

Wings runners at Championships in Bend

Some of the best young Native American cross country runners will compete in Central Oregon this Saturday, February 4.

The event is the USA National Cross Country Championships—this year at the River's Edge Golf Course in Bend—and the Native runners are Wings of America, based in Santa Fe.

There are plans for Wings of America to stop in Warm Springs as they travel this Friday from the Portland Airport to Bend. The plan is for the teams to be at the old elementary school gym at noon this Friday, Feb. 3.

Mike Holyann of Warm Springs Community Health Diabetes Prevention met the Wings of America team at last year's Nike N7 Summit, held at the Nike headquarters in Beaverton.

Tribes and tribal youth sports groups from across the U.S. and Canada were at the summit. On hand was Wings of American program director Dustin Martin, Navajo tribal member.

He and Holyann talked of the possibility of Wings visiting with Warm Springs youth on the way to the 2017 cross country championships.

Timing is an issue in this venture, as the runners—boys and girls teams—need to get to Bend in time to rest and get ready for the Saturday races.

The championships were held in Bend last year also, and Wings visited the Warm Springs Reservation on their way there. This year provides an opportunity for a more coordinated visit, with the goal being a cultural exchange between the Wings and the Warm Springs youth athletes.

Wings has two youth teams of eight runners each: the boys, who will run the 8k race, and the girls, who will run the 6k. The runners are in the 14-19 age groups.

This Saturday at the River's Edge Golf Course, the girls' race starts at 12:10 p.m., and the boys at 12:45



Wings of America cross country teams.

Courtesy photos.

p.m. The cross country championships are hosted by USA Track and Field.

The Wings teams are chosen during the year at cross country camps and races around the country. Many past Wings runners have gone on to run cross country in college.

Locally, chief operations office Alyssa Macy ran for Wings of America in the 1990s.

Several of the runners on the current teams are from Southwest tribes, especially Diné or Navajo. Part of the reason for this is from tradition, both for the boys and girls:

"Growing up we are told to meet the day by running toward the rising sun," said Dustin Martin, a Wings alumnus himself. "This helps us know we're awake and ready to seize the day."

Many adults and elders of the Southwest tribes—with their warm climate and vast land areas—have their own histories of



distance running; so distance running is also encouraged in the youth.

"It's a sport with Native people well represented across Indian Country, and particularly here in the Southwest," Dustin said.

In this, there is similarity to Warm Springs and basketball, the

sport where tribal youth are especially well represented if not dominant.

If you would like information on attending the Saturday championships, call Mike Holyann at 541-325-9176.

— Dave McMechan

Need for youth sports officials

The Oregon School Activities Association, and the Oregon Athletic Officials Association have reached a crisis point in not having enough high school officials in all sports statewide.

In the last five years, the number of officials has decreased 16 percent while the number of contests needing officials has increased.

The result is the OSAA and OAOA are starting to see games canceled, especially at the sub-varsity levels.

Both organizations are making officials retention and recruitment a priority.

Jack Folliard is the executive director of the OAOA, representing more than 3,000 OSAA certified officials in the state. For further information contact him at:

jfolliard@comcast.net

Or call 503-975-4488. Or visit the website:

oreofficials.org

Employee Wellness

The 2017 Employee Wellness Program is starting soon. Participate in three classes and the Project Zero Challenge to earn a CTWS Hydroflask.

Classes are held at 5:15 in the Community Center social hall:

Thursday, February 16 - Topic: Healthy Eating. Presenter, Kacey Conyers, Dietitian.

Tuesday, April 18 - Topic: Mindfulness. Presenter, Beth Ann Beamer, BSN.

For information contact, Jennifer Russell, Employee Wellness Coordinator, with questions 541-553-3589. jennifer.russell@wstribes.org

Or Kacey Conyers, 541-553-2460 ext. 2351.

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Rez Ball: tradition continues with youngest athletes



In these pictures: Warm Springs Eagle Academy seventh- and eighth-grade girls teams.



Jayon Smith photos



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From Warm Springs you can see the Rez Ball tradition at all levels of play, from pre-school kids up through college players.

The Rez Ball style carries on like other traditions: It's passed down from generation to generation, with younger players learning from the older ones.

And in Warm Springs basketball starts early, from even before a person's first childhood memories. "My mom tells me when I was still in diapers I would get up in the morning and play basketball," says

Reina Estimo. "It's something I've always done. I've always loved it."

Reina, who works at Health and Human Services, conducts the Buffalo Skywalker youth basketball sessions with the Recreation Department staff. In high school she played for Madras, graduating in 2000.

She explains that Rez Ball requires the player to adapt and adjust instantly. "It's not structured," she says. "You're adapting and adjusting to the situations—knowing when to shoot, when to pass, where the openings are. I think it gives the player

a better understanding of the game."

This year all but two of the players on the Madras High School varsity girls team are from Warm Springs. And they're having a winning season, like last year when they won the Tri-Valley Conference.

None of the team starters are seniors, so it looks like they'll be good in 2017-18 too.

The teams at the Warm Springs Eagle Academy are also really good, as the next generation carries on the tradition.

These are some upcoming Warm Springs Eagle Academy and Madras High School basketball games:

The Warm Springs **Eagle Academy** girls basketball plays at the Jefferson County Middle School this Thursday, February 2.

They have a home game against the Jefferson County Middle School girls on February 15, the game starting at 4 p.m.

The **Madras High School boys** host Molalla this Thursday, February 7. The game starts at 7 p.m.

The team has a home conference game at 7 p.m. on February 10 against Estacada.

The **MHS varsity girls** play at Molalla on February 7 at 7 p.m. They're at home against Gladstone on February 14.