



HEARTBREAKER

Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

There comes a time when every warrior has to lay down their sword and shield no matter how hard they've fought and their dedication to the battle. That time came on Wednesday, May 22 for the Wallowa Valley combined softball team after their heartbreaking 11-8 home loss to Yamhill-Carlton in the first round of the 3A state playoffs.

The Outlaws entered the game at the top of their league and determined to make their presence known to the rest of the state. Yamhill-Carlton had other ideas, scoring a run in the first, while the Outlaws went blank. By the end of the third inning, the score stood at 3-3. The Tigers pitching relied on blazing fastballs while Outlaws starter Lexie Gassette relied on spot pitching, a changeup and hard-to hit screwball.

In the fifth, the Tigers went to work, hitting Gassette hard while two Outlaws errors eventually resulted in more than a few runs. When the carnage stopped, the Tigers led 9-4, and things looked bleak for the Outlaws. But the ladies clawed back, one run at a time. The Tigers managed two in the sixth with hard-hitting centerfielder Liz Rowley saving the day with a spectacular catch on a two-out line drive that brought fans to their feet.

The Outlaws scored two in their half of the frame, bringing the score to 11-6. Gassette and her defense held the Tigers



Wallowa Valley softball standout Claire Falwell sneaks by the Yamhill-Carlton catcher for a run during the Outlaws' 11-8 loss in a state playoff game at the Jensen Fields on Wednesday, May 22.

scoreless in the top of the seventh. Rowley opened the inning, smashing a single into left field. While the next hitter struck out swinging, Samantha McFarland walked. Aysia Salim then snaked a base hit up the middle. Catcher Jes-

sie Teeney took a wicked fastball to the elbow to load the bases with one out and the tying run at the plate. With the meat of the lineup coming up soon, every fan strained forward for the action, seeing the path to victory.

Second baseman, Grace Collins, came to bat with the game on the line and hit a screaming smoker of a line drive to the right side. Two feet either way and two runners score and Collins would have been on second base. Between that four feet was the Tigers second baseman who snagged the drive and tagged out the stunned runner on the way to second base.

Game over. Gassette pitched for the duration and logged three whiffs and two free passes and six earned runs.

Big guns for the Outlaws included Claire Farwell, who was 2 for 5 with a double and a run scored while Gassette went 2 for 5 with an RBI while Aysia Salim went 3 for 3 with the big stick along with two runs scored and an RBI. Ella Anderson went 2 for 4 with an RBI while Rylin Kirkland was 1 for 5 with a double. Defensively, the squad made two errors that accounted for five runs.

"I thought we played a good clean game," Coach Gary Gassette said. "I didn't want it to end."

One thing that helped take the sting from the loss was the selection of three Outlaws players for first-team all league. Lexie Gassette got the nod as pitcher while Rowley made the cut as an outfielder and Claire Farwell joined the elite as an infielder. Sam McFarland made second team at first base as did Rylin Kirkland at infield while Aysia Salim nailed an honorable mention. Gassette and Farwell were also submitted for all-state honors.

End of the line for boys baseball

Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Wallowa Valley/Elgin combined baseball team, had their storied season halted after suffering a second-round playoff loss, 7-1, at the hands of top-ranked Pleasant Hill on Friday, May 24.

The playoffs started well for WV/E, as they easily won their playoff opener versus the Horizon Christian Hawks in an 8-0 blowout on the Wednesday May 22.

Coach J.R. Collier said the WV/E team brought out its big guns for the shootout. The leadoff hitter, Gus Ramsden, opened the game with a home run. But it was all downhill for the Hawks thereafter.

Ready Steady Coy Aschenbrenner took mound duties for the squad and went the distance, fanning five while walking three and allowed the Hawks only three hits.

"He's pitched well all year, but this was probably the best game we've seen him pitch all year," Collier said.

