

NEW BEGINNINGS: New coach aims to give Grant Union baseball team a fresh start

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union baseball team has a new coach but a familiar face with RC Huerta taking the helm.

Also the head basketball coach for Grant Union, Huerta begins 2022 as the head coach for both programs at Grant Union High School. Huerta began as an assistant with the baseball team in 2019 and ascended to the role of head coach for the upcoming season following the departure of former head coach Doug Sharp.



Huerta

After a four-win outing last season, Huerta is looking to get Grant Union back to its winning ways. The program has won four state championships since 1990. It is a past Huerta knows well, and is always mindful of.

"I played baseball in Redmond when I was a kid. My grandparents lived in Prairie, and I'd come here and get a chance to watch their teams. Looking at what they did and what they built, baseball culture was huge," Huerta said.

"We're proud of our baseball program (at Grant Union)," he added. "We were a little down last year with COVID and having not played much the year prior."

Despite those challenges, Huerta



The Grant Union baseball team warms up before practice on Thursday, March 3, 2022.

Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

sees a bright future for the Prospectors moving forward.

"I'd like to think that at any time we are going to win a championship. That's always the goal: make the playoffs and get a championship under our belt."

The coronavirus pandemic led to the cancellation of the state baseball playoffs for the past two years. When asked if he anticipates any setbacks or complications due to COVID this season, Huerta was optimistic that all those issues are largely over.

"I'd like to think not," he said. "I know they have a need for officials, so

if anybody reads this and wants to be an official, feel free to sign up for that."

Huerta knows there will be challenges and adversity, but he thinks it isn't anything his team can't handle.

"I like to think glass half full. It's sports, so adversity and challenges are going to come up, but we'll be able to face them and hopefully work through them without any game cancellations," Huerta said.

Bringing a championship back to John Day will rest heavily on the leadership of the team's three seniors and the development of its underclassmen.

"We have three seniors on the team," Huerta said. "Mason Morris is a returning player. We have Colby Fell, who is also a returning player, and we have Parker Neault."

Another factor in the success of the team will be navigating a tough schedule in 1A/2A Special District 7.

"Our league is always tough," Huerta said. "I like to equate our league to the PAC-12. We like to beat up on each other."

Despite the youth on the team and a tough league schedule, Huerta is optimistic that putting his fingerprints on

the team will result in success.

"We're going to try and carry on the tradition of baseball here in Grant County. I'd like to get us back into the win column and give ourselves an opportunity."

The baseball team won its first-round state playoff game with Huerta as an assistant three years ago, and he'd like to return the team to a comparable level of success.

"In 2019 we got a chance to go play Kennedy and got out of the first round of the playoff. We didn't quite get out of the second round (against Kennedy), but I'd like to get us back to that place."

When asked if there is anything else he wanted people to know about his team, Huerta spoke of character and hard work.

"We're going to have hard-working kids who are going to hustle on and off the field. They're going to carry themselves with class and respect," Huerta said.

"We're going to get dirty and play hard. We're going to have a good time while doing it."

Huerta also hopes to see the community in the stands for home games throughout the season.

"Hopefully we get some more people out here to see this thing through so us and the softball program can make them proud," he said.

Grant Union begins its 2022 campaign on March 17 at home against Umatilla. The game starts at noon.



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin, File

The Red Chair lift at Mt. Bachelor. A woman was airlifted from the ski area on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, after the latest accident on the mountain.

Skiier airlifted after mishap at Mt. Bachelor

By JOE SIESS
The Bulletin

MT. BACHELOR — A 59-year-old woman was airlifted from Mt. Bachelor ski area to St. Charles Bend on Wednesday, March 2, after a ski accident on the mountain.

At around 10:24 a.m. Wednesday, Mt. Bachelor ski patrol officials got a call about a ski-related injury, Leigh Capozzi, the communications director for Mt. Bachelor, said

in an email to The Bulletin.

"Upon assessing the skier's injuries, Ski Patrol dispatched Bend Fire and Rescue and a medical helicopter," Capozzi said. "The skier, a 59-year-old-female wearing a helmet, was transported by patrollers to West Village, where care was ultimately transferred to Airlink helicopter, who transported the injured skier to St. Charles Hospital."

Capozzi did not provide further details about the woman's injuries or condition.

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

Guns and people can be a lot alike

Over the years I have messed with a few guns and dealt with a lot of people. I have come to the conclusion that guns and people are a lot alike.

Each one is unique. People raised in the same house, with the same parents, can have wildly different personalities. Guns built one right after the other in the same factory can vary a great deal in function and accuracy.

We all know a family or two that are pillars in the community. Hard-working, honest and reliable. People you can trust.

However, they all seem to have that one black sheep that doesn't quite live up to the family name. Likewise, gun makers with a good, solid reputation can throw a lemon every now and then.

On the other side of the coin, there are the families from the wrong side of the tracks that sire a success story and that cheap manufacturer that occasionally turns out a true gem of a rifle. You just never



Rod Carpenter

know what you are going to get until you spend some time with them.

Many years ago I saved my pennies for an expensive rifle from a quality maker only to have my heart crushed. It was nothing but pain and suffering, so we had to part ways.

On the other hand, I have an old, beat-up Ruger 77 that is like that life-long friend that is always there for you. Not shiny or fancy. A little worn, with a few quirks, but shows up and gets the job done without any drama every time.

You may not see each other for a while, but when you get back together, you pick up right where you left off.

Every now and then you come across a person or a gun that just needs some help to become their best self. A little encouragement, some love and attention to help them realize who they are.

A 7mm Remington Magnum started life as a 300 Winchester Magnum, but

just wasn't reaching her potential. A barrel change, some stock work and reloading helped her to really shine.

Both guns and people can be high-maintenance beauties that generate lust in your heart. Fun for a while, but in the end, not worth the cost. Some take a while to really get to know and appreciate. They may seem a little odd at first and take some time to get used to, but in the end are fun to be around.

Each gun you meet will have its own personality. You just never know what you are getting until you spend some time getting to know each other. Maybe you just won't get along. Maybe you can find a way to work together to get the job done.

Every now and then, you find a true friend that will bring joy every time you are together.

What caliber is your best friend? Let us know at shootingthebreezeme@gmail.com.

Rod Carpenter is a husband, father and huntin' fool.

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