



SHOOTING THE BREEZE

Wistful wildcats

A wildcat is a cartridge idea that never got popular enough to become standardized. They exist purely because of the diligent efforts of handloaders.

Typically these are an alteration made in size, configuration or capacity of an existing standard cartridge. To say standard choices abound would be an understatement. One could say we literally have too many good choices these days. So why go through the effort required of a wildcat? Wildcatting made a lot of sense back when there wasn't such a plethora of factory offerings. It is mostly the wildcats we have to thank for that vast selection of contemporary standard loads. Had their makers not been brave enough to try something new or push the limits, we wouldn't have the .22-250 Remington, .257 Roberts, .280 Ackley Improved or .300 Weatherby Magnum, just to name a few examples.

Not all wildcats became trendsetting, overnight sensations, however, and it is these I wish to focus on today. I call them "wistful" as they offer little in performance over factory offerings for the effort required to produce them. Not all wildcats are vain fantasy of course. In the 1950s, American hunters were just getting into a "magnum craze" wherein all participants were creating cartridges with minute differences at a space race pace. Of course theirs was better than everyone else's. Roy Weatherby and P.O. Ackley aforementioned, though more recent are Kenny Jarrett, J.D. Jones and Richard Sherman.

The main drawbacks with wildcats in general are that they're expensive and time consuming. The rifles can be cheap enough to buy secondhand, but to have one made up is going to set you back some coin. One problem with used rifles in wildcat chamberings is that wildcats don't follow any standardized dimensions so yours could be literally the only one of its kind. If you want to shoot it, you'll need custom dies. To get the custom dies built to proper dimensions, a gunsmith will have to make a chamber cast.

And then there is the issue of brass. You won't be able to buy brass off of the shelf ready to use. For some, a simple fireforming of an existing case will suffice. For others you need trim and form dies, which by a series of steps extensively modify an existing factory case with similar dimensions until it is formed into correct brass for your wildcat. After all that, you'll still have to fireform the brass to fit your chamber and anneal it to make it last longer. Each individual case might require up to an hour of prep. For exceptionally wistful wildcats, one might even have to acquire a lead casting kit and bullet molds to cast their own bullets to a non-standard size. All this for anything between a minimal to substantial edge in performance.

For many folks, the extra trouble is worth it. I know many shooters who prefer a wildcat to anything factory. If you don't mind the extra work and costs related, a wildcat is a surefire way to guarantee having a one-of-a-kind rifle. My own first wildcat rifle was a .257 Norma Weatherby Magnum — more about that later.

Do you have a one-of-a-kind rifle in a wildcat caliber? Write us and tell all about it at shootingthebreeze@bme.com!

Dale Valade is a local country gent with a deep love for handloading, hunting and shooting.



Dale Valade

Grant Union baseball player, coach participate in All-Star series

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Jacob Vaughan, a recent Grant Union High School graduate, competed in the Friday-Saturday, June 7-8, Oregon 1A/2A/3A All-Stars Series held at Linfield College in McMinnville.

Vaughan was a member of the Grant Union Prospector baseball team that made it to the quarterfinals this season.

In the weekend games, the East was pitted against the West with the teams made up of Oregon's top-performing

baseball athletes.

Vaughan was a member of the East team and was joined by Grant Union baseball head coach Doug Sharp who participated as one of the coaches for the East.

The East won the first two contests in the three-game series 7-5 and 8-7, and lost the final game 10-6.

Named All-League co-player of the year and first team for catcher in the 2A/1A Special District 7, Vaughan was catcher in games one and two of the series for 18 innings, and had 2 RBIs in game two.



Contributed photo

Grant Union High School graduate Jacob Vaughan, left, who played on the East team in a June 7-8 All-Star series, stands with coach Doug Sharp who is holding his grandson Cub. Sharp coaches the Grant Union Prospectors, and he was one of the coaches for the East in the series at Linfield College in McMinnville.

Elliott wins Gold Rush Run



Contributed photo/Tammy Bremner

Gold Rush Run 5K runners and walkers take off at the starting line in Canyon City with race organizer Hugh Snook, right, giving the signal by dropping the golden nugget in the gold pan.

41 athletes compete in the 5K fun run

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Recent Grant Union High School graduate Tanner Elliott finished in first place at Saturday's Gold Rush Run 5K in Canyon City, clocking in at 20 minutes.

Elliott and 40 others took the route through Canyon City past the Grant County Courthouse and up Rebel Hill Road where a historic schoolhouse stands.

Organizer Hugh Snook had to re-route part of the course to avoid two bridges on Inland Drive and Nugget Lane that have been closed since spring floods.

Snook said Elliott, a Canyon City resident, had a "great run" as the overall winner and winner of the men's division.

There were a total of 13 Canyon City residents representing the town in the race.

The Gold Rush Run is part of the town's '62 Days Celebration, marking the day when gold was found in Canyon Creek.

Brent Labhart of John Day had a second-place finish with a time of 21:05. He holds the current course record for the race.

"He competed well and turned in a good time," Snook said.

"The night before he told me he was in his 'worst shape,'" he added. "I told him his worst shape is better than most people's 'best shape.'"



Contributed photo/Hugh Snook

Jeffrey Kemp of Riverbank, California, races through downtown Canyon City during Saturday's Gold Rush Run.

This is the 21st year the race has run its current course, and Snook first competed in the race in the early 1980s, until it halted around 1990.

"I resumed the event as race director in 1999," he said.

Snook said he enjoys his memories of running in the race over 30 years ago.

The event began with '62 Days in 1922, as each town competed in footraces, tugs-of-war and field events in those early days. The fun run originated in the 1970s.

