enjoys both positions for what they offer.

"Sometimes I like the thrill of diving catches out in center, but I also love

striking people out and throwing no-hitters," he said.

While playing on the Wallowa Valley Eagles team this spring, Bathke, a junior, was already throwing smoke with an 87 mph. fastball. He plans to wait until the end of this season to test his arm against the radar gun again.

"I'm definitely throwing harder now than I was in high school," he said.

Like many baseball fanatics, Bathke also follows Major League Baseball. His favorite team is the Los Angeles Angels, and his favorite player is Mike Trout, the team's star centerfielder.

Bathke travels to La Grande three to four times a week to practice with the team, although sometimes he spends the night with a friend in the area.

He said he doesn't have much time to practice at home, because he also plays several games per week and squeezes in a job at Terminal Gravity Brewing.

All that practice is paying off for Bathke. He's excelled on the diamond. His last outing included throwing four innings of a shutout no-hit ballgame. No slouch at the plate, he's been productive in both the RBI and extra-base hits categories.

With his sights set on college baseball, he's currently talking to George Fox University and plans to visit the school in August to speak with the coach and try to get a workout scheduled. Several smaller colleges have also been in touch about adding him to their program.

"I'm hoping to go somewhere," he said.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Walk to Stop Diabetes is Aug. 5

A fundraiser for the American Diabetes Association will be 9 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 5, beginning at Enterprise City Park. Registration opens at 8 a.m.

Participants can register, donate and find details at main.diabetes.org/goto/WalkOnEnterpriseOr. Information is also available from event organizer Cherie May at 541-263-2932.

Triathlon set at Wallowa Lake

Registration is open for the Wallowa Lake Triathlon, which will be 8 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 2. Swim, bike and run among the Eagle Cap Mountains and Wallowa Lake competing in a sprint-length triathlon to benefit victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Register online at active.com.

Regular registration is \$40 for individuals and \$65 for teams until 11:59 p.m. on Aug. 17. Only those participants registered by this date will be guaranteed a t-shirt due to the order cut-off deadline.

Late registration will be in effect until midnight Aug. 27. No race-day registration.

Includes a 250-meter swim, in Wallowa Lake, 12-mile road bike ride to Joseph and back and a 5k run through the Wallowa Lake Resort area. The event is a fundraiser for Safe Harbors, a Domestic and Sexual Violence Service Provider.

Miller leads Harley Tucker series

Before the first chute opens Wednesday night at Chief Joseph Days Rodeo, the points toward the Harley Tucker Series award have been accumulating. The series includes rodeos at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in Union, St. Paul Rodeo in St. Paul and Elgin Stampede, as well as Chief Joseph Days.

The unofficial tally shows Austin Foss, a bareback rider from Terrebonne, Ore., with 9.5 points. Jesse Brown, a steer wrestler from Baker has 10.5 points and Cody Miller, a bull rider from Parma, Idaho, with 11 points.

Foss and Miller will compete Friday night in Joseph, and Brown will compete Saturday night.

The award was founded 48 years ago by committees from Joseph, Elgin, Union and La Grande to promote more participation at their respective rodeos and because Tucker was the stock contractor for all four of the rodeos.

When La Grande discontinued its rodeo, St. Paul joined the group. Tucker was that rodeo's stock contractor as well.

Along with the four rodeos, Farm Supply is the major sponsor and the Tucker grandchildren contribute money each

- PREVIOUS WINNERS**
- 2016 — Ryan Opie, Crane
 - 2015 — Ryan MacKenzie, Jordan Valley
 - 2014 — Max Filippini, Battle Mountain, Nev.
 - 2013 — George Gillespie IV, Placerville, Calif.
 - 2012 — Pamela Capper, Cheney, Wash.
 - 2011 — Russell Cardosa, Terrebonne
 - 2010 — Shawn Morehead, Bureau, Idaho
 - 2009 — Jason Steard, Royal City, Wash.;
 - Shane Crossley, Hermiston
 - 2008 — Brad Goodrich, Hermiston
 - 2007 — Brad Goodrich, Hermiston
 - 2006 — Ben Lando, Milton-Freewater
 - 2005 — Trevor Knowles, Mt. Vernon
 - 2004 — Kayle Gray, Goldendale, Wash.
 - 2003 — Cindy Woods, Newberg
 - 2002 — Tony Currin, Dayton, Wash.
 - 2001 — Brd Gleason, Touchet, Wash.
 - 2000 — Jeff Coelho, Long Creek
 - 1999 — Shawn Greenfield, Lakeview
 - 1998 — Brad Goodrich, Hermiston
 - 1997 — Toby Adams
 - 1996 — Tony Currin, Dayton, Wash.
 - 1995 — Greg Oules, Chelan, Wash.

year to sweeten the pot. The winner receives \$3,000 and a belt buckle.

