

Sports

BAKER WRESTLING BEGINS SEASON



Kaylene Chamberlain/Contributed Photo

Baker's wrestling team had its first competitive matches in more than 15 months on Thursday, May 20.

Baker wrestlers back on the mat

■ More than 14 months after finishing fifth in the Class 4A state tournament, the Bulldogs travel to Ontario for a wrestling competition

By **Corey Kirk**
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For the first time in more than 14 months, Baker High School wrestlers donned their singlets, snapped on their head gear and entered the circle.

The Bulldogs traveled to Ontario on Thursday, May 20 for a tournament including Ontario, Nyssa, Vale and Burns.

"I was impressed with how we looked. We have a really young team, a lot of freshmen and a few people that have never wrestled before," Baker coach Brandon Young said. "The way things worked out, not having a senior class because we got pushed back so late in the year, we looked pretty good."

The last time Baker was on the mats, the Bulldogs finished fifth in the Class 4A state tournament in late February 2020, the second best finish in school history following a fourth-place performance in 2019.

Baker's Hon Rushton and Sydney Keller each won individual state titles in 2020.

On Thursday at Ontario, junior Gavin Stone won all three of his matches at 145 pounds.

"He wrestled three of the top wrestlers from the 3A division and hindered them all pretty good," Young said of Stone.

Sophomore Kaci Anderson, the lone girl wrestling for Baker, won two of three matches, including going toe-to-toe with two-time state champion Tyler Richardson of Vale.

Freshman Cole Hester also performed well in the 132-pound weight class during yesterday's meet.

"Cole Hester, a freshman, went 2-0 and pinned both of his opponents," Young said.

Through this condensed season, coaches around the region share the same goal of having as many meets as possible, so team scoring will be limited, with more emphasis on individual performance.

Because the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) won't sanction any regional or state tournaments, those will be organized through USA Wrestling, Young said.

"We are still planning on having a state championship, even though OSAA isn't going to have it sanctioned," Young said.

Now that they've had their first meet under their belt, Young is hopeful that all of his wrestlers will never take a single day on the mat for granted after surviving a 14-month hiatus.

"Fifteen months ago we were talking about how we were going to make a run at a state championship, and it can be taken away just like that," Young said.

Baker will host a tournament on Wednesday, May 26, with matches starting at 4 p.m.

Prineville resolution opposing state COVID mandates passes legal review

By **Garrett Andrews**
The (Bend) Bulletin

PRINEVILLE — As opposition to Gov. Kate Brown's COVID-19-related mandates grew throughout 2020, city leaders in Oregon — especially rural Oregon — drafted resolutions declaring them unconstitutional.

While those resolutions were largely symbolic, leaders in Prineville hope their version, passed in January, can have a legal impact for their constituents.

The anti-lockdown resolution approved by the Prineville City Council was written to help business owners who chose to argue fines for ignoring Brown's mandates. The resolution recently survived a

judicial review, a step needed in order for the resolution to be effective.

Prineville Mayor Jason Beebe thinks the effort to draft the opinion was worth it.

"It can potentially help the businesses who have been unfairly fined by OSHA," Beebe said, referring to Oregon Occupational Safety and Health. "I told all of our business community that I would continue to fight for them and this was one way we were actually validated."

In early January, members of the Prineville council tried a move made by numerous other local governments and business associations who opposed Brown's orders, by writing her a strongly worded open letter.

But conservative councilors in Prineville wanted to go a step further than a symbolic letter.

They tasked City Attorney Jered Reid with finding a legal mechanism the city could enact that would protect businesses regarding executive orders and state regulations.

What he found was the city was quite limited with what it legally could do, Reid said.

The solution Reid devised, Resolution 1474, passed the council later that month with a 5-2 vote. The resolution states several specific findings, like that Crook County represented a minute portion of Oregon's total coronavirus cases and that residents were making good-faith efforts to stop the spread of the disease. Those

findings could then be used to argue against a fine in an administrative hearing, such as one called by the Oregon OSHA for violating COVID-19-related business regulations.

Resolution 1474 also included a request for a judicial hearing to validate the resolution. In late March, Reid met one-on-one over video with circuit Judge Michael R. McLane in a judicial review hearing.

McLane issued his opinion upholding the resolution last week. That judicial approval is key to the resolution, Reid said.

"In order for the resolution to have real validity in those administrative hearings I felt it was critical to have the circuit court validate it," Reid said.

ARREST

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Hatch said Sprague wanted the keys to the car in his vehicle port. But that car belongs to a neighbor, Hatch said, so he didn't have any keys to give.

"It was bad, yeah," he said.

Hatch said he saw Sprague's hand tremble as he held the pistol grip of the shotgun, and he feared one shaky finger could end everything for him. So he talked to the man holding his life in the balance.

"I don't know how I did it," Hatch said, "but I talked him down."

Sprague took off, Hatch said, hustled to the house next door and dumped the shotgun in a trash container.

Local police began looking for Sprague in the wake of a 911 call May 19 at 8:56 p.m., according to a press release from



Sprague

La Grande Police, when a person in the 1700 block of East Glacier Street reported they had just been shot at while standing in front of their residence.

While officers were responding, an additional 911 call came from a separate residence in the same block on Glacier. The second caller reported the suspect entered their residence and held them at gunpoint while demanding keys to their vehicle.

La Grande police officers arrived within moments and contacted the callers. Police named Sprague as the suspect and said neither 911 caller knew him.

"A multi-agency, comprehensive search commenced immediately," the press release stated. "La Grande police officers and detectives received assistance from Union County sheriff's deputies and K-9 Molly and from Oregon State Police troopers."

