

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

THE .308 WINCHESTER

In about '79 or '80, my father was looking to upgrade from his trusty old .300 Savage to something with a bit longer legs. At Nydam's (then Coast to Coast) Hardware, where many legendary gun stories seem to begin, he found what he was looking for. My mother bought it for him for their anniversary that year. The rifle was the best of both worlds as far as Dad was concerned. He got more power without having to sacrifice the handling characteristics of his beloved Savage 99 levergun. It was chambered for the .308 Winchester.



Dale Valade

In the 1950s, Army ordnance officers began to look for an alternative to the .30-06 for its standard service cartridge. The T65 experimental cartridge had began life as a .300 Savage and, after some major alterations, became the 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge. Winchester, seeing an awesome opportunity, "bor-



Contributed photo

Jared Rowberry of Boise, Idaho, with his first deer taken this fall with a .308.

rowed" the NATO design and released it for civilian usage with the headstamp ".308 Winchester." The rest, as they say, is history.

While gun sales soared, and a devoted cult-like following

formed nearly overnight, the .308 even today has yet to completely replace, supplant or dethrone the hoary .30-06 in the hearts and minds of most American hunters. While there are unabashed fan

clubs for each cartridge that frequently fling mud at each other, I for one happen to think there is room for both. I own, use and admire both cartridges. And I must admit, although my favorite rifle is by far a .30-06, if a semi-auto, pump or lever-action rifle are preferable to a bolt action to you, then the .308 is probably the way to go. This is not to say there is anything at all wrong with a pump action .30-06 or a bolt action .308!

It's a perfect cartridge for shorter barrels (18-22 inches) and short actions. It is at home in an AR platform. Ammunition of every kind and style is available worldwide. The .308 case is slightly more efficient in that it uses nearly 10 grains less powder than the .30-06 to accomplish nearly the same ballistics. The .30-06 can be hand-loaded and in factory form is loaded to outrun and outthit the .308 with its greater case capacity and heavier bullet range if it sports a 24-inch or longer barrel. But the real world difference is negligible, and I guarantee none of the deer or

elk shot with one or the other each year in Grant County can tell the difference.

The .308 is not merely a hunter's cartridge. For years, it held many long-range accuracy records, and even when Uncle Sam decided to arm his grunts with the M16, the .308 survived and is still used today as a sniper cartridge. Even though small-case 6.5 cartridges or ponderous magnums seem to cast a shadow on either side of the .308, it is still as alive and well as ever in civilian, police and military applications.

Dad filled our freezer with his .308 for years and, in 1997, used it to take his biggest bull elk. I myself have used his rifle, now mine, to take elk, deer and Russian hogs. It works, simply and reliably. As the old saying goes, "Don't fix it if it isn't broke."

Are you a .308 fan? Please write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

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

SPORTS ROUNDUP

Dayville/Monument girls lose two over the weekend

The Lady Tigers faced No. 1-ranked Crane Friday and fell 69-10. The team lost to Adrian 45-30 on Saturday.

"With Crane being the No. 1 team in the state, we knew it was going to be a tough and physical game," said girls head coach Chyenne Perkins.

However, the girls stuck together and played as a team right up until the end, Perkins said.

"They played hard to the last quarter, and that can be hard to do when you are getting beat by such an amount," she said.

Saturday's game went well, and the Lady Tigers played well, but in the end, they came up short, Perkins said.

"I am very proud of how the girls played, and I can see the improvement of what we have been working on," she said.

The girls are 11-6 overall and 3-2 in league play as they go on the road to face Four Rivers (10-6, 1-3) Feb. 7. Tipoff is at 6 p.m. MST.

Dayville/Monument boys split wins over the weekend

The Dayville/Monument boys basketball team won a close one Friday, beating Crane 54-50. The team lost 43-35 Saturday to Adrian.

The Tigers are 12-5 overall and 3-2 in league play. Four Rivers (12-7, 3-2) will host the boys team Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m. MST.

Head coach Jeff Schaffer

Allen to play softball for Mt. Hood Community College



Contributed photo

Grant Union senior Taylor Allen has signed a letter of intent to play softball at Mt. Hood Community College.

could not be reached for comment.

Ukiah/Long Creek girls lose in overtime Friday

The Ukiah/Long Creek girls team tied up the game against Four Rivers Friday, but were outscored 11-4 in the fourth quarter, losing 56-49.

"I was really proud of how they played, considering the last time we played Four Rivers we lost 60-24," said head coach Amos Studtmann.

Studtmann said the girls played with less energy Saturday in the team's 50-23 loss to Harper Charter, which was more than likely due to the previous night's game.

Ukiah/Long Creek's overall record is 0-9. Next up, Huntington

(0-7) will host Ukiah/Long Creek Feb. 7 at 6 p.m.

Ukiah/Long Creek boys win two in a row

The Ukiah/Long Creek boys picked up a league win over the weekend and improved their overall record to 11-5, defeating both Four Rivers and Harper Charter, 66-52 and 67-33, respectively.

The boys are 4-1 in league play as they go on the road to face Huntington (9-4, 1-4) Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m.

Head coach TC Connor could not be reached for comment.

Wrestlers battling illness

The Grant Union Wrestling Team bowed out of the Heppner Tournament Saturday due to illness.

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