



Swim team dives into action

Athletes to prepare for June 24-26 meet

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Members of the John Day Swim Team say their sport takes teamwork, dedication and stamina, and they're using those tools as they gear up for their first competition at the June 24-26 Prineville Meet.

Sabrina Howard, the new head swim coach, said she's looking forward to training the swimmers and seeing them compete.

Howard, who was an assistant coach last year, works as a Title I assistant at Prairie City School and is a wife and mother of two children.

She swam competitively from ages 5 through 18 in California and has lived in Grant County for two years.

She'll have help with the team this season from volunteers Stephanie LeQuiou and Erin Hodge.

LeQuiou has been a stroke and turn judge and will work with the team on approaching the wall correctly to help eliminate disqualifications at meets.

Hodge, president of the swim team group, will help with the dryland training, which focuses on core, team building and getting mind and body in sync.

This year's team includes 57 swimmers, including several returning as well as new ath-



The Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

ABOVE: John Day Swim Team members practice their strokes on Tuesday. From front: Zeke Rookstool, Hannah Vaughan and Madelyn Bailey. TOP: The John Day senior swim team includes: front row, from left, Quinn Larson, Brady Dole, Riley Reames, Casey Vaughan and Andrew Hunt; back row, from left, Trevyn Coalwell, Myckee Coalwell, Grant LeQuiou, Torie Coalwell, Taylor Hunt, Peyton Neault and Quinten Hallgarth.

letes. Senior swim team members shared what they like about their sport.

"We're looking forward to teamwork and winning again, and the family bonding," said Torie Coalwell.

Swim meet schedule

Prineville Meet, June 24-26
 Lakeview Meet, July 8-10
 Burns Meet, July 15-17
 John Day Meet, July 22-24
 District Meet in Lakeview, July 29-31

The team won their home meet and came in second at districts last year.

"It keeps me in shape for football, and it's fun," said Quinten Hallgarth.

Taylor Hunt agreed, adding, "It's a lot harder than football. You use every muscle, and you get up really early (for practice)."

"Our coach has pushed us farther than we thought we could've gone," said Grant LeQuiou.

Coach Howard said summer swim is a way for kids to keep physically fit and teaches teamwork with a wide age range.

"It also embodies individual competition and how to set personal goals," she said. "For beginning swimmers, it teaches the fundamentals of swimming and the different strokes and builds one's confidence in the water."

She said the sport is also a good conditioning tool for athletes who play other sports during the year.

"I'm so enthusiastic for the kids who come out and give me a piece of their summer," she said. "They're out of the pool by the time some kids are just getting up in the morning. I love to see the growth from the beginning to the end."

For more information about the swim team, call Howard, 541-620-0668, or Hodge, 541-805-8996.



Coach Sabrina Howard

Golf scramble to support CASA kids

Event includes barbecue lunch, auction, prizes

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Golfers can compete for a cause in Saturday's sixth annual Grant-Harney CASA Golf Scramble.

Proceeds from the event benefit children who live in Grant and Harney counties who receive CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) assistance. The entry fee is \$65 a person with teams of four. Golf carts are \$20 to rent.

Registration and complimentary breakfast of biscuits and gravy begins at 8 a.m., with shotgun start at 9 a.m.

Hot dogs and chips will be served at the turn during the competition, and a barbecue rib meal will be served after the scramble. The cost is \$8 for non-golfers.

First-place team prize is \$400, second place wins \$240 and other prizes will be awarded.

A silent auction, including a golf package at Sun River with a \$200 gift card, will support the cause, along with a drawing for a set of Wilson Ultra golf clubs.

For more information, contact CASA executive director Tracey Blood at 541-575-5574 or Sandie Gilson at 541-575-1529.



Contributed photo

Grant County Special Olympians, Josiah Hoeffner (third) and Rodney Brunson (fifth), receive their awards at the June 11 track and field regional competition in Milton-Freewater.

GC Wildfire team overcomes adversity in bid for state

Softball team plays in California July 8

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

MILTON-FREEWATER — The unstoppable Grant County Wildfire Juniors softball team won the District 3 title after edging past Milton-Freewater 12-11 in Monday's championship game.

The team now moves on to the Oregon State Championships, hosted by the Or-Cal District, possibly facing the winner of District 7.

Grant County's first game is tentatively set for 3:30 p.m. Friday, July 8, in Tulelake, Calif.

Two other Grant County softball teams, the 11-12 team and the 8-9-10 All Stars, are still competing in the District 3 tournaments in Milton-Freewater.

Grant County Wildfire softball All Stars

The 11 girls on the Wildfire team, ages 13 to 14, have been playing softball together since they were 8.

"Our girls showed so much heart, many times they could have crumbled but they just kept coming back, and they just never give up," said manager Zach Williams.

