



A LOOK AT FOOTBALL



# Wallowa opens against powerhouse St. Paul

Brockamp in his fifth year at the Cougar helm

By Paul Wahl

Wallowa County Chieftain

It's not often that your opening game for the season could be the same matchup for the state championship honor at the end of the season.

Matt Brockamp, head coach for the Wallowa High School Cougar football team, believes that will be the case. And he's looking forward to it.

He has a gaggle of seniors who are expected to carry the team to a successful season.

The Cougars will play St. Paul High School in St. Paul Friday night at 7 p.m.

"They've been a perennial powerhouse," said Brockamp, who is in his fifth year coaching the team. "They've won more state champions than anyone. This is a game I've been trying to put together for a couple years."

Tony Smith has coached St. Paul for years. Three generations of Smiths have played quarterback for the school.

The Bucks' last season ended in a heartbreaking loss to Santiam in the state semifinals.

The Cougar offense will be led by returning quarterback Gus Ramsden, a senior. Rams-



Photos by Paul Wahl/Chieftain

Wallowa seniors Zane Hermens, Austin Brockamp and Gus Ramsden, all seniors, rush in to stop a Cove ball-carrier during Friday's opening season Jamboree at Wallowa High.

den had a slow start last year due to an injury, but came back for a strong finish.

Wallowa's top receiver, Austin Brockamp, also a senior, is expected to repeat his standout performance.

Other seniors on the team include Wyatt Prince, Joe Robb, Zane Hermens, Mike Diggins, Richardo Palma, Zane Mallory and C.J. Horn.

Four juniors — Quinten Tillery, Ricky Prince, Logan Waldron and Kenyon Davidson — are also among the elder statesmen.

The remaining crop of freshmen and sophomores includes Gus Ramsden's younger brother, Zeb and Hermens' younger brother Zeb.

Twenty-seven players are on the preseason roster. Coach

Brockamp will produce a final roster this week.

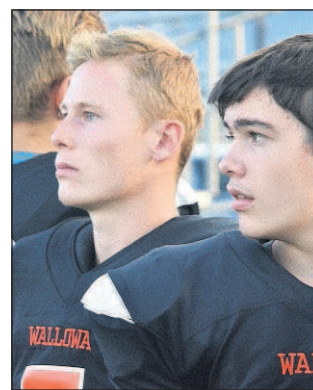
Wallowa opened its season with the traditional jamboree event Aug. 24 with Crane, Adrian, Pine Valley, Pine Eagle and Cove.

For Coach Brockamp, the goal is simple.

"To be 1-0 every week we play," he said. "We try to get our kids to compete at a higher



**ABOVE** Wallowa senior Austin Brockamp breaks through three opponents for daylight in Friday's tradition opening season jamboree at the Wallowa High School football field.



**LEFT** Wallowa High School's football team has a bit of an international flair this year. Senior Corsin Risi is from Switzerland. Jesse Duncan is on the right.

level and win every play. If we don't, we forget about it and move on to the next play."

Wallowa's offense was heavily weighted toward running plays last year. This year, quarterback Ramsden will be encouraged to do more throwing.

"Gus has been throwing the ball real well," he said. "It's something that we know we

need to get better at.

"We will be a hard team to defend against again this year," he added.

Defensively, Wallowa has three players topping 200 pounds — Robb, Horn and Diggins are seniors, Quinten Tillery is a junior and Ruben Hunt is a freshman.

Coach Brockamp is assisted by Jeremy McCulloch.

# Joseph Eagles ready to compete in newly formed six-man football play

New rules, new coach and new assistant coach

By Paul Wahl

Wallowa County Chieftain

Joseph High School is starting the year with a new sport — sort of — and a new head coach.

Duncan Christman will coach the Eagle six-man football squad.

Oregon School Activities Association approved a trial period for the sport, which was regularly played in small towns across the state 1947-59. It was replaced with eight-man games.

It is widely viewed as a method of smaller schools to keep football programs alive.

Six-man football was offered as an alternative for schools with an adjusted enrollment of 89 students as part of a two-year pilot program.

This will be Christman's first year as a head coach. He has previously coached at the middle-school level in Joseph and was an assistant coach on the varsity track team.

Christman was a multi-sport athlete for Enterprise High School, graduating in 2012. He was also active in dramatics and had a number of roles in play productions produced at the school.

