

Weights program provides an outlet

Exercise also provides mental health benefits

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Without sports, Grant Union's weights and conditioning program has provided an outlet for exercise.

Grant Union Teacher Jason Miller said the program has been even more important this school year.

"I think the kids who can participate in weights and conditioning, and any vocational activity in general, can help relieve stress and get around and move," Miller said. "It's been huge for the mental aspect of the kids during these times."

Senior Jordyn Young, who plays softball and volleyball, said the class has helped her maintain strength, but also helped her mental health as the program helps relieve stress.

Miller said different sports require different types of focused training, but athletes



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Grant Union's weightlifting class works on a variety of exercises, from left: teacher Jason Miller and seniors Will Carpenter and Sophie Brockway.

who participate in the program can build their core strength and condition themselves to prevent injuries when doing the specific training involved with a particular sport.

"It's been great for our students to get stronger and more explosive and be more comfortable within that setting, and I think the advantage for the ath-

letics program has been big," Miller said.

Senior Jordan Hall, who participates in basketball, football and track, said with the impacts of COVID-19 on sports, he realized he was out of shape when he resumed training for sports.

Hall said the combination of practicing at open gym and conditioning in the weights pro-

gram has helped in getting back into shape.

"I definitely took a break from everything, and I got out of shape, but you gotta start somewhere and work out everyday," Hall said.

Hall added that weightlifting also helps him relieve stress.

The Oregon School Activities Association will have



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Grant Union senior Jordyn Young lifts dumbbells, which also helps her relieve stress.

an executive board meeting on Feb. 8, which will give an update on the school sports season, but Hall hopes to get a chance to play, no matter how the season looks.

"It's my last year, and I hope we can do something that makes this year even better than the last three," Hall said. "Even with everything going on, I just want this year

to shine out."

Senior Sophie Brockway, who wrestles, said the the gym program provides a great opportunity for conditioning, but the mental health benefits have been just as important.

She said she appreciated the time to talk and grow with classmates in the program, especially with that opportunity being absent with the lack of sports.

Hall said one of his favorite aspects of the program has been the opportunity to work-out with other students and learn more about other people.

"It's also for kids who don't participate in sports that just want to learn those skills that they can apply in their livelihood when they're older," Miller said. "It's fun to see these kids who don't usually interact a bunch, to push and root for each other to get the new max or get the last few reps. It's big because it's team building even when you're not a part of the team. It's building school spirit and that pride in what we do."

Bill would make Oregon landowner hunting tag program permanent

By Mateusz Perkowski
EO Media Group

After 38 years, Oregon wildlife regulators want to make permanent a program that provides hunting tags to landowners who provide habitat for elk, deer and antelope.

The landowner preference program was first implemented in 1982 and has since been modified and extended several times, but the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife now believes it's time to eliminate its 2022 sunset date.

The agency has asked lawmakers to permanently implement the landowner preference program by passing House Bill 2068, which is supported by organizations representing farmers, ranchers, hunters and timber interests.

"We have a lot of members who rely on landowner preference program. It has been an excellent program for our folks. Farmers and ranchers provide extensive amounts of fish and wildlife habitat across the state," said Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of public policy for the Oregon Farm Bureau.

The number of controlled hunt tags that the public can draw for big game is limited each year, which highlighted the lack of tags specific to parcels of private property, said Doug Cottam, ODFW's wildlife division administrator.

"That creates the possibility that landowners who are providing habitat for those animals may not be able to hunt on their own property," Cottam said. "That's the reason the landowner preference pro-



Contributed photo/ODFW

A bill in the Oregon House would make the landowner preference program for hunting tags permanent.

gram was developed in the first place."

Landowners who don't hunt can transfer some or all of their preference tags to others, depending on the sex and species of big game, he said.

In the early years of the program, negotiations over how it would work necessitated sunset dates to update the rules, Cottam said. Though ODFW now thinks the program should be made permanent, it can still be revisited during future legislative sessions.

"The program seems to be set up now and working very well," said Al Elkins, lobbyist for the Oregon Hunters Association.

Tags provide compensation for tim-

berland owners, who sustain about \$4 million in replanting costs a year from big game eating seedlings, said Kyle Williams, forest protection director for the Oregon Forest & Industries Council.

A large population of elk in Wallowa County resides primarily on private property and causes substantial damage to cropland and haystacks, said Tom Birkmaier, a rancher in the area testifying for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

The landowner preference program provides ranchers with flexibility, he said.