No one was injured at either resi-

dence on Glacier, according to police, and the suspect did not make off with the vehicle because it was inside a garage. Police found the keys to the vehicle and "the illegally altered shotgun that had been fired at the first caller" within a short distance, along with other items of evidence.

La Grande police then reported a Union County sheriff's deputy a little after noon May 20 saw Sprague walking on 22nd Street near East L Avenue, contacted him and told him he was under arrest.

"He attempted to flee, but was quickly subdued and taken into custody without further incident," police reported.

On Tuesday, May 18, the Baker City Police Department issued a public notice alerting residents that Sprague was wanted on multiple charges and was "armed and dangerous." He is accused of threatening someone in a Baker City home on May 14.

KICKER

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For the average taxpayer with a household income of \$67,400, the credit will be \$636. For the median with household income between \$35,000 and \$40,000 — half are above and half below that range — the credit will be \$312.

"I have never seen such a strong outlook," State Economist Mark McMullen told members of the House and Senate revenue committees during his quar-

terly forecast on Wednesday, May 19.

"There are a whole lot more resources available than when we last reported in March, and even more than we reported at the beginning of the session, when the budget was drafted. It's quite a remarkable turnaround from a few months ago.

"When the pandemic hit, we saw these massive job losses that blew a \$2 billion hole in the budget. That hole was filled by the March forecast (on Feb. 24), and now we are past where we thought we would be even pre-pandemic."

Gov. Kate Brown proposed \$25.6 billion in spending from the tax-supported general fund and lottery proceeds, the state's two most flexible sources, back on Dec. 1. Legislative budget writers, bolstered by \$2.6 billion in federal aid from President Joe Biden's pandemic recovery plan, unveiled a framework for almost \$28 billion in spending on March 24.

Brown said in a statement that the latest forecast, coupled with projections for the following two budget cycles, sets the stage for a better Oregon.

BUDGET

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The board didn't make any changes to the budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

The City Council will adopt the final version of the budget in June.

The budget is similar to the spending plan for the current fiscal year, with a general fund totaling a little more than \$7.8 million, up \$26,000.

During Monday's initial meeting, the board elected Randy Daugherty, a former city councilor, as board chairman, and Jerry Shaw as vice chair.

Daugherty raised concerns about the beginning working capital in the general fund — cash the city has on hand at the start of the fiscal year —

rising to almost \$1.63 million, up from \$1.36 million last year and almost \$1.2 million the year before.

Daugherty met with City Manager Jon Cannon, and Cannon discussed the proposed beginning working capital amount with Kent Bailey, formerly the city's auditor.

Cannon said he and Bailey were both comfortable with the figure, and Daugherty did not propose to change the amount when the board met Tuesday.

Details from the proposed budget include:

- Police department budget increases by about 7.5%, from \$2.38 million to \$2.56 million.

- The department's staffing level won't change, at 17.68 full-time equivalents. Most of the increase is in personnel costs, which increase by about \$103,000, to \$2,178,000. This includes a \$33,000 rise in the city's share of retirement costs for police employees through Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System (PERS).

- Fire department budget increases by 3.6%, from \$1.95 million to slightly more than \$2 million.

The biggest increases are in PERS (\$25,000) and health insurance (\$23,000).

Staffing increases by one-quarter of a position, from 16 full-time equivalents to 16.25.

In his budget message to the board, Cannon wrote that the proposed budget includes \$30,000 to begin what he anticipates will be a two-year process to upgrade the city's software used for financial accounting and utility billing.

"The City currently uses outdated, customized, and heavily modified software to manage its finances and utility billing," Cannon wrote.

Cannon also addressed effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as economic factors.

"It is expected tourism will continue and provide positive opportunities for investment and growth within the city," he wrote. "The state government is projecting to ease executive orders at the beginning of the Fiscal Year allowing for increased economic activity throughout the city. The housing market remains as a strong sellers' market with residential pricing elevated compared to previous years. Despite property tax compression, increased property values improve tax revenue opportunities for the city."

In other business, the budget board heard a proposal from Beverly Calder, representing the effort to create a train quiet zone in the city, meaning freight trains wouldn't sound their horns at public crossings except in emergencies.

Calder asked the city to

include \$10,000 in the budget for the project, which would require the city to modify five crossings to ensure vehicles couldn't reach the tracks when a train is passing.

Calder said the group promoting the quiet zone will continue trying to raise money for the work.

"Twenty years ago when we looked at it, the price tag was really astounding," said Calder, who is a former city councilor. "I don't remember the numbers but it was pretty much out of our league. There was a great amount of public discussion, there was really great feedback from the community, it was put to a vote, it was not passed at that time."

Calder said changing the crossings would make them safer.

"Every crossing ends up being safer, safer for drivers, safer for pedestrians, safer for all public street users," she said. "The bonus is that the trains don't blow their horns anymore at 4:30 in the morning and throughout the school day at South Baker."

In November 2019 the City Council voted to consider submitting a notice of intent to seek a quiet zone, which doesn't obligate the city to take further action or to spend any money.

The budget board declined to add money in next year's budget for the project.

TEACHER

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The state teacher of the year will be announced this fall.

Eskew received a \$500 cash prize.

Regional teachers of the year are nominated by students, colleagues, friends, administrators or family.

Eskew's students at South Baker helped her celebrate her award on Thursday, May 20.

Three finalists for Oregon teacher of the year will receive \$2,000, with an additional \$2,000 for their school.

The teacher of the year will receive \$5,000, with the same amount awarded to the teacher's school.



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