

The gym is open

Limited basketball, wrestling and dance practices available at Grant Union

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Sports may be on hold at the moment, but Grant Union High School now has an open gym schedule.

Grant Union Principle Ryan Gerry said Oregon School Activities Association season one guidelines state schools are able to have open gym, dependent on a county risk level, and can designate each season an allotted time for students to practice.

Gerry said, at the beginning of the school year, they started offering open gym and open field to the spring sports because their season was canceled last school year.

COVID-19 regulations required closing the gym, but the school is now allowed to reopen it.

"We're just bringing (open gym) back up because when we got into comprehensive distance learning, we weren't able to offer those (open gym) opportunities," Gerry said. "Then our county got put into the extreme risk category so we couldn't have any indoor activity."

Open gym resumed on Jan. 4 with winter sports: basketball, wrestling and dance. Gerry said there are still limitations on the activities, following the guidelines from Oregon Health Department and OSAA.

"They can't scrimmage, and they can't play five-on-five (basketball), but they



EO Media Group file photo
Grant Union's Riley Robertson (10) drives toward the basket during the first half against the Heppner Mustangs last year.



EO Media Group file photo
Mason Morris of Grant Union goes to the hoop during last year's Blue Mountain Conference championship game against Pilot Rock at the Pendleton Convention Center.

can work on shooting skills, dribbling and do some conditioning," Gerry said.

While the past year has been unique in limiting the opportunities kids have to participate in activities, Gerry said this gives students a chance to continue developing their skills while being



Ryan Gerry

with their teammates.

"Open gym resembles a sense of normalcy for the kids to get back and have an opportunity to work with their coaches," Gerry said. "I think it's important to get the kids active and have these opportunities."

The OSAA 2020-2021 season calendar has schools in season one — open gym time — until Feb. 22, when season two starts with fall sports. Football would start on Feb. 8 while cross country and volleyball would start on Feb. 22. However, football is classified as a high-contact sport and would not be allowable under current guidance.

Gerry said volleyball and cross country would be allowed under the current risk level, but are contingent on the next county COVID-19 risk level assessment in January.

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

LUCKY DOGS

Every time the UPS delivery driver makes a stop at our porch, he is greeted at the gate by a drooling small yellow horse.

I would call him a dog, but I know my 16-month-old son could put a saddle on its back

without any trouble. Duke, my trusted yellow lab, is a great candidate, high in the running for mascot to represent the gloriously upsetting chronological period we humans refer to as 2020.

Duke is a loving dog and loyal as the day is long, but I believe he was near the end of the line when God was handing out brains. In 2019, we arrived home late from an evening with my parents. At the time, we lived over near Mitchell. Our pup, excited we were home, ran out to greet us and ended up under the tires of my pickup. Fearing I had killed him, we called the vet and raced towards John Day. After an X-ray, he had a couple of broken bones in one leg and a broken pelvis. Costly as it was for the surgery, downtime and recovery, we were glad he was going to be OK.

Eventually, as he grew, I started to take him to work with me. Part of my duties at the time consisted of lots of tractor driving. Duke eagerly came along, chasing butterflies and birds as I drove along. Sometimes he would get so fixated on a squirrel mound that he would lose track of the big noisy diesel rig roaring in his immediate direction. Sev-



Contributed photo

Columnist Dale Valade's yellow Lab, Duke.

Sometime between then and when I finished the back cut, he had trotted off looking for who knows what and wandered directly into the path of the rapidly descending snag. I saw it happen, and when the tree landed right across his lower back and appeared to smash him to the ground with all of its weight, I turned away, hearing his yelp of pain.

I was mad, upset, hurt and scared all at once. My poor dog who had been through so much would now seemingly meet his demise for literally being in the wrong place at the wrong time. As we felt his legs and spine, we could miraculously feel nothing broken. We saw no wounds or blood. He could walk and, although was quite understandably under duress, appeared to be OK. I couldn't believe it. I just knew that tree had smashed him, and I would then have to put him down.

Another quick trip to the vet after making a phone call was eerily reminiscent of the last time. However, by the grace of a higher power which apparently also watches over my dog, he had no broken bones and no internal bleeding.

The vet told me plainly that, although he needed medication and convalescence, his logging days were over and that we should buy a lottery ticket. In spite of all the pain and loss we have experienced in 2020, it looks like at least we didn't lose Duke. He is one lucky dog.

Do you have a lucky dog? Write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

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

The Carrie Young Memorial would like to thank everyone who helped make 2020 such an amazingly successful year.

To all that donated to this year's cause- in all the million different ways... we thank you! It was such a strange year with all the uncertainty.

But, we had a record year, bringing in a total of \$44,7002.61 to assist the elderly of Grant County.



In memory of Carrie Young
7/13/61 – 9/15/1993

This county's citizens and our family and friends beyond its borders are some of the most generous and amazing people this world knows!

It is our hope to be back to "normal" in 2021 – time will tell.

**From the bottom of our hearts –
THANK YOU!**

**Lucie Immoos, Christie Winegar,
Dolores Young**