The coach said the squad played excellent defense, robbing the Hawks of several hits. Collier particularly noted a diving stop from second baseman Kaden McClure that forced out a runner at second base.

Flynn Nave led the bat squad, going 4 for 4 on the day with an RBI. "They were all line drive shots," Collier said. "He really knocked them out there hard." Christopher Nobles offered a 2 for plate performance with



From the dugout at Pleasant Hill: Coy Aschenbrenner, Zeb Ramsden, Gus Ramsden, Trace Evans, Jackson Decker, and Kaden McClure



Trace Evans batting at Horizon Christian.

two RBIs and Aschenbrenner aided his cause with two RBIs of his own.

"The guys came out on fire, swinging the bat," Collier said. "We were aggres-

sive and played well on defense. It's how you want your playoff game to go."

Unfortunately, the high-powered offense didn't show up for the battle against Pleasant Hill on Friday the 24th. WV-E lost the game 7-1 on the Hill's turf.

"We just couldn't put the ball in play," Collier said. "Every time we hit it, it went right to them."

David Salim laced the team's lone hit in the seventh inning. WV-E scored its only run in the sixth when brothers Gus and Zeb Ramsden got base through a walk and a hit batsman respectively. Both runners advanced on a bobbed ball and Gus Ramsden scored on a passed ball.

WV/E garnered several

walks, but couldn't capitalize on the passes.

"We only had five strikeouts the whole game," Collier said. "It wasn't like their guy was just fanning us."

Nave took the loss for WV/E, striking out two while walking seven and doling out four hits. Gus Ramsden came on in relief, pitching the final 1 2/3 innings. He tallied no strikeouts or walks and gave up a single hit.

"We had a pretty good season overall, especially considering some of the guys we lost from last year," Collier said. "We made it to the second round of the playoffs two years in a row and been defeated by the top team in the state. There's no shame in that."

Greens crew, volunteers get course up to speed

By Rochelle Danielson
For Wallowa County Chieftain

tee time

Although wind, water and wicked skies played havoc to Alpine Meadows Golf Course during April, neither flooding nor a lightning strike could keep a good course down.

That's not to say its seasonal opening went smoothly.

The course opened to the public in mid-April on a Monday, but closed again the next day — and remained closed for four days due to major flooding issues. Most of the fairways were playable, but certain greens along Trout Creek required waders.

To add to AMGC weather woes lightning struck the tree to the left of the No. 1 green. Not only did it destroy the huge old tree, the strike wiped out 5-6 sprinkler controller boxes. On a heavy note ... a big expense. On a lighter note ... one golfer's lament, "I wish the lightning had hit the tree to the right. That's where my drive usually goes."

Mother Nature may have landed its punches, but the greens crew and volunteers worked with diligence to get the course up to speed. Activities such as Thursday Men's Days, Tuesday Ladies Days, and Skins (two-person team) on Wednesday evening, are already in progress. Anyone interested in joining one of the above men-

tioned groups, you'll be welcome. Check with the clubhouse or go to the web site golfalpinemeadows.com for more information.

The golf ladies held their first monthly morning meeting of the summer with President Karen Coppin, presiding. Discussions ranged from serious to silly. After meeting adjournment the gals were able to play 9 to 14 holes of golf before the rain returned.

Several tournaments are planned for the season. The 5th Annual Triple Six Golf Tournament will take place Saturday, June 8th. It's a 2-person team event. The format consists of 6-Holes — Best Ball; 6-Holes — Scramble; 6-Holes — Chapman. It's a fun time and a challenge just to keep score. The payouts — net and gross — for each flight are worth the entry fee of \$85 per person.

As of January 2019, there have been important changes in the USGA Rules of Golf. Three such rules are: Putting with flag stick in hole is now permitted. Measuring a drop — use longest club except putter. Dropping — drop from knee high rather than shoulder.

Enjoy the game. Know the rules. Save time.

Rochelle Danielson belongs to the golf course and loves to play golf.

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