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One summer, one hundred fish

By **BRETT KANE**
STAFF WRITER

When summer break began, Hermiston High School social studies teacher Josh Walker gave himself a homework assignment:

To catch 100 fish by the end of the summer.

"It just sounded like a good number," said Walker, 41. "I thought it would be unattainable. I don't own a boat, and when you're restricted to the shore, you really limit your results."

The goal, as it turns out, is coming along much easier than Walker initially anticipated. He's already amassed 94 catches this summer so far — well on his way to meeting his personal quota ahead of Monday, Sept. 23, when summer officially ends.

"I think I can do it," Walker said. "It just started out as something to do during the summer."

When he's not teaching history to juniors and seniors at Hermiston High, he serves as an assistant pastor at the Victory Baptist Church. When school let out, he found himself with more time to focus on his beloved hobby.

Fishing, Walker said, became a longstanding tradition ever since he was a kid growing up along the Oregon coast.

"Everyone fishes there," Walker said. "I fell out of it for a bit as an adult. But once I hit my 30s, I started fishing for steelhead again."

Since he embarked on his journey when school let out on June 14, Walker has traveled all over Oregon in an effort to complete his goal. He's found spots in Hermiston, Ukiah, Eugene, Portland, and all along the Columbia River. So far, he's reeled in 68 bass, 24 trout, and two catfish.

"The Columbia River is known for its smallmouth bass," Walker said. "Pound for pound, smallmouth bass have more fight in them than any other fish. Bass are very finicky. There's a



Josh Walker holds up a bass he caught this summer as he strives to catch 100 fish.

Contributed photo

whole technique (to catching them). It's fun."

Walker prefers to catch and release, and only keeps his catches if it's against the

rules and regulations to set them free again.

"It's a touchy subject," he said. "Some people want you to keep the bass,

because they'll eat young steelhead and salmon. Others like to catch and release because the next person who catches that same fish in the

future, is going to catch a bigger fish."

Walker keeps his fishing tradition alive and well in his family — his wife

Sadie and kids Madilyn, 10, and Colton, 9, tag along for many of his expeditions. Walker noted that Colton caught his very first bass earlier this summer.

Walker fishes two to four hours a day, five to six days a week.

"It's a great way to stay active," he said. "I walk upwards of eight miles a day."

Walker's record for the summer so far is seven bass in one day. He said that although some days are successful, others are not. Occasionally, there are days where he only hooks one solitary fish.

"That's why they call it fishing, and not catching," he joked. "At the beginning of the summer, there were days I would go out and not get anything. Now, I can get three to four a day. I'd say I'm getting better."

Walker documents each catch on a journal on his phone, as well as Fish Brain — an app that he describes as "Facebook for fishermen."

Although summer's end is still several weeks away, another obstacle looms in Walker's path to completion — a mission trip to Ireland. He'll take off on Aug. 9, and return home on Aug. 17. It's over a week's worth of time that'll slow down his progress.

But Walker remains up for the challenge.

"You gotta be patient," he said. "It's more than a matter of just casting. There's research. You have to know the temperature, whether the water's going to be moving or not, and the right locations. All of that determines what kind of bait you're going to use."

And Walker still isn't through challenging himself once he's completed his summer goal. He's already set a new year's resolution:

To catch 200 fish by the end of 2020.

"It's a good way to enjoy God's creation," Walker said. "You cast the line out, and you never know what's going to come in."

Kennison Field gets top marks heading into fall sports

By **ANNIE FOWLER**
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston High School's Kennison Field turns 6 years old this month, but recent testing showed that the playing surface is in pristine condition.

Buzz Turf Synthetic Turf Testing of Boise performed the annual test on the facility's synthetic turf last month, with the report reflecting continual good maintenance since its installation in 2013.

"Our turf being in such good shape shows our school district made the right choice by buying quality turf and hiring the company that we went through," Hermiston athletic director Larry Usher said.

All is good news with the fall sports season getting under way later this month.

Football practice begins Aug. 21, while girls soccer starts Aug. 26.

