



# John Day Swim Team wins home meet

## Howard wins high-point award

By Angel Carpenter  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Winning their home invitational over the weekend made the event that much sweeter for the John Day Swim Team.

John Day won with 587 points, Prineville Swim Team placed second with 495, Pendleton Swim Association was third with 433 and Lakeview Swim Team was fourth with 382. La Grande Swim Club (227) and The Dalles Swim Team (172) also brought athletes to the competition.

John Day had 60 swimmers competing in the three-day event.

The John Day team will meet up again with the Prineville and Lakeview teams

at the District Swim Meet Friday through Sunday, July 28-30, in Prineville.

Eight-year-old Colbie Howard, who swims in the 8 and under division, won the high-point award for the John Day team.

John Day head coach Sabrina Howard said the relay teams gave them the needed point boost for the win.

"Our relay teams were just outstanding across the board," Howard said.

She added that she and assistant coach Stephanie LeQuieu work hard to choose placements for those teams.

"Our relay really brought us to the forefront in the meet," she said. "They were pumped and they were ready. It's a moment for them to shine."

She said Deja Amsden (girls 15 and over) and Taylor Hunt (boys 15 and over) gave



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

**John Day Swim Team members Zeri Janssen, front, and Cayden Howard compete on Saturday during the John Day Invitational Swim Meet at Gleason Pool.**

especially impressive performances in their individual medleys.

"They are my warriors on the team," Howard said. "They are up to battle."

She said they were asked to

add the 400 individual medley to their events, and showed they were up to the challenge, swimming in the event first thing Saturday morning, on top of all the other events they had that day.

"It speaks so highly of their character, and they represented the swim team very well," the coach said.

She also highlighted Myckee Coalwell as their senior team member and recent graduate of Grant Union High School.

Coalwell qualified for the district meet, which will be her final event with the swim team.

Coach Howard said the home meet is a special time, especially for those new to the team.

"With home pool advantage, it's a lot more comfortable for first-year swimmers," she said. "Just to experience that magic and enthusiasm with them on what a first swim meet is like, it's just priceless."

Russell Hodge, 15, said he enjoys staying in shape for football by being on the swim team.

"It's fun just racing," he said. "The funnest part is knowing when you're done. It's worth it."

Amsden, 16, agreed.

"It's rough, but worth it," she said. "I think it's amazing that we can get such a large community together like this."

The coach said the event is not just about the winning, but about supporting the swimmers and families coming together to help at the event.

"It makes the swim team feel like a family," Howard said, adding, "To have the amount of kids at that meet cheering on the others, playing in the creek, building that camaraderie, just embodies what swim team is all about."

Those who've qualified for the district meet will be fine tuning their flip turns and event times in practice this week.



Contributed photo

**Cauy Pool of Long Creek competes in bareback riding for District 1 at the California State High School Finals Rodeo in Bishop, California.**

## Riding high

### Long Creek bareback rider places 23rd at national finals

By Angel Carpenter  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Long Creek bareback rider Cauy Pool had the experience of a lifetime, finishing 23rd at the July 16-22 National High School Finals Rodeo in Gillette, Wyoming.

There were over 1,500 cowboys and cowgirls from 43 states, five Canadian provinces and Australia competing in 13 events.

Up against over 60 other bareback riders, Pool said he kept focused on his event.

"It was really fun and a great experience," he said.

Pool placed second in his first round July 18 with a score

of 74. Thursday proved to be a bigger battle, Pool scoring a 46 for fifth place.

"I got a low score on my second round," he said. "It wasn't feeling 100 percent and a little bit tougher horse."

Pool was just shy of making it into Saturday's short go, the final round. Qualifiers had to be in the top 20.

"I'd like to thank my dad and a friend Austin Foss — who's been to the NFR four times in bareback" — for their coaching, he said.

He added his parents, grandparents and Foss all supported him in his ride to the NHSFR.

The Monument High School graduate said he plans to help his parents on the ranch before heading to Las Cruces, New Mexico, where he'll study welding technology while riding bucking horses for the New Mexico State Aggies on a full-ride scholarship.