He and Mike Strong and Tammy Clark have been involved in coaching the girls for six years.

The District 3 battles began Sunday against Hermiston, after being rained out Saturday.

In that game, the Grant County girls won by the 10-run rule in the fifth inning, 16-1, with Shaine Madden pitching the first part of the game and Macy Strong closing.

The team was 18 for 33, with a .545 batting average. Hailie Wright went 3-3, Taylor Allen 3-4 and Baylee Combs 3-4.

Grant County had a quick turnaround Sunday to face Milton-Freewater in the semifinal, winning 7-6, with Shaine pitching the entire game.



Grant County Wildfire pitcher Shaine Madden throws the ball to first baseman Taylor Allen for an out in Tuesday's District 3 Championship.

Contributed photo/
 Tanni Wenger
 Photography Studio

In the championship game against Milton-Freewater, Wildfire were down 6-2 in the sixth inning, and came back to score three in the bottom of the sixth on a three-run double by Shaine.

Grant County held off their opponents in the top of the seventh, then scored two in the bottom of the inning.

The team won on a walk-off sacrifice fly hit by Madi McKrola, scoring Kaylee Wright from third base.

Shaine pitched Monday's championship game with McKrola going 2-3, Hailie Wright 3-3, Kaylee Wright 3-4 and Taylor Allen 2-4.

"There was a complete team effort — top to bottom — all 11 girls helped us win this tournament," Williams said.

He said their season was "a little rough" and included game cancellations and sickness.

"We had a lot to overcome this year," Williams said. "Those games were extremely stressful — very back and forth. This group of girls are just battle tested beyond their age. They make the plays they have to make and minimized their mistakes. They're resilient — they can get down late, and they'll still come back. They pound the ball and play as a team."

Grant County 8-9-10 All Stars

Toppling two opponents at the District 3 tournament, the Grant County 8-9-10 All Stars will face the La Grande team in semifinal action at 9 a.m. Wednesday in Milton-Freewater.

Led by manager Zach Williams and coaches Levi Watterson and Marissa Williams, the Grant County team crushed Baker 17-4 in four innings on Sunday.

Drewsey Williams pitched the first three innings, striking out nine batters, and Brilynn Combs pitched the fourth.

"We jumped on them right away, and scored four in the first, four in the second, seven in the third and two in the fourth," Williams said.

Jaydika Anderson went 4-4, Laken McKay 3-3 and Ashlyn Langum 2-2.

The Grant County team of 13 beat Milton-Freewater on Monday in four innings, 18-2.

Drewsey pitched the first three innings, striking out five and Combs pitched the fourth.

"Drewsey did a great job on the mound, only allowing two balls to be put into play and allowing no hits in both games," Williams said. "Both

pitchers have thrown strikes, which is really important at this age."

Addie Northway was catcher in both games.

"It was hot and (Addie) worked hard and stepped up," Williams said.

Halle Parsons, who went 3-3, had the first big hit of the game with two runners on and two outs in the second inning.

"It was a full team effort," Williams said. "Everybody was cheering and working hard on and off the field."

Grant County 11-12 All Stars

Chip Grove leads the Grant County 11-12 team with assistance from Janine Weaver.

The team lost their first game 15-1 to Pendleton on Monday.

Grant County has 10 girls on the team, and were down a player Tuesday after one of the athletes fractured her finger.

They faced Hermiston on Tuesday, past press time.

"We're pretty optimistic about the game today," Grove said Tuesday morning. "We have a pretty good team, our pitching is strong. I think today will be a little different. We need good pitching and good defense."

Special Olympians compete for personal best

Team prepares for July 9-10 Summer Games

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

MILTON-FREEWATER — Grant County Special Olympians put their best foot forward, competing at the June 11 regional track and field meet.

Each of the 10 athletes were awarded for their efforts in their division and showed their signature sportsmanship.

The Grant County team includes Crystal Wimberley, Brian McKrola, Elizabeth Swarouth, Katie Latham, Rodney Brunson, Josiah Hoeffner, Caleb Madsen, Katie Shockley, Jay Colson and Charley Fronapel.

Karla Colson and Ashley Wyllie are co-coaches, and David Gill and Michael Snyder attended the event as volunteers.

"They each, individually, did their personal best, and that's what Special Olympics is all about," Colson said. "They had great sportsmanship. I'm proud of them all."

Wyllie added, "Everybody was supportive of each and other, and it's been going well."

The athletes are now preparing for the July 9-10 Summer State Games in Newberg.

Athlete Crystal Wimberley competed in the 100-meter dash and shot put at regionals, and when a teammate was unable to participate in the 4x100-meter relay, she stepped in to help out.

"We all got closer to each other with some team bonding," she said. "We're ready for Summer State Games. We're practicing hard."