



Enterprise High standout signs to play college softball

Madison Plew will attend Jamestown, in N. Dakota, on a softball scholarship

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

It may not seem like the time of year to celebrate softball achievements unless you're Enterprise High School stand-out Madison Plew. She had cause to celebrate the sport on the brink of winter Nov. 10.

The EHS senior signed a letter of intent to attend the University of Jamestown in southeastern North Dakota on a softball scholarship.

Nearly 40 well-wishers, including teammates, former coaches and friends gathered in the school cafeteria to celebrate the event. Plew, a pitcher and third-baseman, is the first Outlaw to receive a softball scholarship in four years.

EHS athletic director Larry Wells congratulated Plew on being one of the few from the school to sign a letter of intent. He also said he knew of no one more deserving than Plew.

Former coach Jeff Edison said he looked up the word "exceptionalism" in the dictionary and noted the definition, "a condition of being different from the norm."

"You are not normal," Edison said to Plew. "But you are exceptional."

Plew followed, saying she couldn't



I couldn't do this without everyone here. I'm really thankful."

— Madison Plew

EHS softball player, addressing the family, friends and teammates at her signing ceremony

believe the day had arrived. She said she had dreamed of being a softball player before she knew what it meant or what it would take.

Plew's journey was an example that dreams come true if you're willing to work for them, and if you have the support of those around you.

She said that she was the only player in tee-ball who struck out at the tee — even after being given two extra swings. Her first year in Little League saw Plew's father, Andy Plew, coaching her team — one that had no pitchers.

His daughter was the only person he had time to work with, so they bought a book on the subject and the two watched hours of college softball to learn.

"Thank you for watching hours and hours of softball and always pushing me to better myself," Plew said to her father. She also thanked her mother and brother for their contributions to her success.

She also paid tribute to Edison, other coaches and her teammates.

After the signing ceremony, which took place at a table decorated with the colors orange and black, the colors of her future school, Plew posed for photos and took time to thank those who attended.

When asked how much she actually played softball in North Dakota, Plew didn't hesitate.

"I play softball nine months out of the year," she said. "Games run from the beginning of high school until the end of summer. I'll start practicing in a couple of weeks."

She added the longest time she's spent away from the game in the last four years is about a month.

She is active with several teams from Boise to Pendleton and also plays pickup ball for teams from as far away as Portland. Jamestown did not recruit Plew for pitching, she said she will play mostly third-base and some outfield.

Plew, a scholar and athlete who sports a 3.72 GPA, said she plans to study hard and has chosen to major in exercise science and minor in sports psychology. She said it can be difficult to balance the two pursuits.

"It takes a lot of work," Plew said. "But if you know yourself as a student and how much time you need to study helps. Being a student and athlete is really important to me, and student comes first."

Even with her school an 18-hour drive from her home, Plew doesn't plan to forget where she came from.

"I couldn't do any of this without everyone here," she said. "I'm really thankful."



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Madison Plew faces down a hitter last season. Plew recently signed a letter of intent to attend Jamestown University and play for the school's softball team.

County athletes garner league, state awards

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County 1A athletes garnered their fair share of both league and state athletic awards for fall sports. The Joseph volleyball team and Wallowa football team led the way in awards with the coaches on both teams winning "coach of the year" awards.

Joseph volleyball placed two players, junior Emma Hite and senior Alexis Sykora on the Old Oregon League first team. Freshman Sabrina Albee found a place on the second team and junior Tori Suto garnered an honorable mention.

Wallowa High School's Rylee Goller was named second team while sophomore Ashlyn Young rated an honorable mention.

Wallowa football stacked the league with selections as on offense as junior Gus Ramsden won first-team honors for quarterback while senior Patrick Ritthaler and junior Austin Brockamp filed the rest of the first-team backfield slots. Senior Ethan Burns earned a first-team selection as an offensive lineman.

Defensively for the Cougars, Burns got the nod for first-team as a linebacker while Brockamp and Ritthaler filled out the second team at the position. Ramsden chalked up another first-team award as a defensive back and junior Joe Robb earned first-team honors as a defensive lineman. Freshman Zeb Ramsden chalked up an honorable as a kick returner.

