

THURSDAY | JULY 29, 2021

Triathlon at the Grove returns virtually for its 10th year

By DANIEL FRIIS & DAMIEN SHERWOOD

The annual Rolf Prima Triathlon in Cottage Grove has been often regarded as one of the best triathlons in the nation by Triathletes Magazine.

The event was back in the Grove for the 10th time from July 16-26 with a different twist. The competitors were forced to record and document their times meaning that there was no actual live race. On top of this, they were responsible for finding their own locations to do each event.

The reason why the event was forced to go virtual? 2021 in a nutshell.

Even though COVID-19 restrictions were lifted well over a month ago in Oregon, it still wasn't enough time for the triathlon to secure a permit.

see **TRIATHLON** on B2



NICK SNYDER/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

A cyclist participates in the Rolf Prima Tri at the Grove in 2019, which was the last time the event saw competitors swim, run, bike and row at Cottage Grove Lake.

Bridgens returns to SLSD as new AD

By KENDRICK MURPHY FOR THE SENTINEL

Cottage Grove High School (CGHS) has announced its new athletic director as former CGHS educator Garrett Bridgens.

"The opportunity to apply for the position came about and I thought it was an opportunity to come back and serve my community, a place where I grew up and a community that has really done a lot for me and my family," said Bridgens. "So I saw it as an opportunity to come back and work in the place that I live in."

Bridgens, a former Cottage Grove Lion, brings a tremendous amount of coaching experience, knowledge, and community connections to this new role. He got involved in coaching in Cottage Grove, right out of high school, starting with coaching middle school basketball then moving to various positions in



Garrett Bridgens has been named the school district's new athletic director.

high school basketball, football, youth sports, and 17 years on the track and field coaching staff.

The longevity of coaching and community involvement lays a strong foundation for Bridgens' fresh outlook on athletic programming and shows the commitment to the students and

their families.

Bridgens understands the importance of success in the classroom and has experience in both teaching and administration roles.

Previously, Bridgens taught at CGHS from 2007-2019 and in 2014, transitioned half of his time as the district communications coordinator and held that role for five years. Most recently serving as a school administrator for the past two years in the 4J school district.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to come back and work here. One thing I am most excited about is the long history I have with Cottage Grove," he said. "I've made so many connections, lifelong connections, with people in this community, the staff at Cottage Grove High School; so I'm excited about coming back and working with the community and staff at CGHS to do

some great work and serve our students."

Being a part of the Cottage Grove athletic program as a coach for a long time, Bridgens was able to see actions and decisions by previous athletic directors that were both successful and unsuccessful that are serving as guidance for what he could do to lead a better student-athlete experience in Cottage Grove.

"Before I left Cottage Grove, I was really fortunate to be part of a change we had in 2011, under the leadership of Dave Presley, as we revamped the athletic program," explained Bridgens. "I want to look at things we had done in the past like our athlete's council, which was a group of athletes that helped lead our athletics department and get back to that."

"I want to make sure that every student at Cottage Grove

see **BRIDGENS** on B2

Final archery elk proposal released

SALEM, Ore.—Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has released the final proposal for commission consideration regarding changes to how archery elk season is managed for portions of eastern Oregon within the Blue Mountain region.

This final proposal includes two major modifications from the original draft proposal released in March: Five units would be combined into a single Eagle Cap Zone hunt and there would be a single general season hunt for any part of the state not proposed for controlled hunting.

A map is available on the ODFW big game review page for more information.

The original proposal was for a general Western Oregon and general Eastern Oregon tag for any units not managed as controlled hunts.

These changes are needed to help wildlife managers meet elk plan objectives in areas with low bull ratios and in areas with a high percentage of branch antlered bull harvest oc-

curing within the general archery season.

Current management strategy only allows managers to alter harvest during any legal weapon hunts, resulting in significant changes to the season structure and tag numbers for rifle hunting over the last 30 years.

This proposal will be presented at the Aug. 6 commission meeting for potential adoption. To see the full proposal, see Exhibit B at www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/commission/minutes/21/08_Aug/index.asp.

Additional information about the big game review process can be found at myodfw.com/articles/big-game-hunting-season-review.

The Aug. 6 commission meeting will be online via Zoom. To testify about the proposal, register at www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_5F152fCyTdyidRFGazlDRw no later than 48 hours before the meeting (by Wednesday, Aug. 4 at 8 a.m.).

see **ARCHERY** on B2

OSAA recognizes Lane County football official

EUGENE, Ore. — The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) has selected Andy Vobora as the 2020-21 Football State Official of the Year.

