Sports

ELKHORN SUMMER CLASSIC WOODEN BAT BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

Wooden bat baseball tourney returns to Baker

By Corey Kirk
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"We will play more baseball in the summer than we played during the regular season. We think it's crucial."
— Baker coach Tim Smith

A group of Baker baseball players will temporarily trade the traditional purple and gold of the Bulldogs for Brewer brown this weekend for the 2021 Elkhorn Summer Classic wooden bat baseball tournament at the Baker Sports Complex.

Summer baseball is pivotal for high school programs across Eastern Oregon. After being able to play baseball for just a handful of weeks this spring, Baker coach Tim Smith is ready to give his players more time on the diamond.

"We will play more baseball in the summer than we played during the regular season," Smith said. "We think it's crucial."

Baker played 16 games during the high school season in April and May. Like all high school sports affected by the pandemic, baseball had an abbreviated season.

Five teams are slated to join the Baker Brewers for the Elkhorn Summer Classic — La Grande, Pendleton, Fruitland, Idaho, Homedale, Idaho, and Elko, Nevada.

The teams are divided into a pair of three-team pools, with the Sunday, June 27 championship bracket teams depending on win/loss records in pool play. The championship game is set for 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 27.

Baker is in Pool A along with Elko and Pendleton.

"Usually we play better competition (during the summer) day-to-day, so it's huge," Smith said.

He said several Baker players are stepping into their new leadership roles for the Brewers, as multiple players graduated and won't be playing this summer.

"Hayden Younger, Cody Skidgel, Connor Chastain, and all those kids there, they're leading us right now, and are doing a good job too," Smith said.

He encourages local fans to attend this weekend's games, which start Friday, June 25 when La Grande takes on Fruitland at 10 a.m. on Rudi Field.

Baker opens the tournament Friday at 4 p.m. against Elko, also on Rudi Field. The Brewers will play again at 7 p.m. Friday against Pendleton, also on Rudi Field.

The wooden bat tournament is a major fundraiser for the BHS baseball program.

Smith hopes the Bulldogs can return to the Coach Bob Pride Classic in Arizona during spring break 2022. Baker missed out on that trip in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

"We are hoping that we can do that again next year, so yeah, come out, we hope to see everyone out there," Smith said.

Elkhorn Classic Schedule

FRIDAY, JUNE 25
- La Grande vs. Fruitland, 10 a.m. (Rudi Field)
- Pendleton vs. Homedale, noon (Lansford Field)
- Elko vs. La Grande, 1 p.m. (Rudi Field)
- Homedale vs. Fruitland, 3 p.m. (Lansford Field)
- Baker vs. Elko, 4 p.m. (Rudi Field)
- Baker vs. Pendleton, 7 p.m. (Rudi Field)

SATURDAY, JUNE 26
- Pendleton vs. La Grande, 10 a.m. (Rudi Field)
- Elko vs. Fruitland, noon (Lansford Field)
- Baker vs. Homedale, 1 p.m. (Rudi Field)
- Pendleton vs. Elko, 3 p.m. (Lansford Field)
- Homedale vs. La Grande, 4 p.m. (Rudi Field)
- Baker vs. Fruitland, 7 p.m. (Rudi Field)

SUNDAY, JUNE 27
- Pool A No. 3 vs. Pool B No. 3, 9 a.m. (Rudi Field)
- Pool A No. 2 vs. Pool B No. 2, noon (Rudi Field)
- Championship: Pool A No. 1 vs. Pool B No. 1, 3 p.m. (Rudi Field)

SUSPECT

Continued from Page 1A

That law — ORS 161.360(2) states that "A defendant may be found incapacitated if, as a result of a qualifying mental disorder, the defendant is unable:

"(a) To understand the nature of the proceedings against the defendant; or

(b) To assist and cooperate with the counsel of the defendant; or

(c) To participate in the defense of the defendant."

Due to a conflict of interest — the dog's owner, Stephanie Beard of Baker City, is a Baker County employee — the case was assigned to Rebecca Frolander, Wallowa County district attorney.