Another award is presented for the competitor who wins the first three of the four rodeos. The accumulative fund for 2017 is \$9,000.

- 1994 — Sean Culver, Grandview, Wash.
- 1993 — Jason Jackson, Nespahel, Wash.
- 1992 — Mike Hammer, Kennewick, Wash.
- 1991 — Mike Fuller, Clarkston, Wash.
- 1990 — Rocky Steagall, Irrigon
- 1989 — Rocky Steagall, Irrigon
- 1988 — David Cannon, Echo
- 1987 — Jed McKinley, Moscow, Idaho
- 1986 — Rocky Steagall, Irrigon
- 1985 — Dave Cannon, Echo
- 1984 — Johnny Sloan, Ellensburg, Wash.
- 1983 — Joe Ruda, Baker
- 1982 — Butch Knowles, Heppner
- 1981 — Bill Nelson, Baker
- 1980 — Bill Nelson, Baker
- 1979 — Clay Finley, Mt. Vernon
- 1978 — Butch Knowles, Heppner
- 1977 — Bob Koch, Aurora
- 1976 — Butch Knowles, Pendleton
- 1975 — Doug Brown, Silverton
- 1974 — Clyde Longfellow, Kendrick, Idaho
- 1973 — Buzz Seely, Roosevelt, Wash.
- 1972 — Jim Steen, Joseph
- 1971 — Buzz Seely, Roosevelt, Wash.
- 1970 — Buzz Peth, Bow, Wash.

Tony Currin of Heppner is the only contestant with two legs on the award.

Previous three-time winners included Butch Knowles of Heppner (\$5,100), Rocky Steagall of Irrigon (\$3,100) and Brad Goodrich of Hermiston (\$10,500).

Eastside Seniors take to the links at Alpine Meadows

A melodious murmuring of "Monday, Monday," a '60s hit by the Mamas and the Papas, could faintly be heard — a little off-key — coming from Alpine Meadows employees a week ago this past Monday as 72 Eastside Seniors took to the golf course.

"Monday is a slow day at AMGC," said Sherrie Currie, clubhouse manager. "Every other day of the week is fine, but Mondays are more internal. When the seniors come to town on their annual visit, everyone around here hums a different tune. These fel-

tee time

Rochelle Danielson

lows are a bonus to our club."

The Eastside Seniors, an organized group of golfers who have been around awhile, represent seven golf courses in northeastern Oregon: La Grande, Milton-Freewater, Buffalo Peak in Union, Baker, Echo, Pendleton and Enterprise. They play

monthly and visit each club during the summer. Play is always scheduled the day following Sunday.

On July 17, the AMGC gathering was all it was hoped to be as 50 seniors played the nine-hole course twice around in the morning hours, and 22 of the Eastsiders, who traveled a greater distance, took up the afternoon slot.

"The number of players was down by about 20 golfers from last year, but AMGC still accommodated a good turnout in spite of the heat factor," said Chuck Haines, who belongs to

the Enterprise group.

Haines went on to explain the association as being divided into three divisions depending on handicap, and an age requirement of 50 on up. Points for each player accumulate throughout the season, and winners are recognized with fall payouts.

When asked the age range of the seniors, Gary Marr spoke of Mel Elder, who is 93.

"Elder is with the La Grande group and plays an active role each month. In fact he shot a 91 in La Grande," said Marr. "It's cool to shoot your age,

but Mel scored two strokes better."

On a different note: It is also cool to have a hole-in-one. Tristan Beck did just that on No 4 a while back. Congratulations to Tristan.

Thursday Wine-Down winners: July 13, Judy Ables and Rebecca Knapp, 1st low gross, 45. Tammy Crawford and Kate Crawford, 47. July 20, Lil Harshfield and Josie Conrad, 1st low net, 27.5. Dayle Harman and Kathy Reynolds, 28.5.

Rochelle Danielson is a devoted golfer and writer.

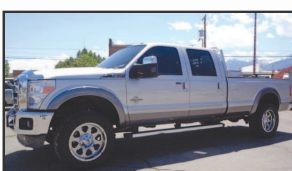
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