Vobora, a four-year letterman on the University of Oregon Football team (1978-82) was inducted in the Medford Senior High School Wall of Fame in 2019. Vobora was recently recognized at the Lane County Football Officials annual barbeque and was joined by former UO football coach Rich Brooks, who was the keynote speaker at the event.

"I just completed my 31st season officiating football and being selected for this honor never crossed my mind," said Vobora. "I've had the privilege of being mentored by a host of great

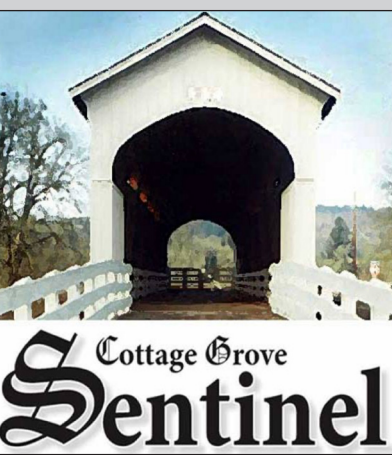


Andy Vobora (right) was recently recognized as Football State Official of the Year

officials over the years and I would not have continued officiating had it not been for the friendship of these men and women and the opportunity to stay connected to the game, the kids and the coaches."

High school football begins with jamborees in just five weeks. The Lane County Football Officials Association (LCFOA) begins training sessions in early August and there are opportunities for new officials get involved, learn the game, meet new people, get some exercise and get paid.

Anyone interested in becoming a high school football official is encouraged to connect with LCFOA commissioner Mike Whitty at WhittyM@comcast.net.



ODFW RECREATION AND FISHING REPORT

myodfw.com/recreation-report

Updated July 22, 2021

Warm weather fishing updates and guidance

Temperatures have moderated in many areas of the state. However, drought and low water levels persist and we can expect water temperatures to spike again later in the summer.

Best bets for weekend fishing

Despite the low water levels and high water temperatures in much of the state, there are still lots of opportunities to have a little fishing fun:

- On the north coast, sea-run cutthroat trout are moving from the estuaries into the rivers. Upper Tillamook Bay and the Nestucca estuary are great places to target these aggressive trout.

- Anglers are catching a few "summer" Chinook – an early arriving variant of a fall Chinook – in the Nehalem Bay.

- In the SW Zone, Fish, Applegate, Willow and Selmac lake are all offering good shots at trout and/or warmwater species.

- Fishing should be excellent in the Upper Rogue River between Prospect and Minnehaha Creek. This section of river is stocked with 3,500 trout per week through Labor Day.

- Spearfish anglers have been reporting some success harvesting smallmouth bass in the South Fork Coquille River.

- Striped bass are biting in the Coquille River.

- Foster and Green Peter reservoirs have been stocked several times this year, and fishing should be good for both trout and warmwater species.

- There are some big large-mouth bass lurking in the waters of Taylor Lake in the Gorge.

- Summer steelhead fishing on the lower Deschutes has been slow, but there are fish around in the lower river downstream of Macks Canyon.

- Fishing for trout should be good at Miller Lake. The lake is getting additional stocked trout originally intended for Fourmile Lake.

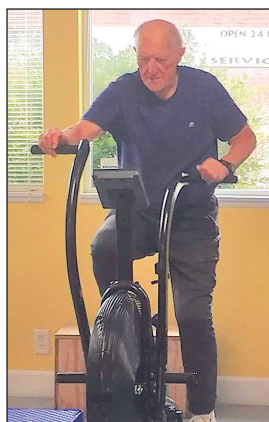
Wildfire closures and restrictions updates

Anglers and hunters should confirm access.

Fire danger in many parts of the state remains extreme. The Forest Service has closed the Umatilla National Forest to the public, and the Oregon departments of parks and forestry have banned all campfires on their lands east of I-5.

Athlete of the Week

This week's athlete of the week is Horst Hittenberger, one of the most dedicated members at the Health Hub. He has been physically active his whole life, and now in his 80s, is a great role model and inspiration for all ages.



Hittenberger rides the Xebex air bike as part of a HIIT circuit in a "Tone & Sculpt" class.

COURTESY OF SAMANTHA DUNCAN