"I am glad it is still part of the fabric of life in Grant County," Snook said.

GOLD RUSH RUN AND WALK RESULTS

NAME	CITY	TIME	(DIV., PLACE)
Tanner Elliott	Canyon City	20:00	(M15-19, 1)
Brent Labhart	John Day	21:05	(M20-29, 1)
Jeffrey Kemp	Riverbank, Calif.	21:30	(M30-39, 1)
David Hall	John Day	21:56	(M40-49, 1)
Grant Hall	John Day	22:14	(M10-14, 1)
Kevin Nelson	John Day	22:27	(M50-59, 1)
Brandon Smith	John Day	22:28	(M30-39, 2)
Zac Bailey	Canyon City	23:28	(M40-49, 2)
Levi Manitsas	John Day	24:22	(M40-49, 3)
Ron Simpson	Canyon City	24:47	(M50-59, 2)
Max Bailey	Canyon City	25:30	(M10-14, 2)
Sheila Comer	Canyon City	25:45	(W40-49, 1)
Matthew Brown	Canyon City	26:39	(M20-29, 2)
Ali Ochoa	Mt Vernon	26:55	(W20-29, 1)
Russ Comer	Canyon City	27:21	(M40-49, 4)
Danielle Ricco	Prairie City	27:25	(W30-39, 1)
Rosalinda Gonzalez	Canyon City	27:39 tie	(W30-39, 1)
Hannah Hinman	John Day	27:39 tie	(W30-39, 1)
Layne Christensen	Nevada City, Calif.	28:32	(M60+, 1)
Tammy McKenna	Mt Vernon	30:04	(W50-59, 1)
Kristin Long	Seneca	31:21	(W50-59, 2)
Madelyn Bailey	Canyon City	33:18 tie	(W10-14, 1)
Sarah Smith	John Day	33:18 tie	(W10-14, 1)
Cheryl Christensen	Nevada City, Calif.	35:42	(W60+, 1)
Kim Grove	Canyon City	35:46 tie	(W40-49, 2)
Sylvia Ross	John Day	35:46 tie	(W30-39, 3)
Eliza Bailey	Canyon City	38:51 tie	(W10-14, 3)
James Christensen	Mountain Home, Idaho	38:51 tie	(M0-9, 1)
Emily Kemp	Riverbank, Calif.	38:54	(W0-9, 1)
Heather Bailey	Canyon City	40:29	(W30-39, 4)
Kyle Christensen	Mountain Home, Idaho	43:47	(M30-39, 3)
Sarah Bush	Canyon City	45:55	(W40-49, 3)
Melanie Leckenby	John Day	45:58	(W50-59, 3)
Amy Kemp	Riverbank, Calif.	46:20	(W30-39, 5)
Noxi Long	Seneca	47:21 tie	(W0-9, 2)
Kelsey Long	Seneca	47:21 tie	(W20-29, 2)
Dennis Hopkins	Portland	55:15 tie	(M60+, 2)
Claire Cofsky	Portland	55:15 tie	(W60+, 2)
Robert Willey	Canyon City	55:29 tie	(M60+, 3)
Elliott Sky	John Day	55:29 tie	(M30-39, 4)
Ashley Christensen	Mountain Home, Idaho	59:05	(W30-39, 6)

Local Special Olympians compete at Portland Timbers' stadium

Team brings home third-place soccer medals

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Special Olympics team placed third at last weekend's Special Olympics Oregon Summer Soccer Invitational in Portland.

Five Special Olympians and five unified partners make up the local team, led by head coach Deronda Lallatin. The competition held Friday and Saturday at the newly renovated Providence Park, home of the Portland Timbers soccer team, had 200 athletes and unified partners and 100 coaches participating.

Lallatin said the event was fun for everyone, and the team also won the Sportsmanship Award.

"Our competition was really tough, but it was really fun too, and the other teams were encouraging," she said.

Team member Caleb Madsen was goalie in the first game, and Jessie Stubbs filled in during the second game, sharing the goalie position with Madsen.

"Jessie has a lot of energy, but we let him take a break, and he blocked a lot of shots,"



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Special Olympics athlete Elizabeth Swarhout passes the ball to teammate Jessie Stubbs in last week's practice at the Seventh Street Complex as the team readied for the Summer Soccer Invitational in Portland. In back are Katie Shockley and her mom, a unified partner, Laurie Shockley.

Lallatin said.

This is the first year the local team has competed in soccer, and the coach said they learned a lot in practice this season.

"The team did a really good job," she said. "They worked hard and ran really hard."

Local athletes participating were Madsen, Stubbs, Brian McKrola, Katie Shockley

and Elizabeth Swarhout. Unified partners and assistant coaches included Laurie and Michael Shockley, Sarah Lallatin, David Gill and Jason Leighton.

Lallatin said Madsen is outgoing and let several people know he would be goalie and to cheer for their team.

Among the fans in the stands were Kim Joslin of Corvallis, a past local program coordinator and sister of McKrola, and friends of the team Laura Goldici and Dan Kilmer of the Portland area.

At practice on June 5, Stubbs said he was hopeful about the upcoming competition and doing well there.

"This team has heart," he said. "That's what this team is all about."

The event was sponsored by Daimler Trucks North America, Portland Timbers and Thorns FC, Providence Health & Services, Les Schwab Tire Centers and Special Olympics International.

Next up for the local team is recreational walking this summer and a wellness program this fall led by Kathy Jo Gill.

Lallatin and Gill are Special Olympics local program coordinators.

Those interested in joining in the recreational walking may contact Lallatin for the calendar.

For more information, call Lallatin at Value Added at 541-575-0715.