



EO file photo/East Oregonian

Spout Springs Ski Area, shown here on Feb. 20, 2014, may not open this season after all.

Spout Springs opening no sure thing

By Phil Wright
East Oregonian

This season's opening of the Spout Springs Mountain Resort remains in question.

Owner John Murray said in early December he planned on opening the resort after reaching an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to alleviate safety concerns between skiers and snowmobilers in the parking lot on the north side of Highway 204.

"There was a verbal hand-

shake with backing in writing," Murray said.

The Forest Service on Dec. 13 announced a new plan to allow overnight parking for trucks and trailers in part of the south parking lot.

"The Forest Service modified the south parking area in response to the loss of overnight parking in the north parking area, which was changed to day-use only to alleviate safety concerns raised by the ski area," according to the announcement. "The changes to the south parking area balance the needs of the

ski area with other recreationists that use this portion of the Umatilla National Forest. This alternative parking arrangement was developed with input from the Oregon Department of Transportation, Spout Springs Homeowners Association President Tim Richardson and other interested public."

Murray said he was not part of that input.

"Kind of disappointing, really," he said.

Spout Springs operates under a special use permit in the Umatilla National Forest, and the

parking area north of Highway 204 is a Sno-Park, which pays for the Oregon Department of Transportation to do plowing and snow removal. The Sno-Park also allows for multiple use, including snowmobiles and trailers.

Murray maintained snowmobilers and skiers are a bad mix, and the parking has been the scene of a couple of fatal snowmobile collisions. He said the first he knew of the Forest Service's changes to the parking plan was Dec. 14, when the resort was taking applications

for jobs.

He said he was not pleased with the changes, nor was his liability insurance carrier, which covers the ski area and related activities but it does not cover snowmobiles and the like. Still, Murray said he is hopeful to work out something with the Forest Service and have the resort open for the first time in two years.

"We're working on it. We're working on it ... We'll see how it shakes out," he said.

Murray also said he is winterizing the place just in case.

Joseph girls soar, boys on the upswing

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The lady Eagles are flying high after a 51-17 thrashing of Echo in Joseph on Saturday, Dec. 22. Sabrina Albee scored 22 points in the effort while teammate Haley Miller contributed 10 and three Eagles ladies contributed five points each.

Coach Lance Homan said that the game provided playing time opportunity for the younger girls on the squad.

"I was proud of how our young girls came in and played with our more experienced girls," he said. "This was a good start to a very tough Christmas break schedule."

The Eagles men stumbled with their second loss in a row. The first a 54-47 defeat at the hands of the Enterprise Outlaws on Wednesday, Dec. 19. Friday saw the Eagles men falling to Horizon Christian 42-31, their lowest offensive output of the season.

Tyler Homan was the only Eagle with double-digit scoring, seeking out the rim for 11 points while Chase Murray offered up six points. Trey Wandschneider and Hadley Miller each knocked four points through the hoop.

"Same story different game," said coach Olan Fulfer. "We just didn't execute. We had some foul trouble and kept putting them to the foul line."

Fulfer noted that the Eagles led by as much as six points late in the game but could not convert free throws and missed easy shots as well.

"We want us to play hard and physical without fouling," the coach said. "They still played hard and didn't fall apart. Their attitudes were great and that's what I'm looking for."

Both boys and girls teams traveled to Dufur for Thursday, Dec. 27 battles that saw both squads emerge victorious.

Led by Sabrina Albee's 25 points, the ladies steamrolled Dufur 65-23 in a contest that was the Eagles ladies most lopsided victory of the year thus far.

"The kids came out and played the best first quarter of basketball I have seen in a long time. We were energized, moving everywhere and really in sync with each other," coach Lance Homan said. "Emma Hite shot extremely well and really controlled the game for us. Sabrina Albee played really well within herself and had a good night all the way around."

Hite hit the target for 15 points. The coach also noted the solid performances of Madelyn and Haley Miller, who rang the buzzer for nine and eight points respectively.

"It was also nice for everyone to get some quality minutes on the floor," Homan said.

The win saw the ladies reach an 8-1 record overall and rank eighth in the state.

The boys also fared well against Dufur, coming out on the top end of a 60-55 score. No comments or stats were made available to the Chieftain.

The contest left the boys with a 6-4 record overall and ranked 10th in the state.

EHS men lose heartbreaker to TigerScots; Lady Outlaws cut down Weston-McEwen

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Despite strong double-digit scoring from three players, The Outlaws lost a 68-67 shootout with Weston McEwen in the final seconds on Saturday, Dec. 22.

Coach Larry Wells said the Outlaws had plenty of opportunities to win the battle. The team had a nine-point lead in the last four minutes of the game. But the trouble started when an EHS player was called for traveling and made an unknown comment to the referee, who promptly called the player for a technical. The TigerScots promptly converted the free throws and scored on the possession afterward.

"We had a little foul trouble, lots of guys with three fouls in third quarter," said coach Larry Wells.

Turnovers and a failure to convert free throws in the clutch following the technical led to the TigerScots victory. The Outlaws were up 67-65 late in the game when a missed free throw opportunity resulted in a Tiger-Scot three-pointer with seven seconds, which sealed the one-point victory.

"We had our opportunities," Wells said. "It's frustrating that with our highest output in a while we just couldn't pull it out."

According to Wells, the team played good defense for the most part, although Weston hit

a high percentage of their shots. Still, Enterprise failed to capitalize on golden opportunities when it counted.

"We've got to manage the basketball better down the stretch," Wells said.

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Shelby Moncrief and Ashlyn Gray combined for 26 points in as the Lady Outlaws trashed Weston-McEwen 61-30 on Friday, Dec. 22.

The TigerScots initially tried to keep the game interesting, trailing only 18-15 after the first quarter, but things went south — way south for Weston afterward. They scored only a single point in the fourth quarter.

After Moncrief and Gray's 14- and 12-point performances respectively, up-and-comer Zari Bathke knocked nine points in the hole. Only one player did not tally points.

Gray also managed to snag seven rebounds while Rilyn Kirkland snatched six.

"We are playing good basketball with a lot more balance," Coach Mike Crawford said. "At the half it was 31-21, so we tightened up our defense. They (the TigerScots) just didn't have enough offensive firepower."

He added that only three of the TigerScot girls scored points and the third player had only one point. Every Outlaw girls got quality minutes on the floor.

"We're getting better every

game," Crawford said. "I'm excited about where we're at."

Both the boys and girls squads ran into a brick wall during their first appearances at the Les Schwab Tournament in Pendleton. Both teams fell to 1A school Powder Valley on Thursday, Dec. 27.

The ladies had an off night, falling to the Badgers 39-28. Turnovers and poor shooting led to the defeat.

"We made them look a lot better than they were," Coach Mike Crawford said. "I'm not even sure we showed up."

No stats were available for the game.

The loss brought the lady Outlaws to 8-2 overall with a 2-0 league record and ranked 15th in the state.

The boys fell mightily to the Badgers 65-47 in a contest that was much closer than it appears. Powder Valley came roaring out of the gate with a 19 point first quarter to the Outlaws' nine. The boys clawed their way to a five point deficit by halftime.

Thanks to burst of energy from Coy Aschenbrenner, the only Outlaw to score in double digits, the squad got within two points in the late third quarter, but a four-point fourth quarter spelled doom for the boys as the Badgers sank virtually every three-pointer they shot.

The loss left the boys with a 6-5 record overall and 0-2 in league play. They OSAA ranks them 16th in the state.

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