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**Long Creek steer wrestler GW Clark competes in a High Stakes Jackpot Rodeo July 20, which was held for contestants during the National High School Finals Rodeo in Gillette, Wyoming.**

## Clark competes at national finals

Blue Mountain Eagle

Steer wrestler GW Clark of Long Creek competed in the July 16-22 National High School Finals Rodeo in Gillette, Wyoming.

Clark, a graduate of Monument High School, qualified after placing third in steer wrestling at the June 8-10 Oregon State Finals rodeo in Prineville.

At nationals, the draws didn't go as hoped for Clark.

He made two attempts, riding with injured knees, and said he was glad to have the nationals experience.

"It was a lot of hard work to put in to make it that far," Clark said. "To get the chance to be able to compete with everyone else was an honor."

Clark will attend Treasure Valley Community College with a focus on equine studies.

He will also ride for the Chukars' rodeo team.

# Third in state



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**The Grant County Wildfire softball team and coaches after their third-place finish Sunday at the State Little League Tournament in Medford. From left, back row, assistant coach Marissa Williams, head coach Zach Williams and assistant coach Levi Watterson; middle row, Lexi McKrola, Jaydika Anderson, Lauren Wenger, Halle Parsons, Drewsey Williams and Savannah Watterson; front row, Brilynn Combs, Grace Voigt, Sivanna Hodge, Addy Northway, Reece Jacobs and Lilly Rockhill. Ray Wenger, not pictured, is also an assistant coach.**

## Wildfire girls give all in softball battle

By Angel Carpenter  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Wildfire earned third place, competing at the July 20-24 Oregon State Little League Softball 8-9-10 Tournament in Medford.

Wildfire short stop Savannah Watterson said she hopes her team will be just as good or better next year. Her favorite memory was seeing her team improve.

"We went from earning third in districts last year to winning districts and getting third in state this year," she said.

The team had three wins and two losses at the tournament, held at U.S. Cellular Community Park's AstroTurf field.

Head coach Zach Williams said it was a good season, and the team increased their knowledge of the game at a quick pace.

"They do little things just right, knowing secondary options on a play," he said. "They're years beyond their age with their softball IQ. They're learning the game so much faster than I've experienced in the past."

On Thursday, Drewsey Williams pitched a 9-0 game against Del Norte of Crescent City, California.

"The girls were patient at the plate," coach Williams said, adding they threw good pitches and put the ball in play.

Grant County had tougher competition, facing Willow Creek of Portland on Friday. Coach Williams said Willow Creek's pitcher threw hard and located her pitches well. Willow Creek went on to win the title.

Saturday brought a turnaround for the Wildfire girls with two wins. They claimed a 15-0 victory over South Salem in the morning and a 12-5 win over Crook County in the evening.

Drewsey pitched the first inning against South Salem with Addy Northway relieving for the remainder of the four-inning win.

Coach Williams said his team had



Contributed photo/Tanni Wenger Photography

**Brilynn Combs of the Grant County Wildfire team slides home safe during last weekend's state tournament in Medford.**

success with quite a few base hits, swinging at good pitches.

Drewsey pitched all six innings for the win over Crook County.

"They were selective (in hitting) and played a lot better defense," the coach said.

Sunday's game was a nail-biter, Klamath County taking an 8-7 win to oust Grant County from the tournament.

"Addy threw the whole game, and she did a really good job," Williams said. "The girls battled hard on offense and put the ball in play hard a lot. In the end, we just came up short."

Williams said the Wildfire girls who now range in age from 9-11, played more than 40 games this season.

"The girls worked hard for months and months in the heat," Williams said. "They came to practice every night. That's why I love coaching. The improvement I saw from March through July was unbelievable."

First baseman and catcher Halle

Parsons said she had a fun summer of softball.

"We had a really good time working hard and coming together as a family," she said. "I like that we worked together really well."

Right fielder Reece Jacobs said she didn't know the team members well at first and enjoyed making friendships.

"The experience (of the tournament), it was pretty difficult," she said. "We played some pretty tough teams, but overall, it was pretty fun."

Coach Williams said he appreciated the contributions of his assistants, Levi Watterson, Ray Wenger and Marissa Williams.

He said the time they dedicated to the team was valuable, as well as the commitment from parents and the contributions of the community who helped them raise more than \$4,000 to go to the state tournament.

"To the volunteers and fans and community that donated, we just can't say thank you enough," Williams said.