



Columnist Dale Valade poses with his cow elk from 2018.

Contributed photo

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

UNDER PRESSURE

It's amazing the pressure that even a bit of stress can create. This is universal no matter which phylum you belong to. Duress can cause us to freeze up, perform super extraordinary feats, make good decisions or poor ones, miscalculate or just shut down. I think folks in high stress jobs can most easily relate, and it seems that no matter your training or experience you'll sometime, someday find yourself in a situation that catches you off guard. It doesn't necessarily take something of fairly epic proportions to get us to flub. A few years back, a coworker and I were traveling on the ranch where we were working and happened upon a flock of turkeys feeding along a creek bed. No sooner had we happened along than a cougar pounced from the brush in an attempt to grab a turkey for dinner. When I saw him, he saw me; he stared at me while I stared at him, both of us frozen. It was the first time I had ever gotten a good look at a mountain lion. Had my friend not shook me back into reality, while placing my rifle into my dumbfounded hands, the cougar would've



Dale Valade

Half asleep I managed to keep up a conversation with the other passengers. Through the fog and snow, just ahead a bunch of elk exploded into view. It was chaos. Brakes screeched as we slid on the snow to a halt and evacuated the road in pursuit of the fleeing herd. Hastily I attempted not one but two hurried offhand shots. Poorly attempted as they were, I of course missed both times, my bullets making insultingly large splashes in the snow. After advancing to another vantage point, I was rewarded with a shot at a standing animal. This time I took a steady rest and was able to squeeze off a good shot, getting my cow elk tag filled. Coyotes can be a head trip as well. If they've spotted you, they trot along shift-

doubtlessly gotten away. I have never froze up like that before, but I sure did that day. Another time I was riding shotgun in a pickup truck headed out to go elk hunting on a friend's private land. ing gears with an ease that would make any Detroit automaker cry shamefully. Out of the blue they will stop, and if you'd been leading them for the running shot, they hit the breaks about the same time you've squeezed off a shot, causing a miss. Or you hastily adjust when they stop, and not knowing when they'll hit the gas pedal again, you rush your shot and pull the shot high, low or wide. The pressure is as tangible as can be. Quite frequently I've seen shots rushed, pulled or other mistakes made in the heat of the moment, even by skilled and experienced hunters. The best thing one can do is to practice as much as possible, and keep your head in the moment of truth. Knowing our limitations can be a big help in selecting makeable shots and throwing fewer Hail Marys. In short, hunting is exciting. Just don't get too excited. Write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com! Dale Valade is a local country gent with a love for the outdoors, handloading, hunting and shooting.

SPORTS ROUNDUP

Grant Union boys fall to Crane

The Grant Union boys basketball team dropped its third straight game of the season, falling to Crane 60-34 June 3. Prospectors head coach RC Huerta told the Eagle Friday that too many turnovers allowed the Mustangs to run away with the game. Huerta said Crane is a well-coached, athletic squad, and they earned the win. However, he said the Pros have another shot on their turf on June 9. He said the team is working on getting prepared for the rematch. "Most of the time, you learn more from a loss than you do a win," he said. "It's about understanding that you have to take care of the basketball." He said ultimately the program is progressing in positive ways that go beyond the win-loss record. "It doesn't look like it on the wins and loss side, but the program is moving in the right direction," he said. "I want them to continue to take what they've learned here and take it into the classroom and continue to be better students and members of the community."

Lady Pros showed hustle and grit in 52-17 loss to Crane

The Grant Union girls basketball team dropped its second game of the season Thursday but continued to improve and showed hustle the entire game, according to Lady Pros head coach Jason Miller. Miller said the Mustangs had many players return from last year's 2A state championship team. Meanwhile, he said, the Lady Pros are a young team. "I have a lot of faith in our girls," he said. "Good athletes, they just learn how to work together to win a basketball game." The Lady Pros will face Crane Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. at Grant Union.

Grant Union wrestling team competes in first meet of the season

Andy Lusco, Prospectors wrestling head coach, told the Eagle that with athletes moving on to other responsibilities and opportunities, the team is "light" in numbers. "I'm proud of the guys who showed up to wrestle at Burns and toughed it out to get in a few matches," Lusco said. Wrestling as an extra in the 152 weight bracket, Jack Strong pinned Adrian Prado and Jac Rojas of Nyssa. Jessi Douglass lost to Briley Rios and Jayden Madrid of Nyssa. In the 170 extra brackets, Sam McCracken downed North Lake's Dani Bates while Prospector's Alex Finley in the 182 division made quick work of Trevor Williams from North Lake, pinning him in less than 50 seconds. In the 220 division, Tucker Carpenter fell to Jesse Aragon of Nyssa. Zach Ostberg fell to Aragon in a later match. Lusco said he is looking forward to the Pine Eagle Invitational on June 12 as another chance to improve before the district tournament the following week.

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, June 9	1:30 p.m.
Grant Union basketball vs. Crane, girls 4:30 p.m., boys 6 p.m.	Grant Union wrestling @ Pine Eagle Invitational, 10 a.m.
Thursday, June 10	Monday, June 14
Grant Union basketball @ Weston-McEwen, girls 6 p.m., boys 7:30 p.m.	Grant Union basketball vs. Joseph, girls 2 p.m., boys 3:30 p.m.
Saturday, June 12	Tuesday, June 15
Grant Union basketball vs. Pilot Rock, girls noon, boys	Grant Union basketball vs. Stanfield, girls 5 p.m., boys 6:30 p.m.

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