Stephanie Beard/Contributed Photo, 2020
Kobe, an eight-month-old Chihuahua/wirehaired terrier, went missing from the Beard home in July 2020.

Baker County Circuit Court Judge Matt Shirtcliff, formerly the Baker County district attorney, recused himself from the case, so it was assigned to Powers.

Beard said in a phone interview on Wednesday, June 23, that she hopes Hickman will eventually be found capable of standing trial.

"He should be held accountable in some way," Beard said. "I'm very concerned about how this is being handled."

Frolander was in court today and could not be reached for comment by press time.

Hickman's attorney, Bob Moon of Baker City, had not returned a phone message by press time.

The charges against Hickman are based on incidents in July 2020.

Beard said in an interview last year that although her family didn't know Hickman well, they had let him stay in an outbuilding on their property as he was finishing high school during the spring of 2020.

She said she hadn't seen Hickman recently before the family's 8-month-old Chihuahua/wirehaired terrier, Kobe, went missing on July 19, 2020.

A neighbor who says he saw Hickman take the dog from the Beards' yard helped police identify him as a suspect.

Hickman was indicted on the theft, animal abandonment and trespassing charges by a grand jury on Aug. 27, 2020.

Hickman first told police that he had picked Kobe up to take him for a ride. He said the dog jumped out of his vehicle near Quail Ridge Golf Course.

Later, Beard said she had learned that Hickman had changed his story to say that he took Kobe to the area of Ebell Creek, about six miles southeast of Baker City off Highway 30.

The Beards, with help from family and friends, searched for Kobe for more than a month.

Stephanie and her husband, Luke, found Kobe's remains on an embankment off Old Highway 30 southeast of Baker City on Sept. 2, 2020, while they were driving home from a day-long search in the Ebell Creek area.

Hickman's entry of a plea in court was postponed several times in the fall of 2020 and in the winter and spring of 2021.

In a Nov. 11 motion seeking a postponement, Moon, his attorney, wrote that "Mr. Hickman is still in the process of being evaluated by a forensic psychologist ..."

Frolander didn't object to the motion for postponement.

According to Judge Powers' order, Hickman is required to comply with requirements set by the Baker County community mental health program. If Hickman fails to comply with the requirements, he could be arrested and potentially committed to the Oregon State Hospital, according to the order.

The order also requires Baker County's community mental health program to immediately notify the court if a "certified evaluator reports that the defendant, at any time, gains or regains the capacity to stand trial or will never have the capacity to stand trial."

DISTRICT 3 LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL, SOFTBALL TOURNAMENTS

Baker teams vie for titles

Some Baker teams were in contention for a district championship in the District 3 Little League baseball and softball tournaments being played this week in Baker City.

9-11-year-old baseball

Baker played Pilot Rock for the district championship Wednesday afternoon, after press time.

Baker won three straight games to reach the championship, topping Union County 17-4 on Saturday, June 19, beating La Grande 20-2 on Sunday, June 20, and beating Hermiston 16-6 on Monday, June 21.

10-12-year-old softball

Baker lost its opening game, 7-2 to Harney County, on Monday, then beat La Grande 14-6 on Tuesday.

Baker played Grant County Wednesday afternoon, with the winner staying in contention.

8-10-year-old baseball

Baker advanced to the district title game, losing a heartbreaker, 19-18 to Hermiston, on Tuesday.

Baker beat Grant County 20-10 on Saturday, lost to Hermiston 26-12 on Sunday, and beat Grant County again, 27-17, on Monday.

10-12-year-old baseball

Baker won its opening game 20-11 over Harney County on Saturday.

Baker lost 18-5 to La Grande on Sunday, then nipped Wallowa Valley 11-10 on Monday.

Pendleton eliminated Baker 17-3 on Tuesday.