The Joseph football offense saw junior Trey Wandschneider on the first team as a tight end and wide receiver while junior Tyler Homan received an honorable mention as running back. Senior Rylie Warnock was awarded a second-team slot as an offensive lineman.

The Eagles defense saw Warnock with an honorable mention in the linebacker slot and Homan on first team as a defensive back.

Wallowa coach Matt Brockamp and Cougars quarterback Gus Ramsden won coach of the year and player of the year, respectively.

Jill Hite, Joseph volleyball coach, was also named coach of the year.

ODFW on guard for chronic wasting disease

So far, no local deer or elk have been impacted

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is increasing its monitoring of deer and elk herds for Chronic Wasting Disease, a fatal neurological disease that has never been detected in Oregon's cervids but is spreading in North America.

The disease is caused by a protein prions that damages the brain of infected animals, causing progressive loss of body condition. It's untreatable and always fatal.

Prions are infectious agents composed entirely of a protein material that can fold in multiple, structurally abstract ways. The prions that cause Chronic Wasting Disease can also last a long time in the environment, infecting new animals for decades.

Department staffers have been keeping an eye out for the disease for years now, running check stations in eastern Oregon to test harvested deer and elk on the opening weekends of popular hunting seasons and requiring disease testing at captive cervid ranches.

The test to confirm Chronic Wasting Disease involves collecting an animal's lymph nodes or brain stem and can only be conducted once an animal has died.

Department officials sampled deer for Chronic Wasting Disease over opening weekend of rifle deer season.

ODFW is also testing road-killed deer and elk and is expanding this testing to western Oregon this year.

Animals that exhibit signs of wasting or neurological disorder are also tested. If you see or har-



Chieftain file photo

A buck whitetail deer rests in the snow on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

vest a sick deer or elk, report it to the ODFW Wildlife Health Lab number at 866-968-2600 or by email to Wildlife.Health@state.or.us and do not consume the meat.

Although Chronic Wasting Disease has not been shown to sicken people, the Centers for Disease Control advises hunters not to eat meat from animals infected with Chronic Wasting Disease. It's also always a good idea to wear latex or rubber gloves when field dressing an animal and to wash hands and instruments thoroughly afterwards.

The state department is also asking hunters interested in having their deer or elk tested for Chronic Wasting Disease to contact their local office to set up an appointment. ODFW is most interested in deer and elk that are at least two years old. To get an animal Chronic Wasting Disease tested, hunters will need to bring in the animal's head, which should be kept cool prior to sam-

pling if possible.

ODFW will also take a tooth for aging and hunters should receive a postcard several months later with information about the animal's age. If an animal tests positive for Chronic Wasting Disease, the hunter will be notified. Samples are tested out of state and results can take several weeks.

Hunters heading to a state where Chronic Wasting Disease has been found are reminded they are prohibited from bringing back any parts of their deer, elk or moose that contain brain matter or spinal cord tissue. This is where the Chronic Wasting Disease prion is most concentrated.

"Chronic Wasting Disease is considered one of the most devastating wildlife diseases on the American landscape today," said Colin Gillin, ODFW State Wildlife Veterinarian. "Once Chronic Wasting Disease enters a state and infects free-ranging deer and elk, it has been nearly impossible to eradicate with present day tools.

So we want to do all we can to keep this disease out of Oregon."

Once animals show the clinical signs of the Chronic Wasting Disease, the disease has probably already been on the landscape one or more years. It can take several years for an animal to become ill but the disease can be transmitted throughout the period of the infection.

Early detection of Chronic Wasting Disease could allow Oregon to potentially eradicate the disease before it takes root. The state of New York was successful in limiting Chronic Wasting Disease's spread because it quickly located the first few individual animals infected and removed them, and no further cases were detected.

"If we ever document Chronic Wasting Disease in Oregon, we want to act quickly and will need the support of Oregon hunters," Gillin. "Early detection is our best chance to keep the disease from spreading, should it enter the state. That is why we need the active involvement of hunters and all Oregonians to continue surveillance and keep an eye open for animals that appear sick."

Chronic Wasting Disease appears to spread most quickly through movement of live animals, although it can also spread by transport of carcasses by hunters or through infected migrating deer and elk.

Documented cases of Chronic Wasting Disease have occurred in Alberta, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming and Saskatchewan.

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