



Wallowa's Isabella Gillery (15) and Abby Straight (14) capture a rebound from Joseph's Basey Dawson (far right) during Wallowa's second-game win.

Ellen Morris Bishop

Basketball season begins for the youngsters of Wallowa County

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

After high school basketball season and its playoffs recede into happy memories, it's time for the next generation of players to take the floor. In Wallowa County, kids in grades 5 and 6 hit the hardwood, showing off their skills and passion for the game. Wallowa includes their 4th graders on the teams. While the games are fun to watch—there's the occasional player from the oppos-

ing team who grabs a rebound and tosses it immediately toward the wrong basket, or kids who simply hang ferociously onto the treasured ball once it's in their possession — youngster's basketball also showcases remarkably skilled players who will be future stars. It may be fun for adults to watch, but for the players, the game is serious stuff. It's not so much whether their team wins or loses, but about ball handling, racing down-court with a precious, stolen leather orb,

and whether for that instant, the ball heaved skyward actually gets into the basket that is so, so, so far overhead.

The next games in this junior version of March Madness pit Enterprise against Wallowa, Tuesday at 4:30 PM in the Enterprise High School gym. On Wednesday at 4:30, Joseph and Wallowa renew their rivalry at Wallowa High School. In each meet, girls play the first two games, boys the second two games.

Baseball starts indoors



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Contact — Wallowa Valley baseball player Christopher Nobles, smacks one in the batting cage on the pavillion in the Joseph Charter School gym. Coach Mark Ramsden said the team has 18 players, including five from Elgin. Ramsden doesn't expect to practice outdoors for about two more weeks due to leftover snow, but the squad is anxious to start the season.

Spring fishing report

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Thanks to the spring weather, things are looking up for Wallowa County anglers.

Kyle Bratcher, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Acting District Fish Biologist, said the main fisheries are steelhead in the Wallowa and Imnaha rivers, which run until the end of April.

According to Hatcher, the fish are just now starting a determined move toward the hatcheries.

"Fishing for them has been pretty good the last couple of weeks," he said. "It should be good as long as the rivers don't blow out (run high)."

Bratcher noted that spring fishing in the Wallowa River can be good when water conditions are right. Nice trout can be caught in the spring months of April and May. Anywhere a steelhead fishery is open, trout season is open. Locally, this leaves the Wallowa, Grande Ronde and the Imnaha open. Otherwise, the season doesn't open until May 22.

Bratcher said steelhead fishing is good on the Grande Ronde because the water is normally high this time of year. He added that with the coming warm weather, the water will probably start to rise and have a negative impact on fishing.

Wallowa Lake — Bratcher said that while the lake still has some ice, he wasn't sure if it was stable enough to fish on, but things are looking up.

"We had some pretty big Kokanee last year, and based on the cycles we've seen in Kokanee populations, I would expect this is going to be one of the better Kokanee years we've seen in the last decade."

He suggested starting Kokanee fishing as soon as the ice comes off the lake.

Bratcher said that he's been grooming for a good spring fishery is Kinney Lake, east of Joseph.

"It's fished really well through the ice all winter," he said. "Typically, it's one of the best spots in the county to fish in March, especially for kids, once the ice comes off it."

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