"It can be used to add revenue for some farms and ranchers," Birkmaier said. "I trade fence work and other ranch work for these tags."

Hunter education field day required for youth to hunt as of April 1

2020 temp rule that postponed requirement due to COVID-19 expires March 31

Blue Mountain Eagle

Youth hunters (age 17 and younger) will need to fully complete their hunter education certification, including completing a field day, to hunt in Oregon on their own tag as of April 1.

Hunter education classes and field days were cancelled or more limited last year due to COVID-19 restrictions statewide. A temporary rule was approved that postponed the requirement for youth to attend a field day class in order to receive their hunter education certificate and hunt in 2020. The rule expires March 31.

Any student who was only able to complete the online or

workbook portion of the class in 2020 will need to complete the field day portion to hunt as of April 1, including for 2021 spring turkey and spring bear seasons.

The temporary rule is still good for hunts from the 2020 season that end by March 31.

To see the latest hunter education classes and field days available and register, visit <https://myodfw.com/articles/hunter-education-classes-field-days>. More classes and field days are being added regularly.

ODFW offers two types of hunter education classes: conventional that is all in-classroom instruction, or online that students can complete mostly



Eagle file photo

Jaime Vandehey of Canyon City shoots a pistol at the hunter education field day at the law enforcement gun range in 2019. ODFW instructor Mark Boss is standing nearby supervising.

independently, except for the in-person field day. Find a list

of approved online courses at <https://myodfw.com/articles/hunter-education-classes-and-field-days-schedule>.

ODFW has taken a number of steps to protect both students and instructors participating in classes/field days since the pandemic began. Class size is restricted to 25 students/parents and then broken up into smaller groups at arrival. Social distancing is maintained, and all students and volunteer instructors are required to wear a mask during the class. Hand sanitizer is available, and equipment and materials are wiped down regularly.

SHOOTING THE BREEZE On accuracy

Everyone fancies themselves at least a distant relative of William Tell, Annie Oakley or Carlos Hathcock. Truth be told it's good to push ourselves to always improve and progress in our craft. This can be maddening when we aren't seeing the kind of results we expect. Case in point, the accurate rifle.

Colonel Townsend Whelen, a hunter and shooter and so much more from days gone by, is often quoted as having said, "Only accurate rifles are interesting." True enough, there is little joy to be had from throwing shots that do not meet their intended mark. While nostalgia or aesthetics may be a driving force behind firearms acquisition for some, I would say most, if not all, shooters agree with the colonel. But standards can vary beyond that principle.

Technology allows us to reach farther and faster with each advancement, but the one thing that cannot be bought, perhaps being most pivotal, is skill. No matter what newfangled easemaker is devised, the fundamentals of marksmanship are still the most important variables in the shooting equation. Simply put, if the nut behind the bolt wiggles loose, then the rest of it is all in vain.

Our standards quite frequently are spurned by our peer group, directly or indirectly. Whether our good buddies or mentors are fine with inch and a half groups, or inversely demand sub-minute of angle accuracy, we are likely to follow suit. If you're a competition shooter, smaller groups mean better scores means more money. There is no room for complacency. But if you're a plinker or a hunter, bug hole sized groups are frankly a useless endeavor. Our targets



Dale Valade

are usually quite generous in size and the informal rests hastily assumed from field positions

with a quickened heart rate are not such as to permit taking much advantage of hair splitting accuracy. Simply put, if you can hit a basketball from 400 yards away, that's likely "good enough" for hunters as that's roughly the size of the vital area on their intended quarry. Most any rifle will shoot at least that well with proper loads and quality optics.

In an article I recently read, the aforementioned Hathcock could rely upon 1.5 MOA groups from his sniper rifle and match grade ammo during his distinguished service in Vietnam. Many today would scoff at such a setup claiming that's nowhere near good enough for such employ. However, even that kind of accuracy will land all of its bullets into a 12 inch circle clear out to 800 yards away — twice as far as our aforementioned hypothetical hunters plan to shoot.

Oh, it's cool to post pictures of amazingly small groups, but after initial load development is complete, shooting groups becomes just another exercise in ego stroking. All shooters can benefit from putting in practical range time rather than only shooting groups. Can you keep your bullets inside of a steel plate the size of your target's vital area? How about from field positions?

What's your standard for accuracy? Write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

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



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