According to the report, the field was tested in designated areas to measure shock attenuation. Testers use what's called a G-max test to measure impact on the field. The higher the G-max score, the less impact the field is absorbing.

The results help determine if there are any areas



HH File Photo

This undated photo shows the Kennison Field turf and grandstand at Hermiston High School, which was unveiled by the Hermiston School District on Aug. 23, 2013.

"We make sure our field is safe in a time of heightened awareness of injuries."

Larry Usher, Athletic Director

of concern, and if repair or replacement is required.

G-max tests must be below 165 to be considered safe. Kennison Field passed with flying colors, testing out between 103 and 125.

"We make sure our field is safe in a time of heightened awareness of injuries," Usher said. "Our field is as safe as it can be. It graded

out as a new field."

The company also distributed crumb rubber fill in the areas that needed it to make the field cohesive. The turf is supported by thousands of pounds of pulverized rubber, which plays a part in the safety of the field.

The inspection included a magnetic sweep of the field, which removed items such as bobby pins, safety pins and track spikes.

The surface was also cleaned and sanitized.

"People wonder why we do that when it looks clean," Usher said. "There is vomit and people bleed on it. You can get staph infections from the turf. This helps

prevent that."

There also was some concern from community members about the integrity of the field surface after the Hermiston School District maintenance staff cleared more than a foot of snow off the field in mid-March. The testing showed no damage.

"The scores are indicative of the work done by our grounds crew," facilities supervisor Martie McQuain said in school press release. "Monthly sweeps of the field have proven to be a diligent method to keep the field in good condition. Our coaching staff, community members and visiting teams have also helped maintain our field in good condition by keeping food and drinks (except for water) off the field."

The Bulldogs open their football season Sept. 6 at Pasco. Their first home game is Sept. 13 against Richland.

The girls soccer team opens its season Sept. 7 with a home match against Kamiakin.

Kennison Field also is used for track, lacrosse and community events. It also served as a practice facility in May for the softball team so it could get used to playing on an artificial surface that is used at the 3A state tournament.

Local students to receive Oregon Hall of Fame scholarships

By **ANNIE FOWLER**
STAFF WRITER

Two local student-athletes will receive scholarships from the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame in September.

Martin Heredia of Hermiston, and Veronica Alvarez Frias of Riverside, are two of six Oregon student-athletes who will receive a \$3,000 scholarship at the Hall of Fame induction and banquet Sept. 24 at the Multnomah Athletic Club in Portland.

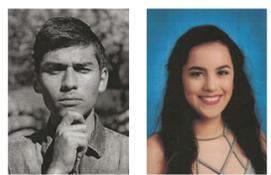
The scholarships are made possible by contributions from the MacTarnahan Family Trust. The recipient must attend an Oregon college or university.

Heredia, who will attend Eastern Oregon University, earned letters in cross-country and track, and earned the varsity most improved award.

Academically, he earned the Breakfast of Champions Award and Bulldog Way Award. He also had participated in various community service activities, including elderly home volunteer, outdoor school and leadership retreat.

Alvarez Frias, a varsity cheerleader for four years, will attend EOU.

She was on the honor roll for four years, and was a four-time letter winner and scholar-athlete award winner. She also has participated in multiple Red Cross blood drives, Breakfast with Santa,



Heredia

Frias

Windy River cleanup and the after-school program.

Students may apply for the scholarship, or be nominated by a teacher or school official. Hundreds of applications were screened by a committee, according to Oregon Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony Chair Mike Rose.

"Academic and athletic achievement score high, but the tie-breaker is always true financial need," Rose wrote in an email. "It ain't just the rich kid who happens to have good grades and plays first string."

Also receiving scholarships are Zach and Jack Folsom of Sheldon High School; Brinley O'Neill of North Medford; and Paige Baker of South Eugene.

Being inducted into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame are Kenny Moore, a University of Oregon distance runner (3-time All-American and Olympian); boxer Molly McConnell; Ray Bloom (1977-81) and Mark Radford (1977-81), Oregon State University basketball; Dr. Bob Gill, special contribution to sports; and the 1975 Portland Timbers.