

# Culminating week events to be set by regional schools



Wallowa County Chieftain, File  
Joseph and Enterprise battle it out in a 5-on-5 passing league game last fall. The Oregon School Activities Association last week announced that the handling of the culminating week for Season 2 would fall to individual schools and regions, rather than trying to orchestrate a statewide event.

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Any Season 2 culminating week activities that take place will be local or regional events.

That was the conclusion the Oregon School Activities Association Executive Board came to during a work session Wednesday, Feb. 17. The decision means there won't be a statewide championship event to wrap up the season, but instead that schools will be able "to coordinate and execute local/regional culminating events at their discretion," according to a press release from the OSAA Thursday, Feb. 18.

"The OSAA Executive Board does not want to put any undue pressure on schools to participate in a statewide event that could potentially place their students and school community at risk," the release states. "Recommendations from the (Oregon Health Authority) advise restricting unnecessary travel between counties, especially when they are at different risk levels. The group felt that requiring schools to travel across the state with the potential for overnight stays for events is not prudent at this time."

The OSAA will adjust participation limitations for teams to have additional contests during that week. How the OSAA will approach the culminating weeks for Seasons 3 and 4 is still up in the air.

Enterprise High School athletic director Beccy Nordtvedt said last week she and other area ADs already

had made the assumption that the culminating week would be regionally based.

The bigger challenge for ADs has been trying to set schedules on short notice, especially with the variable of not knowing the status of many potential opponents in counties that were in different risk ranges. Through the end of last week, for example, both Union and Umatilla counties — two that have several opponents of Wallowa County schools — were in extreme risk, meaning they were unable to play volleyball indoors, and football could be played only with additional measures being met.

"Football is obviously easier with it being outdoors, less restrictions, (but) without Union County, and (with) the counties around us in red, volleyball can't play," Nordtvedt said.

The Enterprise AD said the athletic leaders at the respective schools in the area have been in constant contact and are working on a plan in case counties do drop to lower ranges. Union County will, indeed, drop, and is set to be in the moderate risk category starting Friday, according to *The Observer*.

"We had to go through a process of finding out who was committed to playing or not," Nordtvedt said. "There's actually been a ton of coordination between the schools in Union County and Wallowa County, and the schools in the normal special district. Enterprise is going with primarily 1A schools."

Given that all three Wallowa County schools are in

the safe zone for now with the county listed at low risk as of publication, Nordtvedt said there is a plan in place to play more contests with Joseph and Wallowa in volleyball in case games with other counties get canceled.

"Wallowa, Joseph and Enterprise, we're committed that if some of our early games are canceled with Union County schools we're gonna play each other," she said.

Wallowa AD Mitch Frye said with the exception of one long trip to Crane, the Cougar football team will be able to play all its contests close. Currently Crane, Cove, Elgin, Enterprise and Powder Valley are the teams Wallowa would play.

"We're trying to keep it regional. We have to go to Crane," Frye said. "We're trying to keep things as close as possible. Everything we are putting out right now is totally tentative (because of a possible) shortage of officials, weather concerns" and the pandemic.

And while the details are still being hashed out, Frye said the current plan for the culminating week is to have the schools on the opposite side of the region's 1A special district play those on the other side in a crossover format, similar to what had been done during the district championship week.

"We've been talking about it," he said. "Nothing is set in stone yet. It's on the radar. We are shooting for that."

The volleyball and cross-country schedules are still being determined.

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