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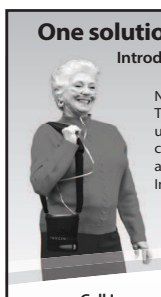

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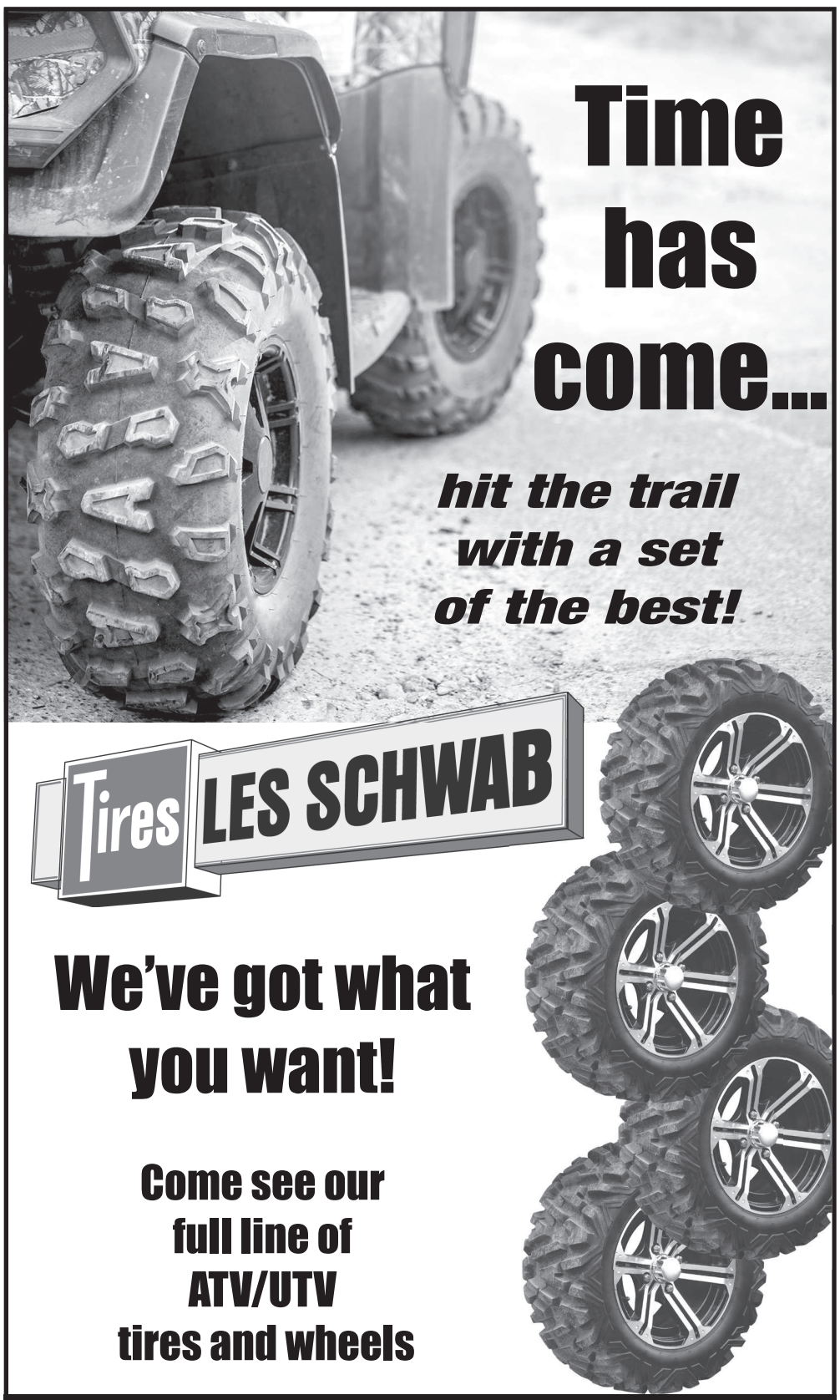

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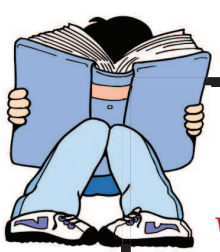

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