He earned his degree at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston and headed back to Wallowa County. He will be substituting in all three school districts in the county this school year.

Christman has been learning the six-man rules and teaching them to the 15 who have already joined the team.

"It's a lot quicker than eight-man football," Christman said. Oregon chose a 40x100-yard playing field.

"That five yards missing off each sideline come at you pretty quickly," he added.

Like any member of his age group, Christman turned to YouTube to learn about the sport. He also spent one-on-one time with a coach from Missoula, Mont., who has been coaching four years.



Contribute photo

Duncan Christman, a 2012 multi-sport graduate of Enterprise High School, will coach the Joseph Eagle football team this fall.

The sport has its roots in Texas, but has become increasingly popular throughout the northern tier of states.

His assistant, John DeWitt, attended a clinic on six-man football in Hermiston. DeWitt, a recent arrival in Wallowa County, has a background in rugby and will be teaching math classes at Joseph.

Christman described the team's practices thus far as a "fun learning experience."

"We're learning new types of offenses and getting used to everyone on the line being eligible receivers," he noted.

A broad crop of seniors also bodes well for the coming season.

Tyler Homan, Kade Kilgore, Trey Wand-schneider, TJ Grote and Steven Beckman will do yeoman's work for the squad. Beckman will be the center.

Five juniors and four freshmen round out the team.

Christman said he doesn't have too many expectations since it's never been done before.

"I'd like to say we're going to have a winning season," Christman said.

The change to six-man also means Joseph will be playing a number of teams from schools heretofore unknown.

South Wasco County in Maupin, Ore., is the furthest destination, a 600-mile round trip. Relatively nearby opponents include Huntington, Burnt River, Monument and Echo. Other

## SIX-MAN FOOTBALL AT A GLANCE

- Most teams use an onside kick; the ball is rarely kicked into the end zone.
- Offense must advance 15 yards in four downs.
- Unless the ball is kicked or forward passed, it may not be advanced across the line of scrimmage. No quarter-back keepers.
- Pass from snap receiver to snapper must travel at least one yard in flight.
- Quarters are 10 minutes in length.
- At least three players must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- All players are eligible pass receivers.
- A field goal scored by kicking is worth two points, a pass or run field goal is one point.

teams Joseph will face in the 1A Special District 2 are Harper, Prairie City and Spray/Mitchell/Wheeler.

Christman said Huntington was a six-man dynasty in the sport's previous iteration.

Games have a faster pace than other football layouts and scores often appear more like basketball numbers than football.

Christman said he hopes the community will come out and support the Eagles, which will have five home games.

"For anyone who says it's not 'real' football, I'd like to have them come out and see the amount of work this team is putting in," Christman said.

In addition to the five seniors, Ethan Pitman, Carlson Littlepage, Guylan Snyder, Juston Rodgers, Hayden Hite, Chase Homan, Trace Collier and Brad Wilcox are also on the team.

# High school football continues drop in popularity

Remains most popular sport in the state

Participation in high school sports was down in Oregon last season, with the number dipping below 100,000 for the first time since 2012-13.

The National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations released its annual nationwide athletics participation report showed that there were 99,907 total participants in Oregon athletics last year — 55,572 boys and 44,335 girls. All three numbers are down from the previous year.

It is a continued trend of fewer boys and more girls participating in athletics; however, as girl participation has risen six percent since the 2009-10 season, boys participation has dropped 7.5 percent.

The most popular sport in the state was football yet again with 12,419 players between the 11-man and 8-man ranks; however, that total is down 17 percent from 15,009 players in 2008. Rounding out the top five for most popular boys sports were track and field (9,526), basketball (7,620), soccer (6,397) and baseball (5,596).

While football's decline grabs the headlines, baseball and boys golf continued its drop-offs. In baseball, participation has dropped each of the past four seasons, from 6,071 in 2015 to 5,596 this season, and it has dropped 17 percent from 2008 when 6,766 kids played.

Meanwhile, golf's 2017-18 participation number of 1,464 is down 32 percent from 2008 when 2,162 kids teed off.

Track and field keeps its spot as the most popular girls sport with 7,289 players, which is an 11 percent increase over the past 10 years. Following track is volleyball (7,086), basketball (5,824), soccer (5,398) and softball (4,568).

Soccer was the biggest gainer nationally for boys, with 6,128 more participants last season.

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